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Your Career is Tied to Customer Satisfaction *Use every tool available*

The world is rapidly becoming a global economy where past limitations due to barriers, delivery, and politics are being swept away. The result is a wide choice of products and services for businesses and individuals and fierce competition for their attention.

Reacting to the economic pressures created by this competition, companies are downsizing, removing promises of security and scrutinizing employee contribution. Thank goodness, you're in sales and marketing.... if you're good. Marketing and selling is becoming even more crucial to the success of companies.

Rather than resist these changes, successful sales and marketing executives will utilize technology to further improve record keeping, data retrieval, and documentation of customer's wants and needs. These same executives will devote more of their time and attention to understanding these needs. Their companies will then tailor products to address their customer's desires, thus creating specific markets that spawn new career opportunities for successful sales and marketing executives.



When it comes to creating a successful career for sales and marketing executives, now and in the future, the key will be to focus on listening and responding to the customer. Focusing on the customer will keep the sales and marketing executive in tune with 1) career opportunities, 2) return-on-investment, and 3) quality of life.

THE OPPORTUNITIES

The ability exists today to verify the results of each effort to gain customers. If you are willing to measure and develop a successful track record, you will have more opportunity and more resources than you've ever had before. Better data, statistical analysis, and communication with customers will further verify (quantify) your results.

Join companies that have a commitment to supply products and services that help the customer feel they are approaching self-actualization, that final driving need to reach some internal goal of accomplishment. These companies will understand the need for continuous investments in customer communication. If you have this commitment from a company, you will have the necessary information to target your efforts. Without a company commitment to customer communication, you will be in a constant losing battle for resources.

Besides choosing companies with customer commitment, it will be crucial to choose companies that have compatible values to you. Values not only about the business that they do, but how they do that business. As more opportunities for product development and market direction arise, the binding force between companies and their executives will be compatible values.

Discerning customers will forever continue to create opportunities for companies to niche their products and services creating an ongoing source of career avenues.



Customer retention and integrated marketing focuses have each been created as a result of furthering

customer contact. The present and the future hold more opportunity than ever for those sales and marketing executives that listen and respond to their customers.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Many larger companies are now downsizing, segmenting and breaking apart. During this time period, and with the large number of "free agents" many small companies will spring up. This creates the possibility of building a fast growth, dynamic winner for tomorrow.

If you are willing to take a risk and tie your rewards to your skills, you can have enormous financial gain. Strongly consider including stock options and ownership as part of your compensation, because sooner than you think, companies will begin to swallow up their competitors in their quest for market control and resources.

Companies have learned that experience from unrelated industries can be valuable to your ability to understand customer needs. So you'll be able to pick your career path in specific industries without the fear of closing out your options for the future.

However, companies are still going to look for relative size experience and responsibility. Moving to a company doing less than \$10 million dollars in sales is not going to gain you much credibility with a Fortune 500 company (unless you turn that \$10 million company into \$100 million company).

If you focus on creating and utilizing new approaches to customer service, sales support, and customer communication, the return on investment for you and your company will



be greater. The payoff will be for executives that can create and implement market inquiry, lead generation, and selling services that are faster, better, and less expensive. Look to make maximum use of telecommunications for the biggest return on investment to your

career, because this is where the greatest savings and advances in customer communication will occur.

QUALITY OF LIFE

With so many opportunities, you will need to do a detailed self-evaluation of your own personal needs and desires. Although it may be difficult, force yourself to take the time to discover what you truly want from your career.

Here are some key questions to ask your self in determining the quality of your life and career:

- What do you like about your current position?
- What causes you discomfort and why?
- What would you change and what would you change it to?
- How could you maximize your contribution to what you are doing now?
- Where do you think you want to be?
- How do you think you will feel once you have reached your objective?
- What will be your contribution during your journey?
- What will be your contribution once you have reached your objective?
- What are the skills/experiences/qualifications that you will need to reach your objective?



- Have you confirmed these assumptions?
- How much time will it require to achieve your objective?

You are going to need to constantly invest in education with both time and money, and your evening and weekend reading will continue to be critical to your success.

Sales and marketing will remain a game of "What have you done for me lately?", but by focusing on addressing customer needs and making the extra effort to align yourself with companies that fit your belief system, you will gain more during the next ten years than in the past 30.... if you're good.

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