



If you want to grow your agency, you must turn into a sales machine...while maintaining the excellent service that your customers have come to expect.

INTERNET MARKETING

By Adam DeGraide

THE LAST THING AGENCIES NEED

More leads aren't the answer

Having spoken to thousands of agency executives over the last few years and having the privilege to work with some of the brightest and best agencies in the country, I believe there is one glaring thing that is plaguing most agencies: They don't know how to sell to the new modern consumer.

Agencies have purchased blueprints, DVDs, CDs, manuals, tools, association memberships, widgets, leads, trinkets, and have gone to conventions—using basically everything available to them in order to help them grow. However, in most cases, it has failed to pan out. Why?

Because the old way of selling insurance is dead, and if agencies don't switch *today* to new marketing methods and techniques, their book of business will continue to shrink, and the frustration will continue to rise.

Step One is to decide today that your agency is no longer a purely service-centric agency, but a sales generation agency. And if that means cleaning house and getting new people who “get it,” then that's what you need to do.

Let me ask you several questions: What is the purpose of the phone ringing in your agency? What is the purpose of actually trying to generate Web leads and/or referrals? What is the purpose of getting out of bed and going to work today? What is the purpose? If you don't sell something, why keep coming in?

If you want to grow your agency, you must turn into a sales machine where all customer-facing employees focus on sales while maintaining the

excellent service that your customers have come to expect. There will be no one to serve if you can't sell them or keep them.

Success stories

What I have discovered is that some of the most successful and fastest-growing agencies in the country literally start with their sales culture.

Agencies like Prostar Insurance in Bellevue, Washington (www.prostarinsuranceagency.com), have an outstanding sales process and access to top markets. They have found ways to receive high-quality opportunities and use strategies to drive new and existing business.

Too many agencies want to start with leads, but what's really needed is strong sales leadership where the mandate is to sell and then service. Also, the best agencies have realized that they need to make sure that *all* products available are sold and that their culture embraces—not disgraces—the modern consumer. More important, they ensure that they close business, no matter where it comes from, and then use automation to turn their customers into customers for life.

Another example is Caton & Hosey Insurance in Port Orange, Florida (www.catonhosey.com). This agency also realized that the model of having only a regional or local footprint is gone.

These aggressive, smart agencies are selling every market and every part of each state they are licensed in.