

PROFITABLE PRINT RELATIONSHIPS

The Successful Print Sales Circle

Video 16: Results selling

Hello, and welcome to month eight of the Successful Print Sales Circle. And in today's sales task, we're going to cover results setting. We all know that print is coming under a lot of pressure at the moment, both from digital channels and also from cost-cutting. It's no longer enough just to sell print. These days in order to create successful sales, we need to be able to convince our customers and our prospects that we can make a real difference to the results of their business. But of course, if we've been used to selling technical specifications and quality and service, that can be quite a hard process to go through. So today's video and worksheets is going to help you go through this and help you work out how you actually help the results of your customer's businesses.

When I was working as a buyer, I will always remember the approach that one printing company made to me, and they rang me up and they said, "Matthew, we're a printing company, but we don't want to print your magazines. Actually, we know that your business is very much based on publishing subscriptions and we specialize in the subscriptions market. And, typically, with our customers, we find that we can reduce the cost in subscription renewals, as well as increasing the subscription renewal rates of your customers." Now that was music to my ears, because if I could change the results of the business and have more subscribers stay with us, well that was what that element of the business needed to do.

So I had this company in for a meeting. They gave me some much more precise results during the meeting and as a result, they won work from me. And that's what results selling is all about because in that pitch, they barely mentioned printing to begin with. It was all about how we could create an increase in sales and at the same time, reduce our costs, two things that any buyer is interested in hearing about.

Printing companies that sell in this way are much more likely to create a long-lasting partnership and a better relationship with their customers because those customers have a real reason to use them. They're not just buying a piece of commodity print. That means that they've got a much better chance of controlling that relationship and making sure that it carries on for a longer time and of course, achieving the results that the printing company needs more quickly and more efficiently. Unfortunately, many companies still focus on selling prints. They end up in a commodity price fight. Their customers don't respect them. They don't have the same level of relationship. They're never sure if they're going to move to another cheaper supplier or not. It makes it much harder to achieve the results that they want to. So that's why results selling is so important.

Here's another example of a really powerful result sell. There's one person I know who sells multi touch multichannel marketing, and they focus very much on the charity sector, small charities, and they contact these charities and say, "Would you share the results you're getting from your donor mailings?" And, typically, when the charity shares that number with them, this particular person is able to say, "Well, actually with my customers, I often achieve much better results." And that means that he gets the meeting, he gets a chance to convince these charities that they should work with him and use his services.

In fact, it's so powerful that one day he went into a potential new client expecting to meet the marketing manager and at that charity, there were three directors waiting to meet him because his sales message was so important to them. Again, that's the type of results that results setting can produce for us. But in order to do that, we need to understand how we help our customers. So often we focus on the production of the print, making sure everything's perfect and on time. We deliver it and then we move on to the next job.

Now's the time to take a step back and talk to some of your best customers and ask them the results that your prints and your services is achieving for that businesses. If you can get a good answer on this, if you can get some real figures, it's a very, very powerful sales tool. Remember, this is not about how you work with them. It's not about the quality of your prints is not about how good your service is. This is all about what business results they are achieving. As a result of using your print and services. What was your customer hoping to achieve? What did they actually achieve? If you can get some good business figures from your customers, you can create some really powerful case studies and these can be used in a number of ways to make your sales job easier. And we'll cover that later in the video.

Now, some people worry that their clients aren't prepared to share this information and it's true not everyone wants their business results shared over the internet for anyone to see. But remember, we can always share these results anonymously. We don't have to use the name of your clients. We can just say a customer in such and such a sector. So it's easy to work around that issue. Once we've created a case study, we have two ways in which we can use it. One is to make it educational. We publish a long form case study and we share it in a way that will educate prospects as to why they should use print, why they should use this type of service, and of course, then they'll make the connection that this is why they should use you as well. We can share that on social media, in trade publications, there is a whole number of ways that you can share this.

The other way that we can use the case study is to use it in more of a direct sales strategy. And in this case, we're going to use the case study or parts of the case study, maybe some significant figures that you can pull out of there in sales letters and emails, and in the conversations that you're having with your prospects and your clients.

So for the remainder of this video and in your worksheet, I'm going to take you through the process for creating a powerful case study, and then what you should do to make sure that it gets out to be seen by as many people as possible. So let's dive into the process. And step one is to pick a service that you want to sell. And ideally, you're going to choose a service rather than a product because services often create much more powerful business results. You can use products and it does work as long as those products are creating a result for the business. So I'd encourage you to pick a service if you can, but if you need to pick a product, that's okay, but have a think about the one that you

really want to promote at the moment and then once you've carried out this task, you can replicate the process we've been through to other services and products.

Step two is to think about which customers are currently buying this service or this product from you. Make a list of the five best clients who buy the products and service, because you're going to want to reach out and contact them. And that's what happens in step three. In step three, you're going to contact these customers and ask them if you can have a quick 20-minute interview with them, where you can ask them a little bit more about how the services and products that you're providing are helping them with their business. Make it clear that this is not a sales conversation and make it clear that you want to use the results for marketing.

Many people are flattered. Many people will know you already and will be delighted to try and help you in this way. Naturally, you're not going to get a 100% success rates from asking this question. Some people won't want to share their business results. Some people may just be too busy, but if you've got five clients to ask, the chances are, you're going to get at least a couple of people who are prepared to have that interview with you. Now in the worksheets, I've given you a script that you can use to reach out to your customers so that you know what to say, when you're asking them to have this interview.

Step four, have the interview. Now, ideally, you're going to want to record the interview. Probably the easiest way to do this these days is to have a quick video conference with your customer and then nearly all the video conferencing software makes it very easy for you to record the conversation. You want to record the conversation for a number of reasons. Firstly, it's very hard to take notes on everything that the customer says, and you really want to be listening, taking it all in and driving the conversation, not taking notes.

Secondly, sometimes we hear things differently from how someone said something. So we want to make sure that you've recorded it so you've got an absolute, accurate transcription afterwards of what the customer said. And, finally, your customer is going to use their own language and if you're looking to find similar customers to the one that you're interviewing, then it's really important that you use the right language for them. And your customer will help both by using maybe specific industry-sector words, but also just in the way they say things. If it's a fairly simple business, they may say things very simply far more simply than we would think if we were copywriting. So those are all good reasons to make sure that you do record the interview. You can reassure your customer that you're not going to use that recording anywhere that that's confidential between you.

During the interview, really try and drive down to business numbers. So if the client is telling you that they've been delighted with your service, your quality's goods, that you're easy to deal with, those aren't the answers you want to hear. What you want to hear is why your leaflets are driving more customers to their stores, how your signage is increasing visitor numbers and footfall, what conversion rates they're getting from the direct mail that they're sending out. All of these things create powerful studies, create powerful figures that convince new prospects. Again, in the worksheet, I've given you a structure so that you can carry out this sort of interview confidently. I've given you the right questions, some follow up questions because you want your client to be talking as much as possible and an idea of all the sorts of figures that you want to be listening out for when you have that interview.

Step five, it's time to write a case study. Now, if you're at all unsure about this process, you can always outsource both the interview and the case study. But in many cases, you'll find that if you create a transcript of that interview and I've given you a link to a transcription service, if you create a transcript of that interview, you will have the start of a very powerful case study because your clients will be talking in a very powerful way. What they say and the way they express it often doesn't have to be changed very much. You'll find that they've written the case study for you, especially if you follow the format of the interview. But again, in the worksheet, I've given you a template for you to follow through, to make sure that you've got all the right elements in a case study and that they're there in the right order.

So ideally, you're just going to take the right sentences from the transcripts of the interview. You're going to put them in the right place for the case study. And then you're going to do just a quick edit to make sure that it's very readable. Step six, and it's time to share your case study. You now have a very powerful piece of sales collateral. You want to make sure that as many people see it as possible and that it's in as many areas as possible. So I've given you two lists in your worksheet. The first one is all about making sure that you are putting it in as many educational places as possible. And the second one is making sure that you're using it in your direct sales in as many ways as possible. So if you follow those lists and write down where you plan to use your case study, you will make sure that you're making the most possible use out of it and you're getting the best value from it.

Step seven is to educate your staff. They should all know about this case study. Not only does it make them proud to work at your company and proud to work at helping other businesses increase their results, but they should be shouting about this too. You'd be surprised sometimes people will talk about this when they're just talking to friends, word gets out about how your company can help other businesses, but all your customer facing stuff should also have a copy of this case study, ready to share it with their contacts, ready to use it if they are trying to sell this product or service to someone or trying to increase the scope of the business that you're doing with a particular company.

And then finally we move on to stage eight and it's time to share your success as always. So what are the metrics for this task? For this task, I want you to pick a service or a product that you are going to create a case study about. Then I want you to list five clients who are already customers of yours, who are buying this product or service and I want you to contact them all to ask them to carry out an interview with them.

Expect to have two or three interviews as a result of this and then I want you to write your case study. And of course I want you to share it as widely as possible and I'd love to hear the results you get from sharing that case study. Now naturally, writing one case study is good, writing many case studies is far better. So once you get used to the system and this process, then I'd like you to think about other services and other products that you can write case studies for. You should be aiming to write a case study at least every couple of months. You'll soon find that you get into a rhythm of doing this and that it's a lot easier to do than you might think.

Never be afraid to write more than one case study on a service or product. The more proof that you have that what you offer really works, the better chance you have of converting a prospect into a customer. In addition, I should mention this actually, people don't just look at the products and service. They look at who the case study is based on. So they're looking for similar companies to

theirs. So if you have a service in several sectors, ideally you're going to want at least one case study for each of those sectors. So I've given you a fair amount of work to do over the coming months.

However, right now it's time to get to it, focus and make sure that you create that first case study to get the ball rolling. I wish you success with this. Do share your case studies with me. I'd love to see them. I'm going to see you in two weeks' time for the next sales task, which is all about making sure that you are raising profit margins when you upsell. And next week we have the podcast and we're going to dive into the world of publishing. You may not have a large web press. You may not be producing long run magazines and books, but actually the world of publishing is going to be a lot more relevant to you than you might think. So I look forward to giving you that podcast next week, and then seeing you in two weeks' time for the next sales task.