Back to School:

Brushing Up On Your Business Acumen

salesforce

SELL. SERVICE. MARKET. SUCCEED.

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Back to School: Brushing Up On Your Business Acumen

Introduction

Do you remember back in school when you would cram for your end-of-the-year finals, goof off during summer break, then come back in the fall feeling like you forgot everything? Even though most of us no longer get a summer break, we can certainly slump and forget some of the basics we had nailed just a few months ago.

Company (and personal) growth is not just about looking for what's shiny and new; it's also about making sure you've got the building blocks nailed and constantly reviewing to make sure you're improving wherever you can.

In this e-book, we've rounded up some often-overlooked tips, tricks and best practices for sales, marketing and customer service as a refresher, plus information on the ultimate crash course—Dreamforce. So hit the (e)books!

Chapter 1

Sales

Supplies

You wouldn't go back to school without a pencil and paper, and you shouldn't tackle the business world without your own set of specific supplies.

CRM: At its simplest, customer relationship management enables companies to manage business relationships and the data and information associated with them. This can include storing customer and prospect contact information, accounts, leads and sales opportunities all in one place. According to salesforce.com data, CRM solutions have been found to increase sales by up to 29 percent, improve productivity by up to 34 percent and boost forecast accuracy by 40 percent.

So what can a CRM solution do for you? Sales reps spend large chunks of their day doing repetitive tasks, like inputting data, contacting clients and checking messages. CRM solutions cut down on the monotony and streamlines the process for maximum productivity.

Time for a pop quiz! (Cue the groans.) According to Forbes, sales reps spend what percentage of their time selling remotely?

A. 30 percent
B. 25 percent
C. 45 percent
D. over 50 percent

If you guessed D, you're correct! Even in just four years, that number has climbed from 41 percent to over 50 percent, so it's even more critical that your business is completely mobile-friendly.

Whether you're in the office or in the field, you should still have access to the same information; mobile CRM solutions allow sales reps to close deals while on the go and reduces customer purchase turnaround times. Salespeople can submit a purchase order without having to come back to the office to complete the paperwork. This cuts down on time wasted and allows sales reps to focus on what they love about their job—selling.

Vocabulary:

Key Account Manager: Assigning a key account to a single individual ensures accountability and "embeddedness" (making you indispensable to the customer) within the entire process. The key account manager should serve as a quarterback, with multiple salespeople, functional department heads—even senior executives—reporting to the key account manager. The KAM should be aware of the stakeholders, their key objectives and issues, and then spearhead relationships in a strategic way.

To assist with introducing the position to your employees, communicate the key account management program as a leadership development opportunity.

Check Up On Your Funnel

You've got your sales funnel nailed down, but when is the last time you reviewed it? Take some time to give it a detailed look and make changes when appropriate. Start by clearly defining each stage of the funnel that works best for your company. If you haven't already, create weekly sales metrics that will gauge how well your sales efforts are doing and how your business stacks up in regards to its goals.

“Funnel accuracy is crucial, and it requires regular evaluation.”

Funnel accuracy is crucial, and it requires regular evaluation. Add prospective customers to your funnel, as well as information on where the customer is in the sales process and the next steps needed. Reduce clutter by removing customers who are no longer viable prospects.

Do you have enough prospects in your sales funnel to meet your weekly quota? You’ll need to know your win/loss ratio, which requires a little simple math. The win/loss ratio is calculated by taking your total number of won deals compared with the total number of lost deals.

For example, if you have 100 opportunities in the final consideration phase and 40 were closed and 60 were lost, then your win/loss ratio is 2:3.

Also think about creating a second sales funnel specifically for the final stages of the pipeline, from the proposal creation to the final sale.

If you haven’t already, nail down your ideal client profile to stop clogging your funnel with bad leads. The profile may include the client’s industry, location, company size, business unit, personality, or the client’s needs.

Chapter 2

Marketing

Supplies

Call intelligence: If you're accomplishing your marketing goals (producing good content, executing smart lead gen campaigns, sending compelling emails), people will want to call you. Call intelligence captures each marketing effort that helped drive the call, which gives you the data to measure ROI and connect the dots among marketing, phone calls and revenue.

Phone calls are more likely to represent high-intent, informed customers who are ready to purchase or ask the final questions that will lead to a conversion. As smartphones become the device of choice, a phone call is the fastest and easiest ways to take that final step towards purchase.

You can also use call intelligence to analyze your phone interactions. What key phrases are turning people on (or off)? Which competitors do your customers mention? With this information, plus the data about what marketing efforts are causing people to pick up the phone, you can tweak your marketing strategy as determined by call intelligence data.

Vocabulary

Social success: This is not a term that we can necessarily define for you; it's about what social success looks like for your particular business. Is it determined by number of likes, tweets, form completes, shares, or a combination of all of these? Once you've decided on your definition of social success, you can determine how these social touches, such as form completes, contribute to pipeline creation.

Here's a quick math equation to help you measure the effectiveness your social efforts. Share of voice is calculated by taking your mentions/(divided by) total mentions for competitive companies or brands. How much are people talking about your company in the context of the wider conversation? That's an important measurement to know.

There are also other important metrics for social that you should be tracking in addition to share of the voice. What's the sentiment of the mentions/ conversations about your company? Are they mostly positive, neutral or negative? Track the sentiments and determine if any of these are going up or down and if so, why?

Determine your goals, including referring traffic and conversion from social. What are the actions that you want your social visitors to complete (click-through, retweets, shares, etc.)? Also set up metrics for your conversions from social and measure the source.

Do You Know the 10 Commandments?

You probably already know that business blogging increases your visibility, credibility and leads, and you want to make sure you're producing strong content. Review the 10 Commandments for Business Blogging, then inspect your content guidelines and make sure you're following these rules.

1. Tell a story: Don't just pitch your readers products; tell a story that makes reading the blog worthwhile for them and their business.

2. Know your purpose: What do you want to achieve

with your blog? Make sure it has an overarching theme and direction.
3. Know your audience: What are their concerns? What are they hoping to gain by reading the blog? How are they consuming the content?
4. Provide value: This ties into the first commandment—teach your audience something new, give them insight or address concerns.
5. Define success: What metrics will you use to assess the blog?
6. Make it visual: Think about imagery and what matches up with the tone and theme of your blog and the particular post.
7. Layout for readability: Use lists and headers when appropriate, and always break up large text in digestible paragraphs.
8. Ask for action: End your posts with a call to action, like a link to an downloadable e-book, to direct the blog traffic somewhere meaningful to your business.
9. Make it SEO-friendly: We can’t stress keywords and tags enough; they are crucial for visibility.
10. Set a schedule: Make a content schedule and stick to it!

Maybe you’re already doing all of these—look for areas of improvement! Are you using infographics when you have the chance? Does each blog post have a call to action? Constantly refer to these guidelines and determine areas for growth.

Chapter 3

Customer Service

Quiz

What percentage of Fortune 500 companies have a Chief Customer Officer? Fortune 100 companies?

A. 5 percent; 12 percent

B. 10 percent; 13 percent

C. 10 percent; 22 percent

D. 20 percent; 34 percent

Ten percent of Fortune 500 companies have established a position for a Chief Customer Officer, and that number climbs to 22 percent with Fortune 100 companies, according to a recent study by the CCO Council. While the role is new and the focus and duties remain ambiguous, at its simplest, the chief customer officer is responsible for forming deep personal relationships with the company's customers in order to truly understand them.

Today's customers have more information—and more choices—than ever. The CCO recognizes the importance of the empowered customer and works to adjust marketing efforts to be more customer-centric than ever before.

Supplies

Knowledge base articles: One of the best things you can do for your customers is help them help themselves. You've likely already set up your FAQ page, but don't let it just sit there! Go through the questions and determine which ones are recurring and answer them with knowledge base articles.

Essentially, knowledge base articles are more in-depth FAQs—online information or data that is available for the public to access any time on the web. To make the most of your knowledge base articles, use headers, bullets, lists and visuals—and then promote them! Continue to build your arsenal of knowledge base articles for common questions and concerns that arise and help your customers help themselves first before they contact your customer service team.

Vocabulary

It's important to understand the differences between customer service, strategic customer service and customer experience. Here's a quick refresher:

Customer service: Constant handling and executing basic customer transactions, most likely your call center.

Strategic customer service: Responsible for gathering voice of the customer information (the stated and unstated needs and requirements of the customer). This involves quantifying the revenue cost of inaction and inputting the voice of the customer into other departments. Strategic customer service also creates customer engagement and prevents future contacts and delivers additional value through education (like webinars and knowledge base articles).

Customer experience: Expands the traditional CRM to be anticipatory by identifying opportunities to be proactive and preventative. The customer experience expands the voice of the customer to include events that the customer may not communicate, including failed website searches and unused product features.

Every Team Needs a Playbook

More and more customers are taking to social media to air their comments and concerns, so it's important that you develop a social customer service playbook that targets social-specific issues. Questions to ask yourself may include:

> "It's important that you develop a social customer service playbook that targets social-specific issues."

- How will you determine which posts are work responding to?
- How will responses differ? With social, everything is visible. While a call center can get away with a script, if your customers see that every response is the same your customer service will feel inauthentic.
- What categories of issues might you see on social?
- How will you route issues to the right teams or individuals who can resolve a specific type of problem?

Frontline Agents—Your Best Brand Advocates

Customer service agents are useful for more than pacifying users who have problems; they are often the strongest link for building your brand reputation. Viewing them as part of your marketing initiatives is a great way to maximize your brand exposure to customers. There are numerous forms that this can take, including encouraging agents to:

- Educate customers about your company
- Upsell your products
- Build buzz for upcoming product releases
- Promote upcoming conferences and webinars.
- Offer special pricing promotions
- Generate leads that can be used for case studies and testimonials

And most importantly, frontline agents are responsible for building a reputation as a company that consistently gives more than customers ask for.

Chapter 4

Dreamforce

If you're looking for the ultimate education experience, make sure to register for Dreamforce 2014! Not only will you have the opportunity to brush up on all the products and services that your company already uses, with over 1,450 breakout sessions, you'll be guaranteed to learn much more than just the basics.

Pop Quiz!

How many people were at the first Dreamforce event?

A. 2500

B. 2100

C. 1300

D. 900

If you guessed C, you're correct! At the first Dreamforce event in 2003, there were 1,300 attendees. At this year's four-day conference, more than 100,000 are expected.

Supplies

Your Agenda: With over 1,000 breakout sessions geared towards different roles and industries, plus keynotes, expos, training, opportunities to volunteer and listen to some awesome live music, having a plan before you show up is critical for getting the most out of your visit. Get a head start on planning your agenda by checking out some of the sessions listed on dreamforce.com, and follow @dreamforce on Twitter for more updates.

Business cards (lots of them): Dreamforce is an unmatched networking opportunity for you and your business, and there are opportunities everywhere to meet like-minded people. You can even start the process before you get to the conference! When you registered you received access to the Dreamforce App, which gives you agenda planning tools and Dreamforce Chatter—connecting you to peers who are also attending.

Groups within Dreamforce Chatter include groups for those coming to Dreamforce solo, LGBTA attendees, and SMBs.

While every event at Dreamforce is an opportunity to meet others in your industry, there are also dedicated networking events for you to meet and mingle with movers and shakers. Ultimately, the best advice is not to be afraid to smile and introduce yourself to others around you—chances are they're looking to network, too!

Vocabulary

Girly Geeks: In 2010 Geraldine Gray, principal at Endiem and Salesforce MVP, recognized that women attending Dreamforce needed a way to connect with other female attendees. She founded Girly Geeks, a real and virtual venue for ladies to connect before, during and after the conference. Now there are more than 20 chapters of Girly Geeks around the world that discuss career advice and job opportunities and offer support to one another.

Dreamforce will further highlight women in tech, inspired by keynotes from Marissa Mayer and Sheryl Sandberg at Dreamforce '13. In addition to the annual Women's Networking Event, there will be an all-new track dedicated to women with sessions aimed to inspire and invigorate the audience. Expect

“Dreamforce kicks off on October 13, so if you haven’t already, be sure to register soon.”

diverse speakers, from athletes to entrepreneurs and philanthropists. Dreamforce is also bringing back the Women in Technology Salon for the second year and the DevZone will feature more female speakers.

Pop Quiz:

When does Dreamforce ’14 start?

A. Oct. 10
B. Oct. 13
C. Oct. 18
D. Oct 23

Dreamforce kicks off on October 13, so if you haven’t already, be sure to register soon. Sessions will include product roadmaps, emerging trends, Salesforce-on-Salesforce (Salesforce employees will discuss how the company uses Salesforce) and Admins-by-Admins.

Hands-on-training sessions (HOTS) will also be available, where you can practice your product skills and learn from professional instructors.

We know that you’re learning a lot within those four days and it’s difficult to remember it all. Almost all breakout sessions will be audio recorded and available online within a week on the Dreamforce website and in the Success Community, so you can access all of the fantastic Dreamforce resources even after you leave the event to make the most of your Dreamforce ’14 experience.

Eager to learn more?

You can always take a look at **[the salesforce.com blog]** for more information about improving your business from all angles including sales, customer service, marketing, IT and more. For the ultimate learning experience, **register for Dreamforce '14** and see why 95 percent of attendees say they would recommend Dreamforce to others.

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SALES SOLUTIONS THAT WILL MAKE YOUR BUSINESS MORE PRODUCTIVE

If you want to grow your sales and establish a transparent sales process, you need an easy-to-use Customer Relationship Management system. Salesforce allows you to store customer and prospect contact information, accounts, leads, and sales opportunities in one central location.

Learn More | See Demo | Get Started

32% improved win rate

40% increased sales productivity

32% increase in sales

Source: Salesforce.com Customer Relationship Survey conducted May 2014, by an independant third-party, Confirmit Inc, on 4,100 randomly selected customers.

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