

The Dating Game

How Sales is about Trust

Successful selling, much like a successful relationship, is all about building trust. When you trust someone else to do what they say, and they deliver, you feel unstoppable together. Lose the trust, and you don't stand a chance.

Whether you're talking about taking someone to dinner—or growing revenue—you have to build trust. And that takes time—which seems to be in woefully short supply.

Successful relationships happen because you decide it's worth it to invest the time and build the relationship. Learn and understand what it means to be mutually beneficial. What happens? Closed deal rates go up, revenue goes up, and everybody wins.

Starting Out

So...where do you start? First, you have to identify the people who are interested in what you're offering. Is everyone a candidate for what you're selling? No, but there are companies—valuable companies—that are a great fit and have a huge need for your product. Unless you put some time and effort into identifying them, they'll find another suitor to woo them and their dollars.

Identifying the right prospects and starting the discussion with them takes careful planning. If you're selling high-end, enterprise class solutions, running Google ads for free trials or promoting discounts might undermine your brand and your value proposition. If you aren't cheap, don't send the wrong message or you'll end up chasing the wrong prospects.

You probably have a list of targets already. Are they the best ones for you and your company? Do you know what problems they're facing? Can you (and your solution) actually solve their problems? Just like dating, you need to know if there is a fit and if you can make each other happy. Take the time to learn what the pain points and business needs are, and then determine how you can deliver value.

How do you do that, while still moving towards an outcome that delivers value for everyone? First and foremost, be honest. You undermine trust from the very

first interaction if you aren't completely honest about your capabilities. Don't promise or insinuate something you can't deliver.

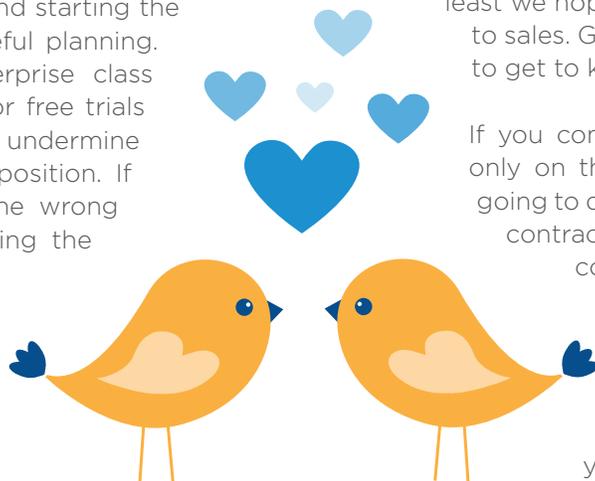
Stoking the Fire

Once you have that initial conversation, take it slow. You wouldn't propose to someone on the first date (at least we hope not), and the same idea applies to sales. Get to know your target. They need to get to know you, too.

If you come off as over-eager, or focused only on the benefits to you, or like you're going to disappear when you get the signed contract, you'll find those prospecting conversations ending quickly and without any forward progress.

Communicate. Send timely emails, make phone calls when it's appropriate. Supplement your digital communications with targeted, high-impact mail when you need to. Nothing moves a relationship forward like a thoughtful, well-executed package or gift.

These interactions show that you are committing time and financial resources to make this work. And gifts tap into the principle of reciprocity, where someone feels more likely to give back when they have received something first.



Decision Time

Be sure you give the relationship time to root, grow and blossom. If you push for a decision before they're ready to buy, you may lose them for good. Recognize that people need time to digest a big decision to feel good about committing. Being sensitive to that need will help build trust and lead to better conversions.

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, there's just not a fit. And that's OK. Don't take it personally. If it's a lost opportunity, remember that there are plenty of other ones out there waiting to be won.

What happens when there is a fit? The emails, phone calls and gift you sent paid off! They said yes, and you got your signed contract. Time to move on to the next big prospect? Not quite.



If you want to incorporate high impact, dimensional components into your sales lifecycle, or need some advice on how to automate that process, give us a call. Our sales and marketing solutions like [SwagIQ](#) and [TMA™](#) can help you create relevant, impactful touches and will integrate easily into your existing sales and marketing automation platforms. We'd be happy to start building trust with you.

About PFL

PFL is a marketing technology company that provides sales enablement and marketing automation solutions, as well as printing, mailing and fulfillment services.

Keep the Flame Alive

Remember that this is a relationship that requires care and feeding. Remind them that you appreciate the business, and reinforce their belief that they made a good choice. (You wouldn't only say "I love you" on your wedding day.)

For long term success, take a multi-step approach. First, send them a thank you note and welcome package. Then, keep yourself top of mind with an ongoing gift and mail campaign. Coming up on that one year anniversary? Time for a gift basket, to let them know you remember the relationship. Birthday? A thoughtful note and a gift certificate for dinner adds the personal touch that cements relationships and deepens trust.

You're not just acquiring new logos. You are building partnerships—long-lasting, deeply embedded partnerships. Every touch, every email, every gift continues to nurture and expand the relationship. And it makes that trust even more solid.

And trust is what it's all about, right?