



7 STEPS FOR Generating Leads

How Sales Associates Can Help Their Outside Sales Staff

An outside sales staff spends most of their time outside the store managing existing clients and finding new ones. While you may not be directly involved in outside sales, you can help your outside sales team be successful by assisting them in identifying new potential customers. These leads can turn into long-term, profitable customers, and it can start with you. Here are some tips for generating leads.



Know your target audience.

Your outside sales team may have a specific target market in mind. That market could be painters, builders, property managers or some other industry. You'll need to know what types of products those customers typically buy and what types of projects they typically work on.



Know your current customers.

Be familiar with the customers in your target audience who already shop your business and may have an account with you. Don't waste their time gathering their information if your outside sales staff already has it.



Look at what they're wearing.

Sometimes you can identify contractor customers by what they are wearing. They may be wearing logowear with the name of their business on it or with the name of your competitor. They may be wearing other workwear, such as painter's whites, that set them apart as working in a specific industry. However, they may also be dressed like a regular customer if they are a manager or supervisor.



Start a conversation.

Not every customer needs help getting what they need, but don't let that stop you from starting a conversation. Ask one or two simple questions so you can learn a little more about them and what they need. A good way to start is to ask, "What are you working on today?"



Ask qualifying questions.

Ask questions to learn more about the customer. For example, if you're targeting builders, ask "What are you building today?" or "Where do you buy most of your supplies?" or "Where do you do most of your work?" This question should be enough to get them talking about their project and allow you to determine if they are working on a building crew.



Keep your conversation short.

Industry professionals want to get what they need and get back to the job site. Don't take a lot of their time or find out everything about them. Keep the conversation to 3 to 4 minutes, just long enough to determine if they are a potential lead for your outside sales team.



Ask a closing question.

Before you end the conversation, ask if you may pass their information on to your outside sales rep. Collect their name, company name, phone number and email, or any other information your outside sales representative asks you to gather.