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\$MSTAR 10:58 AM (EST) 3,142

20 Minute Updates

	Chg	%Chg	Value
Morningstar	10	0.3	3,120
Nasdaq	6	0.2	2,646

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Guerrilla Sales & Marketing

VOL. 126 | NO. 215 | Thursday, November 03, 2011

Follow Up Wisely To Close Sales

By **Lori Turner-Wilson** Updated 3:01PM
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Lori Turner-Wilson

Too many sales professionals work tirelessly to land a sales meeting and develop their pitch, only to lose the sale in the end through a series of poorly constructed follow-up calls.

It's easy to mindlessly make follow-up calls to check on the status of a prospect's decision to buy whatever it is you're selling. They typically sound something like this: "I'm just calling to see if you've made a decision to..." Most all of us have received an uninspired follow-up call like this before. The message unintentionally delivered is that you need him more than he needs you, you're looking for any business (versus his business), and you're not terribly motivated to earn that business.

So what constitutes a strong follow-up call? It begins with how well you defined the next step in your last meeting. Never leave a sales meeting without gaining agreement on a firm next step – a date/time when you'll talk next.

Assuming you've done this, you should be calling at a time that has already been set aside by your prospect, eliminating the need to ask for his time, which could open up an opportunity for a stall.

Begin your call by re-establishing rapport. Remind your prospect of a point of connection, such as a hobby or common acquaintance you share.

When you're ready to transition to business, summarize the result of your last meeting. Recap what your prospect liked about your proposal, what objections if any were posed, and how you resolved those concerns.

Explain not every prospect is a good fit for your company (which should be true), and outline why you believe this partnership is a good fit.

Then offer a new piece of information to demonstrate your motivation to partner together. It could be some additional research you uncovered that he may find helpful or an extra added-value element that you are including in your original project estimate.

Ask your prospect if he has any additional questions, then move to an assumptive close. This might mean, depending upon your sales process, outlining what the first two weeks will look like after executing contracts. You're assuming the prospect has already made the decision to move forward, jumping straight to next steps.

You might then suggest meeting the following day to review and sign contracts. Consider an alternative-of-choice strategy, such as: "Would morning or afternoon tomorrow work better for you?"

If the prospect stalls, don't panic. Just ask follow-up questions until you have a clear understanding of what the real objection is. Consider saying, "Tell me more about your hesitancy to move forward." Overcome the objection, then attempt to close again.

The key to a good follow-up call is getting it scheduled before leaving the prior meeting and planning out how the conversation will flow so you can drive it toward a close.

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MORTGAGES	160	411	19,098
FORECLOSURE NOTICES	0	98	8,325
BUILDING PERMITS	189	727	33,522
BANKRUPTCIES	69	299	15,709
BUSINESS LICENSES	21	85	5,035
UTILITY CONNECTIONS	91	464	23,230
MARRIAGE LICENSES	16	88	4,949

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Lori Turner-Wilson is an award-winning columnist and managing partner of RedRover Sales & Marketing, www.redrovercompany.com. You can follow RedRover on Twitter (@redrovercompany and @loriturner) and Facebook (facebook.com/redrovercompany).

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