

Seven Steps to Still Finish the Year Strong – Even in a Slowing Economy

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August, 2008

Unless you've got buying cycles longer than four months, it's still not too late to finish the year strong if you're in a market that is feeling the pinch of the slowing economy. If you have buying cycles longer than what's left in the year, perhaps it's time to start thinking about how to get Q1 off to a great start for a change.

Here are seven steps I encourage my clients to do this time each year to finish up the year strong and begin to lay the foundation for next year.

1. **Step One:** Take a good serious look at your current pipeline. My guess is that there are some 'opportunities' in there that are not really in play right now. Stop wasting time with the ones that won't or can't buy right now. (Gain agreement with them to change the pace – just don't stop calling on them.)
 - a. If there are opportunities where you question the prospect's willingness and ability to pull the trigger in your time frame, ask for a management level meeting to candidly discuss the situation.
 - b. Prioritize the remaining qualified opportunities and strategize each completely and honestly. Then go close them.
2. **Step Two:** Do a gap analysis.
 - a. Look at your typical closing ratios, compare them to what's happening this year in terms of lengthening buying cycles, pricing issues, etc., and decide what you're willing to do to overcome those challenges.
 - b. Calculate the gap between what you believe is honestly closable and your remaining budget?
3. **Step Three:** Do an analysis of:
 - a. Any opportunities from the past that might be resurrected that could possibly require less than a full buying cycle.
 - b. Your installed base where you might be able to up-sell or cross-sell to help make up the gap.



4. **Step Four:** Do an analysis of your marketing capabilities:
 - a. Are there any quick hit campaigns that might be conducted to flush out some qualified suspects?
 - b. Review your network. Are there networking partners that might be able to uncover a few leads for you?
 - c. Review old leads. Are there any leads you forgot to follow-up with or whose situation might have changed since last contact?
 - d. Review your customer base. Are there any that you can approach for a referral?
 - e. What is the realistic total from those sources and subtract that from your gap.
5. **Step Five:** Review your *current* selling ratios and determine the effort to fill the remaining gap.
 - a. How many Initial Meetings (in your remaining time frame) will you need to get the pipeline stocked with enough potential to fill the gap?
 - b. How many of those Initial Meetings will come from marketing efforts, networking and referral sources?
 - c. Whatever is left is the meetings you must set through cold calling.
6. **Step Six:** Review your two key cold calling ratios (*Conversation Ratio* is dials to conversations with decision makers and *Appointment Ratio* is conversations to appointments) and determine how many dials you'll need to make in order to hit your goals.
7. **Step Seven:** Get your team on the phone! If you need help to get more effective and efficient at cold calling, call the Caponi Performance Group. We've got a *special end of year program* going right now to help you jump start a cold calling program to help you hit your gap.

In summary, it's not too late to finish up the year with a strong push if it is well thought out and executed. We are the cold calling / appointment making experts and can help you jump start your efforts with a program that can double the number of Initial Meetings your team is setting within thirty days.

Caponi Performance Group, along with Contact Science, provides a holistic solution to Appointment Making by providing a proven methodology that addresses both the effectiveness and efficiency of the process. Visit us at www.coldcalling101.com.

