

## ***What is the most effective method for rising above your competitors?***

What is the one thing you don't like about sales? More than likely your answer is the same as most people who sell for a living. Taking care of details. Knowing this can be an excellent way for you to be different.

The first step in setting yourself apart is to make a commitment to really be on top of your business. Follow-up is something you can control. A daily to-do system, writing everything down in one place, carrying out your promises, returning all customer calls within two to three hours, checking voice mail every two or three hours and updating your message, sending follow up letters, notifying customers of bad news, delays and coming up with alternatives. All these things are under your direct control.

One of the best ways to gain credibility with a prospect is to promise to do something-and to do it. Poor self-management is the cause of poor follow-up. Salespeople who don't follow up usually don't have a system. They don't write things down. If they have a list, they don't use it. Not taking initiative also contributes to problems of follow-up.. The key is to identify what you can control and act on it.

Follow-up during the process of trying to open a new account can make or break the possibility of future business. Telephone calls, letters, or personal visits can put you ahead of less attentive competitors. Many salespeople are poor at follow-up. So being precise in your follow-up can put you in a very favorable position.

Follow-up is important after the sale to keep the business.

Follow-up plays an important roll, once the sale is

in place, to help insure nothing goes wrong. After the sale, use follow-up to make sure it's not your last order with this customer. Call or visit in between deliveries to find out how things are going. Consider yourself successful if you learn in time that things are not going well. Meeting and exceeding customer expectations will allow you to move up from vendor to partner. How well you deliver on your sales promise will build your reputation with your customer and his or her colleagues. It will help you get "add-on" business. Always develop a "deliver more than you promise" attitude.

If you make it a point to be meticulous about the details, you will be able to differentiate yourself from your competitors. You can count on some of your competitors letting small things slip by them.

As we discussed in Report 17, Having a sense of urgency, this can also be used as a way to set yourself apart from your competitors. Let's review and ask that question again to signify the importance of doing thing right now! Do you call your customers when there is a potential problem? When you hear a piece of news that could possibly affect one of your customer's business do you make it a special point to let them know, or do you assume they will get the information themselves? When one of your customers has a problem and calls you for help, do you drop everything and do "what ever it takes" to help with the solution, or do you hesitate and hope that by the time you return the call the problem will go away?

If your answer is yes to these questions, you are in the top ten percent!