

Chapter 11

Powerful Prospecting Secrets

■■■ Sales professionals who take the time to evaluate their prospects **consistently outsell their competitors. That's because they don't waste time on dead end prospects.**

As a sales professional, it's important to always be prospecting. However it is also important to remember that **not everyone is a good prospect for you.** You already know from earlier chapters that I believe in focusing on a target market, since the most successful sales professionals target specific customers. They look for companies that have budgets for promotional items and that can give them larger orders and repeat business. They also look to target companies that are in growth industries and that have several departments that may purchase promotional items.

You will save yourself time and money, when you *evaluate your prospects before deciding to work with them.* The Internet provides a wealth of information about companies and organizations; that's right at your fingertips!

When targeting a specific customer or industry, begin by visiting the company's website. It's an easy place to get a quick snapshot of the company or organization you want to do business with – you can find company logos, get product line information and determine key contacts. (Also, look to see whether or not the company is hiring. A company that is hiring will be in a better position to spend money on promotional items.)

Keys to Successful Prospecting

- **Prospect, prospect, prospect! That way your marketing pipeline stays full.** And when your pipeline is full, you don't have to worry about each individual sale. Since I don't believe in making cold calls, instead, I focus on being very active in my community and at the local chamber of commerce. Keeping up with

many outside interests also put me in touch with people all the time. In addition, I have an organized networking, referral and alliance policy. (You'll be reading more about that in Chapter 13.)

- **Take time to evaluate your prospects:**
 1. Does your prospect have a promotions budget?
 2. Does your prospect have the authority to purchase?
 3. How are purchasing decisions made? Are they based on price, quality or established relationships?
 4. Would you enjoy working with this person?
 5. Are they credit worthy? Can you get a deposit or prepayment?
 6. If you present an idea, will it be put out for bid?
 7. How can your company be put on the preferred vendor list?
- **Be prepared for rejection.** Even sales superstars experience rejection. It comes with the territory. Move on, and don't take it personally.
- **Be organized about the individuals and companies you contact.** Use a contact management system to stay organized and keep track of key information.
- **Follow up with hot prospects on a regular basis.** A well-timed phone call or visit can greatly impact your sales.

► *What Can You Do Now?* ◀

- Consistently look for opportunities to meet new people. I have met my best prospects at many non-business related functions: yoga class, book clubs and even on vacation.
- Keep yourself motivated by reading sales and marketing books and listening to motivational tapes.
- Invest in sales training or motivational tapes or CDs.