

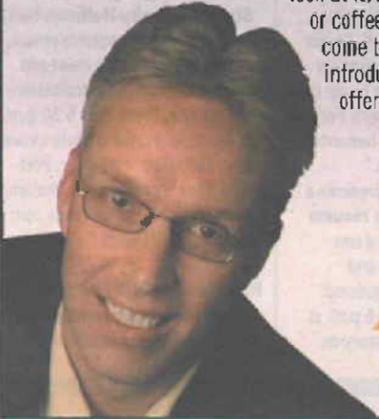
Advertorial

ASK THE EXPERT

IMPROVING SALES PERFORMANCE

Q I want to generate more referrals from my existing clients. How can I do this without making them uncomfortable?

A Every professional should aspire to grow their business primarily via referrals. But most are afraid to ask for them. There are a myriad of reasons (scared of rejection, unsure if they are happy with results, don't want to appear desperate, don't want to risk the relationship...). Most people don't have an elegant way of asking for referrals. Asking "You know anyone that needs sales training?" just doesn't work. Try this: Call your client and let them know that you have been wanting to bring up the subject of referrals with them but have been hesitant, because you do not want to make them feel uncomfortable. Then ask them two questions: 1. Are they open to the concept of referrals? (because some are not) 2. Are they open to perhaps referring people to you? If they are, suggest to them that you email a detailed description of your ideal customer to them and they take a look at it. And that you will follow up with a phone call or coffee meeting in a few days to see if 1 or 2 people come to mind that they might feel comfortable introducing to you. By the way, you might want to offer to do the same thing for them!



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Finding Power In Reinforcement

QUALITY OF PART TIME CANDIDATES

Q We are hiring a part-time office assistant and not seeing the quality or quantity of candidates we are used to seeing. What should we be doing to get the best candidates?

A This is a new phenomenon in this market. We are seeing less quantity and quality for part-time spots. It must be the way the market is recovering. It appears the quality candidates want full time now. Also a lot of people have been out of work, so their unemployment is running out, and they need full-time. To get the best candidates, you could combine two part-time jobs into a full-time job, or lower your expectations and accept the candidates that are looking for part-time.



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ONLINE MARKETING STRATEGIES

Q How can I make my online marketing and outreach work harder for me?

A We've all heard the aging axiom "Content is King." in today's world — where the competition for someone's attention is fierce — the reality is "Relevance is King." Relevance requires thoughtful planning and regular nurturing. It requires you to develop and continually optimize a focused, goal-driven content strategy and to be diligently listening to the people you're trying to engage. So, what does this entail you ask? Let's break it down...

- Listen — Consult existing website and marketing analytics for insights, conduct surveys and employ social monitoring tools.
- Plan — Based on findings, establish the target audience, primary/secondary goals, high-level messaging direction, specific tactics and potential tests for all of your online properties and outreach vehicles (website, social pages, email, etc.). Consider the strengths and weaknesses of each channel and tailor your plan accordingly.
- Optimize — Test various aspects of the program (message/tone, frequency, date/time, call to action, etc.) and establish a reporting schedule to assess the performance of your efforts, identify needed changes and inform future tests.
- Repeat

The result is a smart, hard working online marketing strategy that maximizes your ROI (of both time AND capital).

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Entrepreneurs' Organization
Portland

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EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Q Must employers offer their employees health plan coverage?

A Generally, no; employers may choose whether or not to offer their employees health plan coverage, subject to the following requirements:

- Employers may be required by contracts, including collective bargaining agreements, to provide some or all of their employees health plan coverage.
- Employers may be subject to "prevailing wage" laws, which have an employee benefits component (which may be met either by providing benefits or higher wages to the affected employees).
- Starting in 2014, "large" employers (those with at least 50 full-time-equivalent employees) who don't provide their full-time employees with "minimum essential coverage" will be subject to a penalty tax.
- Employers who don't offer their employees health plan coverage may have difficulty recruiting as desired.

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*This general information is not intended to provide individual advice. Schedule an appointment with an expert to discuss your particular situation and needs. Questions sent to our experts may be answered in the future "Ask the Expert" pages.