

Successful Sales Tips for Small Business Owners

By [Alyssa Gregory](#), About.com

Sales are an important part of every small business; it's also common challenge for many small business owners. If sales are something you struggle with in your small business, it can be helpful to spend some time getting a better understanding of the sales process and fine-tuning your sales skills. With some practice, you can become a better sales person, one who is not only more comfortable with the process but also more effective.

Here are some tips, tools and advice to help you improve your sales skills so you can sell your products and services more effectively.

The first step of becoming a more effective sales person is refreshing your understanding of the sales cycle. It can become a lot more manageable and less overwhelming when you look at it like a standard process with recurring activities, instead of a leap into the unknown every time you begin the process. Get familiar with the stages of the sales cycle that go from prospecting to asking for referrals from the new customer, and begin to systemize the process.

Once you have a solid understanding of the sales cycle, it's time to make it shorter and more targeted. The last thing you want is a sales cycle that goes on and on without ever being able to close the deal. You can control the sales cycle by becoming more efficient at each step and adjusting the time accordingly. With practice, you can reduce the length of the sales cycle and close sales faster.

Creating the Perfect Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a useful tool to have in sales and many other business situations. The more comfortable you are delivering a summary of who you are and what you do, the better you will be able to do it. And this applies to sales meetings, cold calls, and everyday networking. Writing an elevator pitch may take a little time, but once you have the perfect pitch, you will be able to use it over and over again.

Writing a Unique Selling Proposition

Another very useful tool in sales is your unique selling proposition (USP). A USP is a statement that outlines how your business, product or service is different from the competition. Your USP can become the cornerstone of your sales pitch that identifies your business as the better choice, and explains why prospects should choose you over the competition.

Overcoming Sales Objections

One very common hurdle in the selling process is dealing with sales objections. To get past this challenge, you need a plan in place that helps you identify sales objections so you can build the right arguments to overcome them. Some common objections are: Price, Complacency, Fear of Change, Trust, Personal Politics, External Input or Timing. Although every sales process may be different, there are several common sales objections that you will see pop up over and over again. Using the right techniques to overcome them can help you close the sale.

Negotiating Successfully

Negotiation can be a key part the sales process, and the ability to negotiate effectively can be useful in many different business situations. When you are a good negotiator, you can avoid sales objections, make your prospects and customers feel like they have been heard, and close the sale with terms that work for everyone involved.

If you don't know how to negotiate, you may struggle with closing sales. Start with knowing what you want to get, tackle the easiest issues first, and keep compromise in mind and you are on your way to a great negotiation.

By understanding the sales process and practicing the areas where you struggle, you can become a better sales person who not only has the ability to sell more of your products and services, but do it with more confidence.



Welcome, Recently Certified DBEs!

Annette Smith
Annette Smith Electric Inc
Residential and Commercial
Electric

Sharon Palmer
Palmer Express
Refrigerated Commercial
Trucking

Esther Schwier
Simply Office Interiors
Commercial office
furniture

Laura Mason
2Cs Freight Broker LLC
Arranging delivery of
freight nationwide

INROADS

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MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MDT holds two bid lettings each month.

Proposed for letting September 2012:

UPN/UNIT	PROJECT ID	FINANCIAL DISTRICT	PROJECT DESIGNATION	TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION	LENGTH MILES
6865 000	IM 90-6(126)298	2	AMSTERDAM ROAD/I-90 EB ON-RAMP	NEW CONSTRUCTION	
7465 000	IM 90-6(135)316	2	W OF CHESTNUT-SLIDE REPAIR	ROADWAY & ROADSIDE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS	
7448 000	IM 15-5(122)286	3	MANCHESTER TO VAUGHN	MAJOR REAHB-W/O ADDED CAPACITY	5.4
5034 000	STPX 56(56)	5	KINDSFATER WETLAND	ENVIRONMENTAL	
7737 000	STPS-ER 323-1(34)7	4	SLD RPR-7M S OF EKALAKA/MT 11-1	ROADWAY & ROADSIDE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS	
7525 000	HSIP 45-2(11)33	5	SF109-BRDG RAIL-S OF HARLO	MINOR BRIDGE REHAB	

We need your help in determining what to offer at the DBE Summit. Please look at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DBESUMMIT> and weigh in your opinion!

Why You Need Paper Business Cards for Your Small Business

From: About.com

Technology improves the small business landscape every single day. For example, using the right technology can help you cut costs in your business. Technology can also streamline communication by connecting you with clients and colleagues all over the world when you use teleconference and webinar services. Technology also gives you access to online training and information that you can learn from and use to grow your business.

While using technology in these and other ways is vital in order for your business to be successful, there are some areas where small business owners should be more hesitant to let go of tradition. Using printed business cards is one example of this.

Technology Gives Us Options

There is certainly no denying that technology gives us the ability to move to an all-digital method of exchanging contact information at meetings, conferences and networking events through our smartphones and other touch devices and apps created just for this purpose. But, should we?

The perspective is that while small business owners should embrace these technological advances, they should be used in **addition** to traditional methods of exchanging contact information.

Holding on to Tradition

Paper business cards are still a worthy tool in a small business owner's networking toolkit, and here's why:

- Handing over a physical business card can be a powerful touchpoint that can amplify your first impression.
- In professional settings, business cards are still expected in order to round out introductions.
- While not trash-proof or immune to the possibility of being misplaced, paper business cards are not susceptible to a technology glitch that will prevent information from being retrievable later.
- Your business card can provide easy access to all of your most important contact information, and drive people to your website.
- A business card can be used for more than just networking when you include it in physical mailings and promotions.
- An effective business card can be a powerful part of your brand that engages the recipient and makes him or her want to learn more about you.



Save
The
Date

For the first ever...DBE Summit/Networking Event
01/09/13
In Helena

DBE participation for MDT Awarded Contracts for May and June:

Prime DBE	Location	Project	DBE Participation
A M Welles	SF099 – East of Bozeman	HSIP 90-7(96)324	0%
Helena Sand & Gravel Inc <i>Arrow Striping</i>	11 th Ave – Helena South Mt Ave – Helena	NH 8-2(81)44 UPP 5811(2)	8.9%
Knife River – Belgrade	Greeley Crk Crossovers	ER 90-7(104)348	0%
Knife River – Billings	Tumble Weed – North	NH 16-2(13)30	0%
Knife River – Billings <i>Arrow Striping L & J Construction</i>	South of Red Lodge – S	STPP 28-2(40)56	3.2%
Knife River – Kalispell	Polson Urban	STPS 354-1(21)0	0%
Knife River – Missoula	Florence – North Carlton Crk Rd – Maclay Rd	NH 7-1(133)74 NH 7-2(55)78	0%
L H C Inc <i>Arrow Striping</i>	Bldv Av – 16 th W-W 11 th St Havre	STPU 5799(24)	1.5%
Montana Lines Inc	Fairview Intersection Imprvments	STPP 20-2(27)63	0%
Pavement Maintenance Solutions <i>Arrow Striping</i>	Conrad – West	STPS 531-1(6)27	20.3%
Pavement Maintenance Solutions <i>Arrow Striping</i>	York Road – East	STPS 280-1(27)5	14.7%
Pavement Maintenance Solutions	Lothair – Hill Co Line	NH 1-5(104)308	0%
Pavement Maintenance Solutions	JCT Hwy 141 – East	NH 24-2(22)56	0%
Riverside Contracting Inc – Msla	Saltese- East Deborgia – West	IM 90-1(162)6 IM 90-1(193)16	0%
Riverside Contracting Inc – Msla <i>Arrow Striping</i>	Chinook – South	STPS 240-1(8)0	12.8%
SK Construction Inc	S-228 – S of Highwood/MT 11-1	ER 228-1(9)15	0%
Sletten Construction Co Inc <i>Yellowstone Environmental</i>	Big Dry Crk – 14 M E of Jordan	NH-BR 57-5(34)226	.4%
<i>Wharton Asphalt Arrow Striping</i>	Fairfield – Jct US-287	STPS 408-1(8)0	100%
Average Participation			1.80%

This is where the DBE Program has been in the month of August:

Native American Development
Corporation Development and
Procurement Conference



Montana Contractor's
Association annual Golf
tournament

Several projects with DBE
goals on them and more to
come...

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August

Take a class anywhere, anytime with the Small Business Training Network (SBTN). The SBTN is a virtual campus offering online courses, publications, and other forms of technical assistance. Courses are self-paced and take about 30 minutes to complete.

Available classes include:

- Strategies for Growth
- Construction Safety & OSHA Compliance
- IRS Resources for Small Business Owners
- Recordkeeping

Access the full listing at:

<http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/counseling-training>

September

- 9/12 Innovation Roundtable – Dorsey & Whitney/Startup & Financing Legal Issues
5 pm, MonTEC, 1121 East Broadway, Missoula
For more information:
Contact: Brigitta Freer, 541-6461
Cost: Free
- 9/19 Innovation Roundtable: Dorsey & Whitney/Selling Your Company
5 pm, MonTEC, 1121 East Broadway, Missoula
For more information:
Contact: Brigitta Freer, 541-6461
Cost: Free
- 9/24 Merchandising Expert Visit, Bruce Baker, Curb Appeal Reinvented – Marketing and Merchandising
9 am – 12 pm, Deer Lodge, Community Center
For more information: Contact Julie Jaksha 533-6780
Cost: \$25 per person
Also available is personal coaching for an additional \$25

- 9/25 Merchandising Expert Visit, Bruce Baker, Marketing Sales Techniques and Customer Service
9 am – 12 pm, Ennis, conference room at First Madison Bank
For more information: Contact Julie Jaksha 533-6780
Cost: \$25 per person
Also available is personal coaching for an additional \$25
- 9/26 Merchandising Expert Visit, Bruce Baker, Curb Appeal Reinvented – Marketing and Merchandising
8 - 11 am, Uptown Butte, 2nd floor conference room at the Thornton Building
Contact Julie Jaksha 533-6780
Cost: \$25 per person
Also available is personal coaching for an additional \$25
- 9/25 Creating a Winning Corporate Culture
8:30 am – 4:30 pm, Best Western GranTree Inn, Bozeman
Contact
www.ProsperaBusinessNetwork.org
Cost: \$25

