

Chapter 4

The Easiest Sales to Get

■■■ **Selling more to existing accounts is one of the easiest and fastest ways to make more money.**

Your current customers are your best source of sales and referrals. Research has shown that it takes far longer – five to seven times longer – to sell to a prospect than to an existing customer.

Inside out opportunities

After more than twenty years in the promotions business, it still amazes me how many sales opportunities come to me from my relationships with existing customers. And how easy it is to sell to other people within the same organization. Because the critical ‘know, like and trust factor’ is already in place.

Find opportunities to sell to other departments within the same organization.

The marketing department is not the only purchaser of promotional items within an organization. There are opportunities in human resources, sales training, recruiting, safety and the executive offices, just to name a few. Review the list below to help you build up the number of contacts.

In larger organizations, **check to see if there are other divisions in a different location** that can use your services. Provide outstanding service and excellent product recommendations. **Under-promise and over-deliver**, so that your name is the only name that comes to mind when purchasing promotional items.

Opportunities around every corner

Recently, the head of Investor Relations in a large company, where I routinely call on the Marketing Department, contacted me. She was looking for a gift to give attendees at their annual stockholders meeting. I would have never thought to call on that department

had they not approached me. Remember, there's an opportunity around every corner. And some surprises too!

But it's not just the added contacts within their organizations -- your existing customers can connect you with profitable prospects outside their organizations too! Charitable organizations and trade associations that your customers are associated with are two great examples.

Lifetime annuities

View your current customers as lifetime annuities, not short-term sales. Let them know that you would appreciate any referrals they provide. Express your gratitude by sending them a handwritten thank you note and small promotional gifts for their thoughtfulness.

INSIDER Information

Building relationships ALWAYS makes sense

One of my current healthcare customers sits on the Board of a statewide Healthcare Coalition. When the Coalition needed promotional items to promote a statewide healthcare initiative, they turned to me. The result was thousands of dollars in business that dropped in my lap, as well as several repeat orders. All because of the strong association I had with this customer. The same group also put me in touch with the national association that handles these events. Wouldn't it be great if all orders were this that easy?

How to Get Your First Clients – Fast!

When you're just starting out, it can be scary if you're not seeing a steady stream of income from your business right away. And the last thing you want to do in that case is sound, or feel, desperate.

Find out who's buying

First, familiarize yourself with the **job titles of those people who are the power buyers of promotional products** and use this information to build your list of prospects.

In small organizations **the president or owner** may be the purchaser. In larger companies, these are the **job titles of the people who frequently purchase promotions:**

- Marketing or Advertising Manager
- Sales Manager
- Administrative Assistant to the Marketing Manager
- Human Resource Manager
- Safety Director
- Employee Benefits Coordinator
- Diversity Director
- Promotions Coordinator
- Trade Show Planner
- Meeting Planner
- Purchasing Agent
- Investment Relations Director

Ten proven ways to build a client base quickly (and with the confidence of a PRO!):

- **Make a list** of your friends, colleagues, relatives and former employers. Then **look for connections** between those people and people who purchase promotional items.
- **Contact your high school or college alumni association.** These are great examples of groups that like to do business with past graduates.
- **Consider forming an alliance** with a business association. Many large trade associations are looking for services to offer their membership
- **Start your own referral network.** Meet with others who service your same target market but are not direct competitors, such as printers, graphic artists and trade show display companies. **Develop ways to refer business to each other.** (More on this in Chapter 13.)
- **Always put networking on your calendar** and make sure you go to one event per week. Visit a group several times before you make a monetary commitment. Make sure the people who attend fit your target market description or can refer you to people in your target market.

- Prepare a **great 30-second commercial** and let others know what you do in a memorable way. (See Chapter 8 on how to develop your own commercial.)
- Ask to **leave your catalog and business card** in businesses and stores you patronize.
- Make **valuable connections** by becoming active on committees at your local chamber of commerce.
- Look for **underserved markets** (small or mid-size companies or emerging markets) that may not have as many salespeople calling on them.
- **Go after markets and causes you feel passionate about.** Passion translates into sales.

Make More Money With Co-op Advertising Dollars

Many manufacturers, such as office supply companies, computer companies and heating and air conditioning companies, **reimburse their local retailers and dealers for some or all of the costs of promotional product advertising, called co-operative advertising dollars.** These sales are usually easier to land because the advertiser already has all or part of the money needed to pay for the order. (In essence, you're showing your client how to increase his or her advertising exposure without adding any expense.)

Your job is to research the companies that have co-operative advertising dollars to spend. **For more information on this type of advertising and how to take advantage of co-op dollars, check out the Co-op Program Manual published by the Promotional Products Association International on the web at www.ppa.org.**

Quick Tip

When working with existing customers **look for ways to enhance every order.** It will help you boost profits quickly and easily.

McDonald's® does this when they ask if you want fries with your burger. You can do it too, by asking: *Would you like a matching coaster with that coffee mug or special packaging?*
