

Organising Sales Data

Categorising your customer base is a very useful way of achieving more success with your sales. Hopefully you do something similar to this already but I will provide at least one sales tip along the way.

Here are the basic categories and what they mean:

Suspects – those you believe may have a requirement for your services. They may be in the right sector, the right geographical area, the right turnover category etc, but you have yet to speak to them.

Prospects – those you have spoken to, have identified the decision maker and have established a requirement for your services. They should also have received any introductory literature.

Pipeline – those you have a sales meeting booked with and/or have done a quotation for.

Clients – those who have bought from you or who currently buy from you.

Excludes – those who do not fit your customer profile, have no requirements or simply do not wish to be contacted again.

Referees – those who advocate your services. Sometimes a client, sometimes just a referral partner.

(There is more to understand about each category and if you have any questions regarding this, please feel free to contact me directly.)

The trick here is to clearly understand how far along this process each customer is and to concentrate on getting them into the next category. For instance, far too many people try to turn 'suspects' into 'clients' directly, which is practically impossible. If you concentrate on moving customers along this chain, establishing requirements steadily and building rapport along the way you will find that more suspects end up as clients by moving through these other stages.

If people have been hanging around in your database for years without looking likely to ever produce a sale, try them one last time to see if they are likely to have any requirements and if not, get them in the excludes category to help keep your database tidy and concentrated. You should be looking to work through lots of data and getting more 'suspects' from wherever you can.

Referees are great for providing 'prospects', cutting out the first part of the process and giving you more warmer leads (I have discussed this in other articles).

Go through your current database and see if you are happy with where you are at along this process with all your contacts. If you feel that your database is in a bit of a mess and you are not entirely sure what stage these people you have spoken to are at then set aside some time to go through and tidy up the data. There are new customers in there just waiting to be unearthed!

Happy Selling!