

## Section 1

# Two Left Feet

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### *Typical Tactics Are Out of Sync with the Market*

RELEVANCE IN SALES MATTERS. It's the difference between an open door and a shut one. Between a friendly greeting and the sound of a dial tone in your ear. Between a request for more information and a conversation killer, such as "We're not interested, but thanks anyway."

What does *relevance* mean? Relevance is relation to the matter at hand. It means that you have practical and social applicability. For sales professionals, relevance means

that you are timely, current, and in sync with your market and your environment. Just ask Apple.

## The Biggest Loser

When Apple required its iPhone customers to use AT&T to power the phone, both Apple and AT&T lost revenue and sales as a result of irrelevance.

In the months before the official launch of the iPhone, Apple fans and tech geeks alike eagerly awaited the day on which they could purchase the slick new device. During the waiting period, cell phone companies scrapped and fought for the opportunity to be the company to power Apple's new toy. In the end AT&T won the prize: the exclusive right to provide phone and data service for the iPhone.

Many customers who bought the iPhone didn't appreciate the exclusivity of this pairing.

As a result, they took steps to unlock the iPhone immediately after purchasing it in order to break away from AT&T. Customers who did sent a clear and direct message to Apple: that AT&T's service plan is not a relevant—or wanted—addition to the way-cool iPhone I just bought. Instead of putting up with this arrangement, they took matters into their own hands and found other cell phone service providers to work with the phone.

Although the exact number of unlocked iPhones is unclear, Toni Sacconaghi of Bernstein Research estimates

that there may be as many as 1.4 million of them. It's hard to say, since some of those 1.4 million phones may be sitting on store shelves. In any event, there's a gap between the total number of iPhones sold by Apple (approximately 4 million) and the number of iPhones activated with AT&T (approximately 2 million). That gap translates into millions of lost dollars for AT&T—and for Apple, which makes a commission on each new AT&T customer who signs up.

Steve Jobs took a step toward irrelevance, and Apple missed the mark by insisting that its customers use the AT&T service. Instead of allowing customers the flexibility and option to choose their own phone provider, Apple made an uncharacteristic move, a decision that made it difficult for international users to purchase cell phone coverage for their iPhones and that created a barrier for U.S. customers who didn't want to pay cell phone cancellation charges to switch to AT&T just to own an iPhone.

Some estimate that Apple lost millions in revenue because it teamed up with AT&T. Others dispute that figure, pointing to AT&T as the bigger loser. After all, Apple still makes money from sales of the phone itself, regardless of whether customers stick with AT&T or attempt to unlock the device. But without a “cooperative” customer who follows the rules, AT&T loses out, both in lost subscribers and lost revenue.

Your prospects do care about relevance. They aren't concerned about the hoops you have to jump through to be timely, current, and in sync with their needs and desires. But they do require it if you want to build a relationship with them—and profit from that relationship. Because being relevant is about the only thing that will cut through the endless offers and solicitations they receive.

### Pitches, Pitches, Everywhere

Right now, your prospects and potential clients are on the receiving end of over 5,000 ads, sales pitches, and marketing messages each day, according to Yankelovich, a market research firm. Consumers who live in metropolitan areas can hardly step out of their houses without coming into contact with ads or solicitations. Ads are ubiquitous, lining the backs of bathroom stalls, the walls of subway and bus stations, and the halls of every major airport. They spill out of every form of print media and pop up on just about every page we surf on the Web. In a *New York Times* article titled, “Anywhere the Eye Can See, It's Likely to See an Ad,” writer Louise Story reports that even motion sickness bags on airplanes are now coveted ad spaces.

As a result of advertising overload, your prospects now have a shorter attention span, a tendency to jump

from one source of stimulation to another, and a limited ability and willingness to listen to what you have to offer. If you combine the shortened attention span with the endless amount of options available to them and the ability to tune out, delete, ignore, or filter out your attempts to reach them, it becomes clear that the playing field has changed.

Companies and sales departments with deep pockets no longer control how buyers consume their messages. Customers do. In this new reality, attention is the new currency and your customers control what they watch, read, and hear. The shift in power from company to consumer is one of the key findings that Ketchum, a public relations firm and communications leader, discovered as part of a 2007 survey that polled over 1,200 U.S. consumers. As Ketchum senior vice president Nicholas Scibetta explains, “The survey results also show that today, more than ever, each consumer can search out the specific information he or she is seeking while tuning out the media sources that aren’t personally relevant or meaningful.”

Thanks to TiVo, Caller ID, and the delete button, your customers no longer have to endure or tolerate anything that isn’t exactly what they want. While some customers are not always clear about what they want, they *do* know when your offer is irrelevant or off the mark.

Not only can they ignore you, but they feel empowered to push back anytime your pitch becomes too frequent or too much—a sobering fact that makes using the traditional sales process a major liability, since it was not created with this new reality in mind.

Although out-of-sync offers tend to be the norm, you might have a very hard time reaching some people using the typical tactics, in spite of having a great opportunity for them. For instance, if you are a salesperson at a medical recruiting company, you are in the business of finding relevant and highly qualified physicians to fill positions for your clients (often large hospitals). To do so, your daily routine goes something like this: Make 100 calls a day to a targeted list of physicians in an attempt to find qualified candidates interested in and open to interviewing for the positions offered on behalf of their clients.

The task sounds simple, and the formula for success seems clear—at least in theory.

Often, however, these targeted lists really aren't so targeted. Sure, all names on the list may be physicians rather than Australian shepherd breeders, which certainly helps. Then what? Just being a physician doesn't make the candidate ideal for the job you're offering.

What happens, then, when the doctors on the list aren't interested? What if they found a job three years ago and complain to you that they've repeatedly asked to

be taken off the list? What if they are retired or unqualified due to malpractice claims? What if they've had a terrible experience with the company and never want to hear from you again?

Unless you know what's relevant to the prospects on the list, making cold calls is a bit like playing Russian roulette. You're always running the risk of being outdated, irrelevant, and unwanted.

After receiving an irrelevant offer, prospects will most likely screen you out. They can do that in a number of ways: by joining the Do Not Call list, by asking you to take them off your list, and by blocking your phone number so that you can never reach them again.

Even with this market shift, many organizations still continue to use cold calling as a primary sales tactic. They continue to use it without permission from the prospect and without stopping to ask whether their offer makes sense. They continue to use it without understanding that what was relevant last month (or last week) is not necessarily relevant today. And they continue to use it without noticing that the prospect has moved on to something else.

So, if the typical tactics such as cold calling are both outdated (because they can be blocked) and irrelevant (because they are unsolicited and unwanted), then why do sales professionals insist on using them? We tend to stick with what's expected and go with what we know—because

it's safe and easy. We tend to do what's traditional, even when it's no longer effective.

Mother May I?

Sales professionals and companies can quickly get back in sync with their prospects' needs and desires by adopting several contrarian strategies as a way to boost sales and build relationships. Sales professionals and recruiters who usually operate from a database or a leads list can take the opposite approach by actually determining which prospects on the list want to hear from them about future jobs or offers—by asking permission to keep in touch. A smart move, since not everyone is potentially your customer.

Seth Godin introduced the power and importance of asking permission in marketing and selling in his 1999 best seller, *Permission Marketing*. Seth's work and concept of "Permission Marketing" has only increased in importance as the market control has shifted from the salesperson—or company—to the consumer. The salesperson who understands this and learns to ask permission not only wins the hearts of potential clients but also has the ability to remain relevant, stay in sync with the market, and avoid interrupting people.

By seeking permission to keep in touch with potential customers, sales professionals in the medical industry can adopt the contrarian approach and do the following:



- Save time by calling only on the physicians interested in making a change—instead of wasting time and money by calling retired doctors or physicians who don't match the job qualifications.
- Build trust and credibility with potential clients by respecting their desire to stay on the list—rather than burning bridges by calling doctors who don't want solicitations about jobs.
- Make relevant and timely offers, knowing which physicians are ready to make a change and what conditions are needed for them to do so—rather than pitching jobs that are not a fit.
- Generate referrals to new doctors by building relationships with a network of physicians who are happy to recommend you—instead of creating enemies by offending influential members of your target market who have the ability to damage your reputation.

With the permission to follow up, sales professionals can then ask those physicians exactly what types of practice opportunities they are interested in pursuing. Knowing exactly what potential clients are wanting, sales professionals have more time to meet new potential prospects and grow their pipeline—rather than wasting energy and attempting to coerce a physician to consider a practice opportunity that doesn't fit.

After gaining permission, sales professionals can also learn to keep in touch by offering valuable and relevant information as a strategy to build trust and credibility, generate referrals, and open the door for potential sales. As the Ketchum research study suggests, potential clients are much more willing to listen to you and are interested in hearing more if you can find a way to be relevant.

All too often, sales professionals seem to think that relevance and keep-in-touch efforts equate to contacting potential clients repeatedly and consistently in hopes of closing the sale. Like the actor in the Verizon cell phone commercial who continuously asks the caller on the other end of his phone, “Can you hear me now? What about now?” uncertain of whether his message is getting through, salespeople who persistently ask closing questions at the end of each month are only pressuring their customers and destroying trust and credibility, not to mention losing sales.

This is not the contrarian way.

Instead of constantly trying to close the sale, companies can adopt a valuable keep-in-touch strategy that provides timely and meaningful information designed to help their potential customers find solutions to their problems.

Consider for a moment the e-mail lists you subscribe to and look forward to receiving. That will give you a sense of what you might want to use for your own keep-in-touch

strategy. For medical sales professionals, this could take the form of a monthly article highlighting newsworthy events and trends in the medical industry that affect their prospects. Or it could be a weekly conference call designed to keep doctors apprised of the job opportunities by specialty and by region of the country. By offering relevant content, sales professionals have an opportunity to build a long-term relationship with their clients—something that you have an opportunity to do as well. The contrarian approach to keeping in touch not only means that the physician on the other end of the phone or e-mail has given you permission to keep in touch but that she gains value every time she hears from you. Which means that she thinks of you when she is ready to buy—all because you showed interest in her, took time to listen, and took steps to earn her trust. Instead of a single sale, the sales professional using the contrarian approach has a client for life, a client who refers 10 colleagues and who becomes a raving fan, telling everyone about her positive experiences with you.

## Bull's-Eye

Royal Canin Canada, a pet food company, understands the power of the contrarian approach to sales.

In a MarketingProfs.com case study, “How a Pet Food Company Is Building a Loyal Customer Base via Highly Targeted Emails,” writer Jennifer Nastu chronicles the

success Royal Canin experienced as a result of implementing a particular contrarian strategy. The company adopted the strategy as a way to increase sales for its customized, breed-specific pet food sold in specialty stores. Royal Canin knew it had to distinguish itself from the hundreds of other pet food options available to its potential customers. The company also had to demonstrate why pet owners would want to pay a premium for the benefits that come from a food specially formulated for their dog's breed. The company understood that it would take doing something opposite of the conventional selling methods in order to win the business and the trust of the pet owners.

Instead of trying to convince customers to pay more for a pet food that they didn't know about, Royal Canin set out to earn the role of trusted advisor among its potential clients. By implementing "Pet First," a content-rich e-mail program, the company was able to build trust and credibility with potential clients over time. "Pet First," however, is not your average e-mail newsletter. In building relationships with potential customers, Royal Canin:

- Focused on bringing in loyal and active subscribers who would spread the word about the company—instead of assuming that all pet owners were ideal clients
- Created a highly targeted e-mail program specifically designed according to information collected about

the pet owner and the pet (including breed-specific tips and suggestions)—instead of sending out generic articles

- Allowed customers to tell the company when they were ready to buy—instead of asking for the sale again and again

The results are nothing less than remarkable. Eight months into the campaign, Royal Canin reported e-mail open rates of 95 percent and click-through rates of over 80 percent—incredible, given the average success rates. According to Bronto.com, average e-mail open rates as of March 2008 are 18.2 percent and e-mail click-through rates average around 4.3 percent. When asked about the results of the campaign, Royal Canin's Andrew Cannon is pleased. "With the core group of subscribers we've attracted," Cannon reports, "it's been extremely successful."

With e-mail click-through rates that are more than 20 times the average, Royal Canin's relevant, keep-in-touch campaign is successful indeed!

## The Usual Suspects

"That's easier said than done," the veteran sales guy counters in thinking about the contrarian approach. It's understandable that sales managers and sales professionals in the trenches may initially resist adopting the Contrarian

Effect because they can't yet see how simple, easy, and profitable it can be to do so. For many seasoned sales professionals, the idea of staying relevant, timely, and current appears to be more work than they want to do right now.

In all fairness, why should they try the contrarian approach?

Many well-intentioned sales professionals argue that they continue to use the old tactics for one reason: They *believe* that they work. They also believe they have evidence demonstrating their effectiveness. This "evidence" can come from a variety of sources, such as training programs, sales books, sales seminars, first-hand experience, or stats reported by another company or another sales professional. These advocates also cite the typical tactics as "best practices," since other industry leaders or top companies report sales success in using the same techniques—a fact that cannot be verified unless you are a sales professional working for that organization.

While this evidence may appear to be strong and sound, it is often not directly linked to the results these sales managers want to achieve. In other words, the stats and evidence don't actually match up with the results created by the actual tactics themselves—a startling realization that Neil Rackham discovered as he was doing research for his book, *Spin Selling*.

## Reasonable Doubt

When Rackham began the research, he was comfortable and familiar with the traditional tactics and theories on how to sell. He *believed* that his research would simply reinforce and validate the success of what he already knew. What the research actually uncovered, however, was something entirely different. As Rackham explains, “Research has an inconvenient way of coming up with evidence that the researchers sometimes wish they’d never found.” In this case, Rackham actually discovered evidence *against* the successfulness of the classic tactics and support for contrarian methods:

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**When we started our investigations, our aim was to show that classic sales-training methods really worked and had a positive impact on sales success. It was only after we found a consistent failure of sales training to improve results in major sales that we began the long research road that led to the development of the methods described in this book. Before our research, I was happy to think of selling in the traditional terms that our findings now challenge.**

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In his study of closing techniques, the sales experts he consulted, which included writers, trainers, and experienced sales managers, believed that “closing . . . was the stage of the sale where the most crucial elements of success would be found.” As the experts initially suggested, Rackham’s research confirmed that closing techniques were indeed the most popular tactic, if not the most critical element of a successful sale.

Before he discovered research that proved otherwise, Rackham himself believed in the paramount importance of closing. In fact, he credited the “Alternative Close” as the reason for winning his first big piece of business. As a result of that success, one that he *felt* was due to his use of closing techniques, he “closed the hell out of everyone” during his first year of business, until his research proved that closing techniques were not the success factor he believed them to be:

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I now realize that I probably cost myself  
and my company a lot of lost business during that  
year. But at the time I was a totally convinced  
hard closer. After all, my personal experience  
showed that using an Alternative Close had  
given me my first big piece of business.  
I *knew* closing worked.



**I look back on my enthusiasm for closing with real embarrassment. From what I now know about success in the larger sale, I see closing techniques as both ineffective and dangerous.**

**I've evidence that they lose much more business than they gain.**

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Instead of seeing a correlation between closing techniques and more sales, an association that many sales managers and trainers believed to be true at the time, Rackham repeatedly found closing to be negatively related to sales success and to be linked to lost sales.

As a result of his own experience, as well as his research that included observing more than 35,000 sales transactions, analyzing more than 116 factors that influence sales success, and studying effective selling in more than 27 countries over a 10-year period, Rackham drew two very important conclusions:

1. Attributing his sales success to the use of closing questions proved not to be true. As a result, he changed his belief surrounding the use of closing questions.
2. Closing questions, the most popular typical tactic, cause much more harm than good for the major sale.

Based on his research and his findings, Rackham abandoned his belief in the effectiveness of closing techniques.

## Groundhog Day

Unlike Rackham, many sales professionals see glimpses of the market shift and specific evidence that the typical tactics no longer work and yet *still* choose to hold onto their beliefs in the traditional way of selling.

For example, many sales professionals still maintain a belief in traditional strategies like cold calling in order to prospect and connect with new leads and potential clients. While they may concede that cold calling might not work with every prospect, they believe it can be used on the next potential client with seemingly positive results. They may believe if they get enough prospects into their sales funnel, they are certain to get a few sales. In short, they perceive their work as a numbers game. “Sure, not everyone will buy,” they admit, “but enough customers will buy to help me make my sales quotas.” At least, that’s the way they interpret their reality and their results.

Dan, a freelance photographer who sells his stock photography to magazines and other publications, feels that way.

After making a few attempts at communicating with clients in a more targeted and customized way, he gave up

and went back to the usual approach. In fact, Dan has reverted back to mass marketing and doesn't bother to do anything other than send out generic e-mails to a mailing list he purchased. He defends his decision in a comment he made in response to Chris Anderson's October 2007 blog post (Anderson is editor in chief of *Wired* magazine and author of *The Long Tail*), which criticized the practice of sending unsolicited and irrelevant e-mails:

Over the years, I have tried calling many of my intended targets but, when your market is magazine and book publishers all over the world and you have 7 to 10000 [sic] potential targets this can get expensive and impossibly time consuming. As well, the vast majority of creative buyers don't even bother returning your phone call. I've tried individual emails, which get an even lower response. So, I started sending out stock list updates via a mass emailing and the response has been nothing short of phenomenal. Yes, I do get requests to be taken off the list and there is a clear "unsubscribe" link at the bottom of every email but, only about 3% use it. I've also had potential buyers call me, tell me my work is great, ask to be taken off the list and put on the postcard only list. Others have called after receiving a promotional card and requested email only. The bottom line is, as a single entity operating a creative business, marketing to potential buyers is necessary, time consuming, expensive and difficult to do on an individual basis. As well, when the "broad brush" (okay, I'll call it spam) approach works as well as it does for me, it makes sense to keep doing it.

In his experience, the “personalized, nontypical approach” appeared to yield fewer results and cost him time and money, because he expected instantaneous results and because he was cold calling instead of contacting warm leads. And if that was the case, there’s a very good chance he didn’t give the new way sufficient time to work for him. He goes on to justify his decision to employ the conventional strategies, which he admits are spam, given his schedule and the demands he faces as a traveling photographer:

I spent \$10,000 this year on lists, email software, promotional cards etc. to promote my business and my work. You’re on a list of people who buy creative work that is sold to photographers every day. If you don’t really buy photography, why not just hit the unsubscribe button? Why give out your email? I get about 150 emails a day and travel 200+ days a year which makes it very difficult to get back to everyone after sorting through the spam I get but, it’s an unfortunate part of the business and I unsubscribe to stuff that does not appeal to me.

In Dan’s world, the apparent benefits of using a traditional tactic (buying a list and sending unsolicited e-mails to the people on that list) seem to be many, because he doesn’t have other prospects giving him valuable feedback regarding the negative consequences of his actions and because he appears to be more interested in the immediate sale rather than building long-term relationships that result in repeat

business. From Dan's perspective, he can spend more time on his photography and avoid the headache of customizing his direct outreach or devising new and different ways to reach his potential clients—strategies that may be far more effective and less costly than what he is doing now. But he continues to use the conventional way, even though he is doing something that will prompt prospects to block his e-mails and even though he received a public reprimand from a well-respected author and thought leader for doing so.

Tim Johnson feels the same way. Before adopting one of the oldest sales tactics in the book, Tim tried a variety of strategies, both traditional and contrarian, in order to reach prospects and to convert leads to sales. As a broker in the legal funding industry, his goal is simple: to connect with plaintiffs and attorneys. In launching his business, he invested heavily in direct mail campaigns and advertising. On the advice of a colleague in his industry, he networked with attorneys and paralegals in his target market. He even dabbled in some Internet-based strategies. Unfortunately, he felt that none of the strategies produced the results that he wanted. Like Dan, he didn't allow adequate time to test those customized strategies.

Nevertheless, he made a decision to adopt a few of the old-school selling strategies. Tim maintained he saw growth in his business when he implemented cold calling and walk-in visits to law firms as the two primary strategies

in his sales process. He reported that he was able to produce more results with a list of law firms, a phone, a car, and 10 minutes to drop in on a law firm. By adopting cold calling and walk-in visits, he claims he was able to increase his sales, connect with more prospects, and reduce his overall costs.

Both Dan and Tim believe they *know* their industries. Based on Tim's own beliefs (but not necessarily statistics) and experiences with clients and law firms, he assumes that there's a very high probability that the law firm he visits today could use his services or refer him to its clients. So, while his colleagues are busy using direct mail or advertising, Tim spends his time going door to door because he believes it's the best way for him to meet clients and referral partners. Like Dan, Tim may not be hearing any negative feedback to the contrary, which reinforces his belief in the effectiveness of the tactics.

Additionally, both Dan and Tim *believe* they have tested and tried more personalized strategies and attempted to use something other than just the old-school methods. As a result of that "test," they maintain the belief that they close more sales using the tried-and-true sales tactics and system, which is unfortunate. Dan and Tim probably did what many sales professionals often do in trying to do the opposite. They may have done a little bit of research on potential target markets here and a little bit of warm calling there. Or they may have started

a keep-in-touch strategy, such as a newsletter, for a few weeks or a month, expecting to see immediate results. They may have made a relevant offer to a handful of people, and when the sale didn't close immediately, they ditched them and returned to the old way. In the same way that it's unrealistic for you to expect to lose 15 pounds or get in shape after a few trips to the gym, sales professionals rarely give the contrarian approach adequate time to generate potential clients and produce sales.

Is it possible that Dan and Tim are actually settling for less than the best by holding on to strategies that don't actually generate the results they seek?

### The Little Engine That Could

Author and spiritual writer Thomas Merton believes that "the biggest human temptation is to settle for too little." By clinging to the old ways, ways that don't work now that their prospects are running the show, sales professionals like Dan and Tim will achieve less than they could if they adopted the contrarian approach.

For starters, Dan and Tim can begin by gaining permission to keep in touch with potential clients and referral sources so they can build relationships instead of constantly searching for new prospects every time they need to make a sale. They have a great opportunity to craft a follow-up strategy that allows them to offer value—free

resources, articles, tips—in order to build trust and credibility with potential clients and to remain relevant and in sync with their target markets. In doing so, they save hours and hours of time in cold-calling people and interrupting them, many of whom will never buy from them. But there's even more.

By adopting two contrarian strategies, Dan and Tim can reach far more qualified prospects in much less time:

1. *Identify and target specific groups of individuals, rather than the mass market.*

As part of their international survey, Ketchum describes the new market reality as the “public of one,” a concept that highlights the importance of communicating with and targeting individuals and distinct groups of individuals, rather than the faceless many. Instead of using the typical tactics to broadcast a one-way message to the masses and to target everyone with a pulse and a checkbook, Dan and Tim can benefit greatly by spending a small amount of time clarifying the following points:

- What are the qualities of the people with whom they do their best work?
- What are the specific demographics of the distinct group of people they want to reach?



If you ask average customers whom they prefer to do business with, they will tell you that they like to buy from those that they “know, like, and trust.” Naturally. After all, why would a potential customer want to buy from someone they don’t know, don’t necessarily like, and definitely don’t trust?

If customers respond best to the sales professionals who match these criteria, it’s only logical that the customer-salesperson affinity works both ways. Yet many sales professionals expect to or feel pressured to work with high-maintenance, demanding, or unpleasant customers because they feel they have to have the sale. Choosing to do business with your less-than-ideal clients comes with a price—a high price. The wrong customers cost you time, money, and energy and zap your motivation and drive needed to identify and communicate with the right customers—a major buzzkill that can tank your productivity.

There’s an easy solution for this. It’s called the “Red Velvet Rope Policy,” a concept coined by Michael in his best seller, *Book Yourself Solid*.

By identifying the qualities and traits of the people with whom you do your best work, you are giving yourself an incredible advantage over the salesperson sitting next to you, struggling to serve a stable of hard-to-please prospects and customers. When you work with the clients who

embody the personality traits and interests that inspire you to do your best work, you automatically save time and energy and earn more money as a result. Why? Because working with the clients you naturally resonate with is easy and effortless, allowing you more time to find more clients like them and make sales in less time.

Take a moment and think about the qualities of your best clients, the ones you want more of. Are they intelligent, positive, quick learners? Are they creative, artistic, and open to new ideas? Think about the people you most like to be around, those who inspire you and give you the most energy. These are the people with whom you do your best work, the ones who are allowed past your Red Velvet Rope. Applying the test also means that the customers who want services you can't or don't want to provide, who have unreasonable expectations, or who suck the life out of you are less-than-ideal clients for you, even though they might be great clients for someone else.

In addition to establishing a Red Velvet Rope to filter out the less-than-desirable prospects, Dan and Tim can more effectively connect with ideal prospects by getting a clear picture of their target markets, the distinct group of individuals most likely to benefit from their products and services. This cannot happen when you buy a leads lists and send out broadcast e-mails or cold-call every business that belongs to an industry category.

Both Dan and Tim can do themselves a favor by outlining exactly what groups they are intending to reach. For Dan, is it magazines? Newspapers? From there, Dan can drill down to identify the specific types of magazines and publications that most need his services and communicate with them in a way that speaks to their needs. Since the needs and desires of end users of a business magazine like *Wired* are completely different from those of a magazine like *Home and Garden*, Dan can save enormous amounts of time and money by:

- Isolating and defining the specific subgroups and clusters of publications that are most likely to purchase his photography based on past experiences and on their actual needs and desires, rather than on his perception of what they want or need
- Investigating how to reach the key decision makers of these subgroups in order to build trust and credibility with them over time
- Determining the best ways to communicate with these distinct groups—whether it be via e-mail, phone, newsletter, or all of these—so that he can provide relevant and timely content as part of his follow-up strategy

In following these strategies, Dan may determine that he is targeting three or four different and unique subgroups,

which is fine as long as he remembers to communicate with each group as a unique entity. A blanket communication to all of those groups won't do the trick.

Once Dan identifies the detailed demographics of his target market, he can further identify the ideal clients, the ones who pass the Red Velvet Rope test, who are part of the larger target market. In doing so, he can identify the prospects who want to hear from him and want to receive communication from him, even if they are not ready to buy.

*2. Collaborate with strategic partners who share the same target market.*

A second contrarian strategy that both Dan and Tim can immediately implement is to find ways to collaborate and work with others who serve the same target market. Instead of cold calling, what if Tim found strategic partners and other service professionals who already work with his target market? By forming relationships with them and leveraging their efforts, he has a faster and more efficient way to meet and build relationships with potential clients. Additionally, he can get warm introductions and meet far more of them in less time. In turn, the strategic partner benefits by meeting the potential clients who are a part of Tim's permission-based prospect group. This strategy allows both Tim and his collaboration

partner to profit from the work of two people rather than from their individual efforts. Here's a specific example of how Tim can collaborate and win.

Suppose Tim meets a business consultant who also works with family law firms having no more than 10 attorneys. Together they can:

- Host business receptions and events that allow the family law attorneys to grow their own networks and that connect them with strategic partners they need to know, such as accountants and high-level financial advisors
- Cut down on the time it takes to build trust and credibility with prospects by introducing in their monthly newsletter or blog post their strategic partner as a recommended resource
- Understand how to best refer business to one another, ensuring that they can give each other high-quality referrals
- Introduce each other to additional strategic partners and centers of influence in their network

On his own, Tim is able to meet only a handful of attorneys, if that.

In collaborating with strategic partners, Tim can quickly meet all of the top attorneys in his city and grow his network

by several hundred people overnight. And not just strangers, but prospects and strategic partners who already know and like Tim because he was referred to them by someone they already know, like, and trust. This means more sales in less time, but without alienating prospects or pressuring potential customers to buy when they are not ready.

Like Dan and Tim, you have an opportunity to shift gears and head in the opposite direction. You can access the knowledge and apply the strategies you need to thrive in today's customer-driven market. You can quickly and easily begin to implement the contrarian strategies, starting today, by:

- Choosing to work with your ideal clients—the ones with whom you do your best work (Red Velvet Rope Policy)
- Clarifying the distinct groups of individuals that comprise your target market (the “public of one”)
- Collaborating with strategic partners and other business professionals who serve the same target market in order to reach more prospects with less effort
- Asking for permission to keep in touch with potential prospects and clients
- Creating a relevant and value-based follow-up process that builds trust and credibility

Your prospects and clients will thank you for it.