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Monthly Newswire

Welcome to our monthly newswire. We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and find it useful.

December 2022

You Can Book Me

Scheduling software to help your clients and business contacts book meetings or calls with you.

Scheduling can be hard work - many of us will have experienced the frustration of multiple emails to contacts or clients, just to schedule a meeting or call.

You Can Book Me has been designed to help people to schedule meetings with minimum fuss. It's designed to work with external contacts as well as colleagues across your business. The system works by showing your free timeslots and allowing others to book a meeting or call with you, at a time that suits your availability.

It is easy to set up You Can Book Me. Once you have signed up, you can connect your Microsoft Outlook Calendar, or Google Calendar with You Can Book Me. Next, you can create a booking page. You can set out your availability and choose the length of your appointments. For example, you may prefer 30-minute slots for calls or meetings rather than 1-hour timeslots. You can even personalise your booking page with your company logo.

You can also set up notifications so that you are alerted to new booking activity, etc. Once your booking page is set up you can share it with clients or contacts by sending your booking page link. The link can even be embedded into your website so that customers can self-serve and set up appointments with you. A nice feature is that You Can Book Me automatically handles time-zone differences and only offers times if you're available.

You Can Book Me offers a free 14-day trial which is a useful way to see if the system works for you. If you are happy with it, you can move to a monthly paid plan for £8 per user, per month. There is also a free version, but it offers less features and is more limited in terms of use.

Consultative Selling

Buyers prefer to purchase from firms that understand them and their needs.

Consultative selling focuses on creating value, building trust with a prospective customer and exploring their needs before offering a solution. In consultative sales, the salesperson's first objective is building a relationship and their second is providing the right product or service for that individual. Consultative selling doesn't mean you can't also offer structured information throughout the sales process. But unless the prospect feels understood, no amount of transactional value will win them over.

Consultative salespeople try to understand the problems that their prospect is facing. They ask questions to understand how important the issue is and how it is holding the person or their business back. This allows the salesperson to outline what they could bring to the table in terms of providing a solution to the problem. It also helps both parties to establish whether there is an opportunity to do business together or not.

To make a consultative selling approach work, you need to understand your prospects, the sector of the market in which they operate, who their competitors are and so forth. Once you have identified a prospect, check out their website and try to understand any gaps in the market or key news stories that relate to your prospect's world. This knowledge will allow you to have consultative sales conversations based on current information that is relevant to the prospect's world and this will help to build trust.

Spending time doing your research allows you to provide insights to potential clients that will interest them. Being able to offer this type of information is called sales enablement. It allows your sales team to offer information to prospects that nurtures them towards a sale, which enables the sales team to close the deal more efficiently.

The final part of a successful consultative selling approach is the follow-up strategy. The research and sales enablement that your sales team deliver should help to build a solid foundation of trust between prospective customers and your firm. Your team can then focus on nurturing the relationship, which means continuing to engage and follow up.

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In order to be effective, follow-up activity should be interesting and personalised for each prospective client. If your prospects see that your sales team mean what they say and will follow through, they tend to be more responsive in return and will treat your firm as a trusted business partner. This means that if they decide to buy, your firm will be at the top of their list.

Rethink your supply chain

Supply chain disruption has been an ongoing issue since the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges and disruption for businesses across the world. Now that most parts of the world are open and trying to get back to normal, demand is increasing and supply chain disruption has become a serious problem for many businesses. A typical supply chain flow might start with raw materials, move through the supplier, the manufacturer, the distributor, and then the retailer, before eventually reaching the customer.

Pre-pandemic, many businesses embraced globalisation and sourced their materials from suppliers across the world. Due to the various lockdowns during the pandemic, many suppliers are dealing with backlogs of orders and new supplies are harder to come by. An example of this is the current bottleneck with regard to semi-conductors which is affecting the electronics and auto industries, whereby manufacturers simply cannot get hold of the electronic components that they need to build their products.

Businesses can manage disruption to their supply chain by preparing for unforeseen events and having a contingency plan in case of emergency. It can also be helpful to audit your supply chain to identify any vulnerabilities.

For example, you may depend on one supplier for a key component. You can manage this risk by sourcing these components from multiple suppliers. Therefore, if one supplier goes down, you have others that you can rely on.

Depending on your business, it may also be worth building up an inventory of spare supplies in case of emergency. This can be expensive and holding extra stock may not always be a great idea if you operate in a sector of the market where products go out of date relatively quickly. However, depending on the type of business that your run, it may work for you.

It may also be worth looking at the geographic location of your suppliers. If they are located in a country on the other side of the world, it may be a good idea to find an equivalent supplier here in the UK, who can supply your business easier and without the risk of long-haul travel disruptions. Supply chain disruption cannot be prevented, but if managed effectively, any unforeseen or unpredictable risks to your business can be minimised.

Optimise your sales funnel

Align your sales and marketing efforts to drive revenue growth

A sales funnel is the process that a prospect goes through from their first interaction with your business right through until they become a paying customer or client. The objective of a sales funnel is to push qualified prospects from one stage to the next while dropping those who are either not the right fit for your business or who do not need your product or service at this time.

A sales funnel typically consists of three parts.

1. The top of the funnel consists of the marketing that attracts prospects to your business. This could be anything from advertising, having a physical shop / premises or it could be the landing page on your website.

2. The middle of the funnel involves all the parts of your sales process prior to the sale. This could include people trying out a product in your showroom or website visitors reading about the benefits of your products on your website or in your marketing materials.

3. The bottom of the funnel consists of the buying decision and the final purchase process.

In order to optimise your sales funnel, you should map out every aspect of your customer’s journey and ensure there is a call to action at each stage. If a potential customer chooses not to act, they are effectively deselecting themselves from the process which can save you time and will allow you to focus on those customers who are going to move down the sales funnel and make a purchase.

You can further optimise your sales funnel by using data analytics to better understand your customers and their behaviours. This will allow you to refine your call to action at each stage of your sales funnel.

You can also improve your sales funnel by focusing on after sales support and looking after your clients. Taking the time to understand your client’s objectives and checking in regularly can help you to win repeat business.