

Using the Power of Process to Grow Your Business

In order for any business to work, it must become a system, so that the business works exactly the same way every time, down to the last detail."

Michael Gerber, *The "E" Myth*

Every successful business operates with specific guidelines or processes that generate an exact, predictable result. While many functions within a business typically leverage the power of processes, the sales and marketing departments (which may be one and the same!) have yet to fully embrace the power of process in most companies.

Based on the Webcast presented by **IntegratedMARCOM, The Weaver Group, and Sales Effectiveness, Inc.** on May 5, the following document outlines the Top 10 processes we believe to be critical in achieving business growth. These processes fall into three key areas:

1. Strategic Planning
2. Business Development
3. Negotiation

[Top Ten Sales Processes to Increase Your Sales Now](#)

The Process of Strategic Planning

"If you don't know where you're going, how do you know when you've arrived?"

Having a strategic business plan (and remaining true to it) is a critical component to successful business growth. **David Weaver** of **The Weaver Group** and AdviCoach Business Advisor, shares the following elements of developing a strategic plan for your business:

1. Determine Your Destination - Personally

A business owner can't determine where to take their business if they don't know where they want to go personally. Ask yourself:

- Do I want to grow my business into a larger, more profitable firm along with the accompanying challenges that presents?
- Do I want to remain a "technician" – one who produces and delivers products or services without building a large support team? You may limit your income by not replicating and building on your success but you also deal with fewer headaches.
- Do I want more time in my life away from the business? If so, you may want to focus on developing a repeatable process for your business so that your business can run without your constant presence.

2. **Determine Your Destination – For Your Business**

Once you've determined what you want for yourself, lay out a path for your business that will deliver on your personal goals and dreams. Answer these questions and you're on the way to understanding where your business needs to go:

- Is it all about making more money? More free time? To build a sustainable business that can be passed along to a family member or sold to an outside buyer?

3. **Determine the Route for Getting to Your Destination**

Utilize the One Page Strategic Plan to organize your thoughts and your plan.*

- Plan your route: Remember the airline pilot example of including 'waypoints' along your route to ensure that you stay on course. In business, these are typically Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) that measure results along the way.
- Monitor your progress: Review your plan monthly, quarterly and annually to ensure you're meeting your goals. Has anything changed in your market? Within your competition? Are there any new forces at play that you can take advantage of?
- Take the same careful, detailed steps in planning your sales process

* "Mastering the Rockefeller Habits" by Verne Harnish

For an updated copy of the One Page Strategic Plan and a free business assessment to help identify goals and how to attain them, contact David Weaver of The Weaver Group at dweaver@advicoach-atlanta.com or (678) 620-3990.

The Process of Business Development

"The difference between good companies and great companies are what they do with the 90% of prospects who are not yet ready to buy." Jim Collins, *Good to Great*

Once your strategic plan is in place, such as David Weaver describes above, you are ready to implement business development processes to achieve those goals.

When it comes to defined processes, Business Development (Sales and Marketing) is often the least "systematized" function within a company. The company's ultimate success in growing revenue depends on the business development team's adoption of a Sales Action Plan—including what activities, when, by whom and what's the next step. A more systematic approach to business development means more consistent and predictable revenue streams.

Tara Lamboley, Relationship Manager of IntegratedMARC (www.integratedmarcom.com), a business development advisory firm, recommends implementing the following three sales processes to maintain a consistent sales pipeline, and to increase top-line revenue growth in your business:

4. Consistent Nurturing of Prospects

Think of Nurturing as a term to describe the customer experience your prospects have at all their points of contact with you. If you consistently communicate something of value to your prospects over time, they will consider you the go-to expert when they require that service or product. In fact, **if you communicate more than four times with a prospect, you will beat out 90% of your competition!**

- **Personalized Communications: Letters, Emails, Calls**
Instead of blanket direct mail or cold calling, deliver letters, emails, call scripts and personal calls that are highly customized and professionally written to distinguish the company, the product/service offering and build lasting relationships.
- **Specific to your Prospect's Situation**
Focus on common pain points for the particular industry/market segment of your prospect and how your company resolves them (include client testimonials for even greater credibility)
- **Think "Educating," not "Sell, Sell!"**
The message to your prospect is "We understand your challenges, and we're here when you're ready to buy."

5. Consistent Nurturing of Clients and Partners.

Now that you've nurtured your prospects into customers, you have trained your customers to expect regular communication from you. Don't stop now! Continue to maintain contact regularly with your customers and referral partners with personalized communications to ensure:

- Additional opportunities for revenue (cross-sell, up-sell)
- Client testimonials/case studies for marketing purposes
- Referrals to your next customer

6. Consistent Sales Messaging

If you are going to make the effort to nurture these prospects, customers, and partners, be sure you have something uniquely valuable to say. Answer the question "How is your product or service demonstrably more appealing than that of your competitors?" and then build that difference into your sales processes to be able to deliver that experience to the customer. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Need to differentiate your brand among a crowded field of competitors: What makes your company unique?
- Need a compelling message to make prospects take notice

- Message is not about what you do (technical), but the benefits you provide for customers (emotional)
- Think long-term relationship, not short-term sale

For more information on business development processes, or to gain an objective assessment of your current business development efforts, please contact Tara Lamboley of IntegratedMARCOM at tara@integratedmarcom.com or (770) 856-2087.

The Process of Negotiation

“I want a lower price!”

Who doesn't want a lower price? We would all like to get a lower price on everything we buy (brain surgery and parachutes being two obvious exceptions!). As a salesperson, that simple demand is probably the one you dread hearing the most. But, when you do hear it, what do you do? Simply lower your price?

Sales Effectiveness, Inc. has developed the **AGREE** methodology for negotiation with simple and effective strategies for dealing with price pressures like this. There are eight total strategies; here are the first three. (The other five strategies can be found online at www.saleseffectiveness.com.)

7. Let them feel heard.

You can acknowledge their request for a lower price without agreeing to any specific action on your part. Remember, an acknowledgement is not the same as an agreement!

- “All of my customers, in this economic environment, are looking for the best value, which they often equate with the best price.”
- “If I were in your position, I would be looking for the best value also.”
- “As a purchasing manager, I fully understand that your role is to search out and find the best value you can get in every transaction.”

8. Specifically define the process of the conversation you're about to have.

Unless you are a used car salesperson or a horse trader, you are not here to play the classic negotiation game (you know the game . . . they start with a low price, you start with a high price, and then we meet at some middle ground). Instead, try these alternatives:

- “Rather than begin our conversation with a negotiation over price, may I instead ask you a few questions to help me better understand your thinking about our current offering and our price?”
- “The price we've proposed is the best we can do with what I currently know about your situation. Perhaps I can provide a better price if I better understand your current situation and needs.”

9. **Quantify, Acknowledge, and try to get their commitment.**

Quantify: “The word “lower” has a pretty broad range, from \$0 up to our current price of \$X. Can you share with me how much “lower” a price you had in mind?”

If they tell you that “lower” means a 10% discount, simply **acknowledge** it:

- “It sounds like you are asking for a 10% discount from our current price. In addition to the discount, are you asking for any other changes to the deal?”
- At this point, **don’t commit** to the action you will take. **Do** try to get a **commitment** from them:
- “I can’t say ‘yes’ to your request for a 10% discount at this time. Before I present your 10% offer to my management, can I have your commitment that this will be the final pricing request you will make?”

With these strategies in your back pocket, you are sure to maximize your effectiveness in any negotiation. For more tips like these, or to assess your negotiation skills, contact Bruce Hoelzen of Sales Effectiveness, Inc. at bruce@saleseffectiveness.com or (770) 335-9807.

And last, but not least. . .

10. MEASURE the Results

Be sure to monitor and measure the results you find from implementing any of the above 9 processes. As the saying goes, “You can’t manage what you can’t measure.” Once you have implemented the processes above—whether on your own or with the help of outside expertise—have a process in place to quantify your results.

For additional information or to request an assessment of any of your current processes, please contact the following resources:

Strategic Business Planning Assessment:

David Weaver
The Weaver Group
AdviCoach Business Advisor
dweaver@advicoach-atlanta.com
(678) 620-3990

Business Development/Sales and Marketing Assessment:

Tara Lamboley
IntegratedMARCOM
tara@integratedmarcom.com
(770) 856-2087

Negotiation and Sales Skills Assessment:

Bruce Hoelzen
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