

PROFITABLE PRINT RELATIONSHIPS

The Successful Print Sales Circle

Video 14: Proactive Selling

Hello, and welcome to the next task on making our current customers more profitable through the successful print sales circle. Have you ever just missed out on a job? You picked up the phone or you send an email to a client and asked them about a potential job, only to find that they placed it the week before, and you missed out? If only you'd contacted them at the right time, you could be the one printing that job rather than one of the competition. Isn't it frustrating when that happens? The reality is, that often it's our fault, because we haven't put the right systems in place to make sure that we understand our client's requirements enough. And if we'd done that, we would be the ones printing that job. We would have beaten the competition. So that's why today's task is all about proactive selling.

What's proactive selling? Proactive selling is a system that ensures that you are contacting the clients about their print requirements before they are contacting you about them. In actual fact, you understand their key needs and you're keeping them up to the mark for those needs. They don't have to think about it, they have no worries, because they should be safe and secure in the knowledge that you will be contacting them. You will be making sure that this happens. That's the best possible outcome from it. And in a minute, I'm going to take you through a system to help you make sure that you are helping the right clients with all their regular print activity and that you do not miss out on those jobs that you should be making sure that you're printing.

But I want to make you aware that proactive selling carries out a number of advantages. The first of these advantages is that because you are contacting the client proactively in good time, you're the person who's most likely to win that job. They're not picking up the phone and thinking about phoning three suppliers, or phoning up someone else who contacted them the week before, and you're no longer front of mind, because you're the person making that contact in the first this place.

Secondly, and most importantly probably, is the fact that proactive selling means that the print is much more likely to go ahead. Sometimes your clients are creating big business events and print is a part of it, but it's not the key focus of what they're organizing, and it can get pushed to the bottom of their to-do list as a result of this. And sometimes there just isn't time at the end when they suddenly think, "Oh, I've got to get this print done," and there isn't time for them to do it, so the print never happens. But if you contact them in good time and remind them, and even potentially, as I'll show you in a little while, take over the management of the job, then that print happens and you're the person producing it.

It's also a great way to fill your sales diary further. So when we did the sales diary task a couple of months ago, then you were actually relying on what the client said to fit in your sales diary. When should I contact you? The client leads that. Now you're beginning to put in contacts where you're leading the sales process because you know that your customers are going to need prints at this stage. And finally, as we'll see, it's a fantastic opportunity to offer upsells and to go back to the upselling exercise that we carried out a few months ago. So there's lots of great reasons why you should be carrying out proactive selling.

With that in mind, let's jump into the process. Right, stage one is to make sure that you're picking the right clients for this process. This process doesn't work for every single client on your books. The type of client that it works best for is a client who's probably not as organized as they should be, but they do have a regular requirement for print. In addition, this print is typically driven by events. Now by events, I don't just mean conferences or exhibitions or online events, although those can be events that trigger prints, but they can be other things in the client's calendar as well. It can be sales promotions, it can be times when they create campaigns, it can be just times of year when they need to sell more items. And also it can be something as simple as a stock replenishment. So those are some of the ideas of the events. I've put a list for you in the worksheet, and stage one is to go and look through your current clients and have a look and see which of those clients fit this profile and could benefit from the process of proactive selling.

Stage two is to research their events. At the moment, we may not have a definite list of exactly when all their requirements fall. So now it's time to create that list. You can research the common events on the internet, so if they do attend live events, you can check when those dates are on the internet. You can also talk to your account staff. They'll have a good idea of what happens when with clients. And finally, and most importantly, sit down and talk to the customers themselves. They'll be able to tell you when they need reminders, what they've got planned coming up in the next few months as well. So make sure that you create a list of events for each individual client that you go through this process for.

And stage three is to put those events into your sales diary. Now that might seem a relatively simple task to undertake, but actually you need to think about this, because your sales diary date isn't too close to the event that's triggering this need for print. You to think about your production time, you need to think about the time that the client needs to design and get all the information together for you to produce the work, and you need to include that decision-making time. And then a few days before that, that's when you should be making a note in your diary to make this reminder call to the client. Now in your sales diary, as well as putting down that date to make the call, just put a little reminder note in there as well so that you know what you're calling for, the type of print. Just have that there so it's nice and easy when you come to make the call.

Stage four, plan those calls as well. So in the worksheet I've giving you a list of questions to work through that you should prepare to think about asking the client. Is the event still going ahead, for instance. What print do they require for it? There's a whole list of questions there that you should be ready and prepared to ask your client so that they're giving you all the information that you need to make sure that you can go ahead and help them.

And stage five is all about improving and upselling. So as well as planning the questions, think about how you could help them further this year. How do they get results from the print that they're using

in this event. Is there a process or is there a type of product that might be better suited to it? Those are the sorts of things you should be thinking about. In addition, have you changed anything? Are you offering new products or services that the client may not yet be aware of, or they may be aware of, but they may not associate with this particular event? Those are the sorts of things that you should be raising with the client at this point.

In stage six, you're actually having a dialogue with the client. And it's time to take things a little further, because in stage six, you're going to offer to become a project manager. Now this won't work with every client, but some clients will be delighted if you offer to actually take this whole project off their hands and manage it for them. Now before you offered to do this, do make sure that the revenue and the profit from the job is worth you spending your time doing some project management for. But for larger print jobs, this can be very effective. So what I'm suggesting is that you help the clients by, first of all, maybe contacting decision-makers in the company and making sure that they're aware when decisions have to be made and giving them a prod, giving them reminders that the client may not have time to do, your own contact might not have time to do. And then perhaps liaising with designers or marketing agencies to make sure that they've got everything coming together at the same time when you need it for production.

Now in order to do this, I want you to think back to month one, because that's when we covered referrals. And actually you're going to need to be referred by your contact to other people at the company or to outside suppliers, giving you authority to actually talk on their behalf. So do think about going through a very similar process to the referral process in month one, to make sure that you can have successful communication with them. Becoming a project manager can make all the difference between a project going ahead or not, and also between you becoming a really trusted partner who they want to use automatically next time. It's a very powerful process if you're allowed to enter into it.

So hopefully you've now contacted the clients at the right time, they were grateful for the reminder, they gave you all the right information, they placed the order with you, perhaps you project managed it for them, and you've produced a marvelous piece of print for them and for their event, and they're delighted. But that's not the end of the process. Now we move to stage seven, and we create a never ending task. So go back to the sales diary project and you'll see that I focused that on never-ending tasks. You want to make sure that when you've completed this, you're already researching the dates for when the next time this event will happen. So either checking out event dates on the internet or talking to the client about when they've got the next one planned, and making sure it's in your diary so that you don't forget next time. You remember to make sure that this work is coming to you.

And then finally, stage eight is to share your success. So your metrics for this project are to create five clients where you will proactively sell. To make sure that you've researched the events, that you've entered those dates in your sales diary, and that you've planned some upsells. And at the end of the project, you should have aimed to get jobs from at least three of those clients, and some valuable upsells as well. So on the matrix I gave you on your worksheet, I'm going to ask you to actually put down a value for the upsell and your success in selling that as well.

Now, clearly this is proactive selling, and some of your clients won't have events for the next few weeks or even months. So this may not be one that you can complete in the next two weeks, but I

want you to make sure that you've done all the groundwork and that everything's in place for it. So that's where the accountability will come in if you're a gold member. Also, I want you to think about actually going back to this and checking other clients and making this maybe a project that happens every two or three months until you've got all your clients who qualify for proactive selling in your system, so that everyone is always remembering to contact them at the right time. This system's very powerful. It makes sure that you get the maximum revenue that you should from these types of clients. So do make sure you implement it.

Next week we have our live call. I'm looking forward to talking to you then, and then we're into month eight. And for our first project in month eight, we're going to look at results selling. That's a really powerful way to build your sales systems, to make sure that you can really convince new clients to come on board in a way that many printing companies can't. So I look forward to seeing you on that task in a couple of weeks time.