

STRATEGIES FOR NEW CUSTOMERS & INCREASING SALES

1 Finding Customers

To launch or grow any business you need customers.

Where does your new business come from? Friends, networking, websites, referrals, online business listings, email subscriptions. You may find new customers by simply being in the right place at the right time.

Do you have all the new business you need? Are you making as much money as you can? If you aren't, chances are you need to focus more on finding customers.

2 Step 1 - Develop a Prospect List

Ideally, you want to be prospecting for customers who are already likely to buy from you.

Draw your list from these resources first:

- **Referrals.** People your existing customers have contacted and suggested that they get in touch with you. This may be from a referral program you implement or simply word of mouth.
- **Networks.** People you've connected with personally at industry events, local events, or online via social networking.
- **Website Visitors.** People who've shown an interest in your offerings by accessing your website and leaving contact data or opting-in to your newsletter. If you are using online methods to gather contacts, you will want to create policies for data collection and use. Be mindful of Privacy Laws and Regulations.
- **Purchased Lists.** Selling direct to consumers? You may purchase a list based on criteria like housing type, personal interest, or geography. If you are selling to other businesses, you may purchase a list based on business type, number of employees, titles, or the profession that typically buy your product.

3 Step 2 - Decide Who Your Target Customer Is

Who is your ideal customer? As a business owner you should be able to easily list at least **five characteristics** of your ideal customer.

Having a hard time coming up with your list?

Consider your top 5 to 10 customers. What do they have in common? The answer will help you profile your ideal customer. If you have a customer database – analyze it. Look for patterns and trends.

- Who has bought from you in the past?
- What do these customers have in common?

Characteristic Example:

Do you sell value added food products to other businesses?
Your ideal customer might be a:

- Natural/Gourmet Retailer
- Supports local products
- With annual sales greater than \$750,000
- Population of 150,000 within a 15-mile radius
- And within 500-mile radius of your processing facility

Focus Your Efforts

Provide potential customers with reasons to buy your product or services instead of your competitors. Every time your customer sees a communication from you, they should have a call to action incentive that encourages them to respond and eventually buy from you.

A call to action will help convert a prospective customer into a sale. It might build a sense of urgency, encouraging the customer to act or miss out on the deal. Provide the customer an incentive to take action while you have their attention.

B2B (Business To Business)

Remember if you are selling to another business make sure your prospect has a budget, authority to buy, and a business need.

Growing your customer base is a process. When you're selling to other businesses know when to nurture a lead and when to discard them.

4 Step 3 - Define the Value of What You're Selling

What benefits are you selling?

Work out what problem your target audience has and how you can help them solve it. Finding a solution to a common problem is the way many successful businesses got their start. Listen to customer feedback, it's a great way to gather insights.

Determine what makes your business unique. Help customers understand why they should buy from you and not your competitor.

5 Step 4 - Create a Communications Package

Decide how to connect with your prospects. This can be a series of direct mailers, e-mails, social or other digital ads. It could be your website, phone calls, or product demo's just make sure from the recipient's point of view your communications:

- Are relevant
- Feel personal
- And are somewhat anticipated

Decide how you want to contact your prospects over time.

Will you send them an introductory offer via email or do a direct mail?

You want to build awareness, credibility, and trust with each communication. You can do this by delivering the right information at the right time.

Communicating with customers and prospects on a regular basis will build awareness of your business and familiarity of your product. Use these communication efforts to clear

Experienced business owners say it takes 5 contacts with someone before they decide if they will buy from you.

Keep communicating. Keep them coming into your store, visiting you online, or talking to your sales team. Track your efforts, both in terms of process – how many touches did you make, and outcomes – how many of these prospects lead to new customers.

6 Sales Strategies

The better you understand your customer, the faster your sales and business will grow. **Sales grow by selling more to existing customers or finding new customers to sell to.**

Many small business owners struggle to define their target market and end up setting their sights too broad.

Don't overestimate your market or focus on a market that may not be there at all.



7 Understand What You Bring to Your Target Audience

Understand the problem that your product or service can solve. Use that information to help decide who would be willing to pay for the solution you are offering.

Your customer must have a need and must also be aware of that need.

8 Who Has Already Bought From You?

To hone your target marketing and your sales strategies, see who has already bought your product or service.

- Which customers brought in the highest revenues?
- Which brought in the highest profits?
- Are they the same?
- What do your customers have in common?

You can gain valuable insights by using historic sales data to profile your customer.

Once you clearly profile your customer it becomes infinitely easier to target your messaging, reach your target market, gain repeat business, and find new customers.

9 What's the Revenue Model for Your Business?

Figuring out how you'll reap revenue can help you define your sales strategy and connect with your target market. Without a specific plan for getting revenue it's easy to overestimate the size of the customer base and muddy your sales strategy.

Revenue Model Examples:

- Transaction-Based:** directly selling an item or service to a customer
- Advertisement-Based:** uses resources to attract traffic to a website
- Commission-Based:** sum of money the retailer adds to the total cost
- Affiliate:** receives commission from a seller rather than a customer

10 How Will You Actually Sell Your Product or Service?

Your distribution strategy can help determine how best to connect to your target market and make the sale.

Will you have a store, a website, or both? Will you be selling only in your local community or globally?

11 How Do You Find New Customers?

Sales start with defining your target customers and understanding how your product fills an expressed need. You'll need to do some market research and study your target audience's demographic, geographic and purchasing patterns.

Understanding how to locate your customers early on can help you establish a game plan once you start building a marketing strategy.

Selling From a Storefront

- You need to know if customers are local or visitor.
- How they found you.
- How you might gain repeat business.

Selling From a Website

- Learn about your prospective customers' online behavior.
- Did they find you via your website or via social media?
- How are they searching for the types of items you carry?

12 Is There Room to Build on Previous Customers and Sales?

Build on your customer relations and the knowledge you have of their buying patterns and preferences to increase sales. Track what's selling and what's not. Who's buying and who isn't.

Always look at how you can sell more of your high margin products and how you can keep current customers coming back and possibly buying more.

13 How Can You Keep Your Sales Plan on Track?

Monitoring is one of the most important aspects of a successful sales strategy.

As you move forward with your plan you must keep track of how well it is working. At the beginning of each month, take a look back at the previous month.

Sales Plan List

- How did it go?
- Who is buying what?
- Are sales coming from the channels and customers you expected them to come from?
- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- Did you hit your numbers?