



THE REVENUE ACCELERATOR™

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**High Impact Business
Growth Solutions**

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President/Founder

From The Editor

Welcome to the 20th issue of The Revenue Accelerator™. This publication was established as a direct result of recommendations from a Market Development Group, Inc. (MDG) Client Satisfaction Survey. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide practical revenue and profit generator tools for MDG clients, colleagues and friends. The MDG staff encourages our readers to give feedback on the articles included in this newsletter. We welcome any suggestions of articles or topics you would like to have included in future issues.

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Are You Moving the Needle?

By: Eric Wiedenmann, President - Market Development Group, Inc.

There are a myriad of ways that companies attempt to increase sales and profits. However, there are basically only three effective methods that a company should implement so that it can significantly move the *sales needle* forward. These methods are summarized below:

1. Increase penetration or SOW (Share of Wallet) to existing customers. This is often the most effective way to increase sales as you have a history of being a qualified vendor and customer acquisition costs are 80% lower than trying to sell to a company who has never purchased your products or services. Cross marketing your services and Customer Satisfaction Surveys are two effective methods to increase your customers' SOW. Special programs such as incentives for purchasing additional products and services have also been effective. Adding new products and services to your product and service mix is required as they all have life cycles.

2. Sell products and services to new customers and/or new markets. In a typical year, a company can lose 10-15% of their customers through mergers and acquisitions, financial issues, competitive issues, and poor customer service and quality. It is imperative that a company increase their customer base 10-15% just to break even.

3. Contact your inactive customers and let them know that you are still in business and ready to serve them. MDG has a client that increased sales 30% in 2010 due to the fact that the owner decided to call and e-mail customers that had not purchased from him during the past two to three years. Many of his inactive customers were happy that he called and that he was still in business (a survivor of the Great Recession).

What are you doing to move your needle? [MDG](#) can help you move your needle to the next level.

Capturing Top Business Trends for 2011

By: Client Success Group (CSG)

A compilation from various thought leaders on the subject suggest the major business trends for 2011 will include social media, social services, healthcare, eCommerce for retail services, retirement planning, mobile computing, home improvement and corporate social responsibility to name just a few. When I combined these lists a clear pattern emerged: Success in 2011 will require knowing more about your customer's requirements. Social media, cloud computing, mobile apps, and a growing investment in eCommerce are all attempts to capture more information about our buyers to improve our business conversations.

At CSG, this message couldn't arrive too soon.

Many of our clients are Early Stage through Growth companies who seek a “first mover” advantage in emerging markets and geographies. This requires a unique insight into the target markets and buyers’ requirements followed with well defined company, market and product strategies to reach them. A difficult initiative for most companies because it requires skills not often found in an organization. *Harvard Business Review*, “Acquiring the Early Adopter requires skills not often found in an organization.”

The *Business Trends* of 2011 will require that companies invest in resources to better understand the business and purchase requirements of their major markets and buyers. Sellers overly focused on their product will find stiff competitive winds and buyer resistance. Why? Statistically speaking, without business value quantified by the buyer, a purchase is not likely. In 2011, this trend will become much more prevalent with buyers.

Whether you’re a Start-up or mature company, the process begins with capturing the classic “Early Adopter”. This is a critical step in the validation of your business and market strategies. Funding sources will tell you the failure to do this are a major cause for business failure. Most companies we see fail to take this step.

Why? In some cases, companies are led by technology executives who lack exposure to market and selling strategies. *Harvard Business Review* publishes ongoing articles on this subject. In others, it’s a belief that the product will simply sell itself and these market validation steps are not required. These product driven companies will achieve opportunistic revenue, which is not sufficient to achieve revenue momentum, a primary reason why more than 70% of start-ups fail within the first four years.

One of the primary reasons for business failure is the seller’s inability to understand key business requirements and market drivers of their buyers. Since a buyer typically invests between 50%-75% of their time evaluating your company, sellers must be prepared to address issues beyond the product itself. When this happens, a sale is much more likely to occur. **Sellers should be prepared to answer these key business value questions:**

Why would I meet with you? Why would I change my current process or solution for yours? and Why would I buy from you?

Creating sustaining revenue dramatically improves your chance of success; whether it’s launching your company or a large enterprise entering new markets or channels. So in 2011, focus on understanding your buyer’s requirements:

1. Executives want to see business value. i.e.: lower operational costs or increased revenue
2. Directors and Middle Managers wants to see advantages
3. Influencers and recommenders want to see benefits
4. End user wants to see features and functions

Enter 2011 with some thought to the development of sales messaging that is aligned to each buyer’s orientation and that will compel them to meet with you. Resist the temptation to tout that great new feature and instead, invest time in understanding your buyer’s requirements.

Adopting this means your discussions with executives will become relevant, your sales cycles will become shorter and your revenue momentum will start to occur.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
The CSG Team

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The Lost Art of Storytelling
Why We Need To Revive It

By: Bud Boughton

It has all changed. In the past it was the salesperson who introduced a company and its products to the potential buyer. Now, before the salesperson even knows the prospect exists, the potential buyer is researching solutions on the Internet. What was once a “sales process” has become much more of a buying process and the buyer is much more in control of this process than ever before. This raises a question for sales professionals – How does a salesperson deliver real value and differentiate him or herself once in front of the prospective customer? To answer that question, we must begin by answering a deeper more cerebral question, “*What is the prospect really buying?*”

In making any buying decision, the buyer must evaluate three fundamental elements of whatever it is he is buying. They are the product itself, the service associated with that product, and the price for the product. There is no way any business can provide the highest quality product and the best overall service and do so for the lowest price in the marketplace. It would be illogical to think that. But, if these are the three elements that the prospect is going to take into account in his/her evaluation, what is he or she really buying? What is the buyer after? One word –value. That’s right! Ultimately, a buying decision is really a value decision.

That said, *what is the best way to sell this elusive, intangible thing we call “value?”* By far, the best way to sell value is to be a storyteller. No, I stand corrected. It’s not enough to be a storyteller. The true professional salesperson must master the art of being an outstanding storyteller. More than any other sales tool (other than a live human being who serves as a reference for your company and/or product); nothing captures the real essence of value like a story.

Why should we be telling stories?

Aside from the fact that a story does a better job than anything else of capturing the essence of value, people in general like to hear stories, especially when they are told well. People like stories because when we hear them we have the chance to learn, to be enlightened and yes, to be entertained. Second, when you tell a story, you aren’t so much talking about your product or service as you are the real impact that your product or service had on another company or even better, another human being. Let’s face it, people get bored listening to “product stuff” but who won’t put down their pen and give you their full attention to hear a story? Last, stories get shared and while you may be sharing your story with only one person or in a single prospect’s office, there’s a very good chance that if your story is told well and makes some solid points, it will get told again and again by those who hear it. Stories, more than anything else, capture the essence of our lives. That is why we like to hear

them.

How to tell a story “effectively?”

Unfortunately, it is not enough to just tell a story. You must become a master at telling stories. Here are six points that will get you well on your way to becoming that master storyteller you need to be.

1. You are always more effective telling a story when you are on your feet (standing not sitting). Your ability to control the room, to walk and talk at a certain pace, to use hand and arm gestures is so much better when you are on your feet.
2. Begin by telling your audience that you are going to tell them a story and then open the story by painting a mental picture for them. Don't jump ahead to the meat of the story without first telling them about when this took place, the time of year, it may even be appropriate to describe the weather on the day your story takes place, whatever, but helping your audience paint a mental picture helps to take them out of their real environment and bring them deeper into your story.
3. Describe the people in your story in some detail, either by their physical appearance, their temperament, or their personality. This truly “humanizes” the story and helps your audience feel like they really know who the people are. Ideally, they may even relate someone in your story to someone in their organization, someone who could be critical in the buying process.
4. When you are describing the real impact of your product and/or service in the story, it is important to emphasize numbers that are compelling and yes, don't be afraid to repeat those numbers or write them on a grease board or flip chart for the sake of impact. Stories, however, are about playing more on feelings and emotions than they are numbers and logic. It is equally important when talking numbers to also capture the intrinsic value, the unquantifiable impact that your product had on your customer. How did your product or service ultimately improve life for the people in your story?
5. Close your story with a ‘value statement’ that relates directly to your current prospect (who you are telling the story to). Help them feel the connection and see that the story you just told has definite similarities to their situation; that it could almost be their story if they buy your product or service.
6. *Practice, practice, practice!* Yes, telling a story is a performance. You literally are on stage when you are telling your story. It combines the very best of your skills as a public speaker, a salesperson, and yes, even that of a thespian. Don't think you can hear a story once and then just go ‘wing it’ in your next sales call. Effective story tellers know how and when to pause for affect, when to soften their voice to emphasize a point, and when to raise their voice and use more dramatic gestures. To do it well takes practice.

Summary

Technology and the Internet have changed our lives in many ways. It has transformed what was a traditional sales process into a buying process and it also has changed how we do our sales presentations. Years ago, before the advent of PC's and PowerPoint presentations, salespeople were master storytellers. They had to be because they stood in front of their prospect and made presentations with nothing more than marker in their hand, a blank flip chart and possibly a few handouts for

the people in their audience. They drew pictures, they told stories, and their presentations had energy, personality, and were professionally done.

In a recent article published in The Chronicle of Higher Education, the point is made that real teaching seems to begin when we rely on the wit and wisdom of the instructor versus the graphics and bullet points in a typical PowerPoint presentation. The article, entitled "When Computers Leave the Classrooms, So Does Boredom" has actually spawned new terminology on campuses across the country called "teaching naked" in reference to faculty members who now are teaching without the aid of PowerPoint.

As salespeople who work with prospects in their buying process, we must realize that we are indeed educators in every sense of the word. That means we need to think about how we can most effectively communicate our value proposition with our prospects. It just may begin by telling a story or two.

Harold "Bud" Boughton currently resides in a suburb of Indianapolis and spends most of his time doing sales training/mentoring, professional speaking and freelance writing. In his career he has sold for several major corporations (P&G, Xerox and IBM) and later served as a member of senior management with several banking software companies. You can contact Bud at 317-885-9431 or at CoachB@BudBoughton.com.

About MDG

Market Development Group Inc. (MDG) is a professional organization specializing in value added, quick turnaround and fast payback of sales, marketing and product management solutions for entrepreneurial, mid-sized and Fortune 500 companies. MDG has over 50 clients nationwide.

MDG Provides the Following Benefits to Its Clients

Revenue/profit growth by finding and developing new sources of revenue

- Sales and marketing programs implemented timely and cost-effectively
- Gathers and provides critical market research to help clients make better informed

What Our Clients Say About MDG

MDG was a significant factor in taking a business unit from six figures to middle seven figures. MDG has some "quick and dirty" ways of getting a lot of information without spending a lot of money and time.

Ron Prescott - President, RJP Inc.

MDG is dependable, thorough, meets deliverables, and keeps you informed.

John Pendergrass - COO, TRW-Lucas NovaSensor

MDG is a very focused, cost-effective way to generate marketing information and strategic data.

Dave Marshburn - Sr. Director, Seagate Technologies

- strategic decisions
- Increased competitive advantage through "SWOT" (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis

MDG Difference/Why You Should Work with MDG

MDG provides a unique blend of customized, practical, objective, timely and cost effective business development, market research/market intelligence and "road maps" to successful program implementation services. MDG's mission is to deliver a fast R.O.I. to all clients. As an objective independent service provider, MDG is able to craft creative solutions for our clients. MDG is the originator of "The Rapid Response High Impact Sales Plan™."

MDG provided me with a marketing plan that I could use to develop a larger client base. MDG can zero in on what the objective is, reduce some of the minutia you're going through, and put together a marketing program that really works for you.

Darren Merritt - VP, Boardwalk Investments

MDG is proactive, has excellent follow-through, and exceeds service expectations.

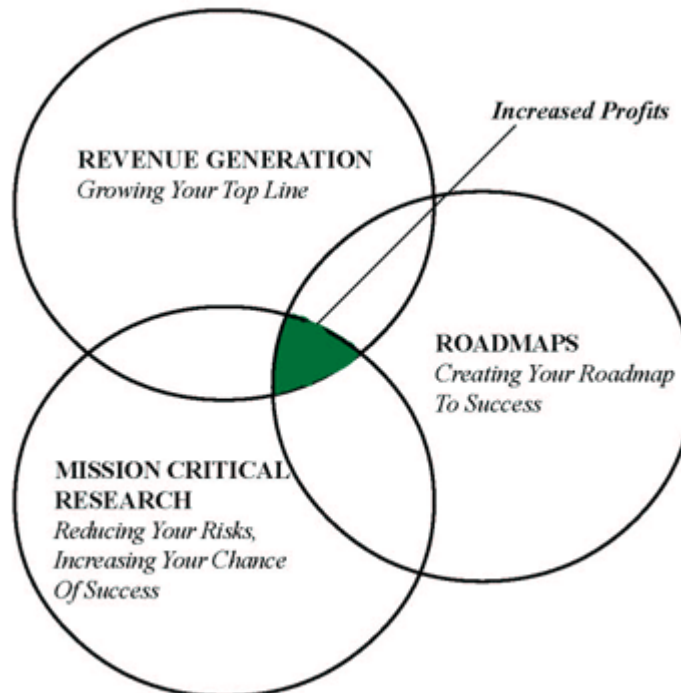
Todd Schuelke - Vice President, Eclipse Group, Inc.

MDG's willingness to take the extra step, spend the extra hours and pull the team together was a big ingredient to our current success.

Albert R. Steele - President, CBC Industries

Increasing Sales and Profits Quickly and Cost Effectively

This Is How MDG Helps Its Clients





Revenue Generation:

- Increasing Closure Rate
- Finding Untapped Markets
- Time/Territory Management
- Developing New Channels
- Business Development



Research:

- Helping Companies Make the Right Mission Critical Decisions
- Customized Market Research
- Competitive Intelligence
- Opportunity Identification
- Customer Surveys
- Finding Acquisition Candidates



Roadmaps:

- Strategic Marketing Plans
- Rapid Response High Impact Sales Plans

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