

Advertorial

ASK THE EXPERT



IMPROVING SALES PERFORMANCE

Q: It is so hard to access decision makers these days. What are some tips for leaving effective voice mails?

A: Voice mail is a great tool, especially for hiding from pesky salespeople. As a seller you need to have a strategy for using voice mail in order to get results. Start with when you will leave a message. I generally call three times before I leave my first message. Think in terms of a progression of messages. My first message is very brief and is meant to arouse curiosity. The second one is an appeal for help, still pretty vague. The third message is where I finally identify what company I am with and the purpose of the call. You also want to think about your call to action. I think it is usually naïve to believe that a prospect that has never spoken to me will return my voice mail message. It is better to ask them to respond to an email message that you will send them after you hang up. The email might contain an article or white paper, and 2 or 3 options for how to connect with you. Remember that no one prospecting attempt stands alone, but is a part of a coordinated campaign designed to result in a conversation.

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NOT A MATCH WITH THE TEAM

Q: We are currently interviewing and the people look great on paper, but when we meet them in person, we realize they wouldn't be a fit with our team. How do we find someone who would be a good long term fit for our team?

A: The biggest reason people don't stay long is lack of cultural fit with the team or their manager. First, identify what are the most important traits and attributes to fit with your team. Is it someone who does it right the first time, someone who is friendly? Brainstorm all the intangibles and then when you interview you will look for those as well as tangible skills and experience. Having team members assist in the interview process is also effective because different people might pick up on different traits.

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ONLINE MARKETING STRATEGY

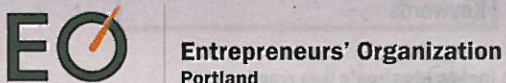
Q: How can I make my online marketing and outreach work harder for me?

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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EO is a global community that enriches members' lives through peer-to-peer learning, once-in-a-lifetime experiences and connections to experts. For membership nomination inquiries, contact Kent Lewis, kent@anvilmediainc.com. For more information visit www.eoportland.org

EMPLOYMENT LAW

Q: Can my Oregon company refuse to hire applicants because they have a criminal conviction?

A: Yes, if the conviction is job related and consistent with business necessity, and the employer does not treat applicants inconsistently on the basis of a protected class. On April 25, 2012, the EEOC issued new guidelines that discuss when an employer can base a hiring decision on an applicant's criminal record. The guidelines indicate that an employer may reject an applicant if, for example, the employer can show that the applicant's past conviction may affect performance on the job, or that the applicant poses a threat to workplace safety. The guidelines encourage employers to make an individualized assessment of each situation by looking at the nature of an applicant's crime, the time elapsed, and the nature of the job.

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