



71 Following up and following through

What is follow up?

Follow up is carried out by telephone or email after an initial contact has been made with a prospective customer. You may need to follow up the following.

- Leads generated at networking events or conferences.
- Leads or contacts made at talks.
- Sales letters or direct mail.
- Sales proposals.
- Offers on your products and services made to your best customers.
- Research or testing of new ideas.

Why is follow up important?

Following up sales letters or direct mail can increase the response you get between 20% and 50%. Follow up in general is vital.

Follow up both acts as a reminder and shows that you are interested. Most people will thank you for following up. Another term for follow up is nurturing. By following up you are nurturing your prospective customers.

Your challenge

Think about how long it typically takes to finally get a piece of business in your industry. Consider whether or not you would have got it if you hadn't been disciplined with your nurturing. Your challenge will be to get into the routine of doing your follow up. This will involve setting up a system and keeping the focus.

How to follow up successfully

- If your follow up is by telephone always ask if it is convenient to talk.
- Remind of the last contact.
- Explain the purpose of your call.
- Always have full details of your last contact in front of you.
- Get the details right.
- Use their name.

- Connect with the rapport you had the last time you met or spoke. Find some common ground from the start.
- Be disciplined and carry on until you have a conclusion.
- Don't pester – calling and leaving messages every day is not good practice.
- It is better not to ask for the person to call you back. That way you are in control of when you try again. You may leave a message that you called and find out the best time to call back to catch the person in.
- Keep an up-to-date customer management system.

How GOOD IS YOUR FOLLOW UP? – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

- ▶ How do you handle the follow up of your sales proposals?
- ▶ How do you handle the follow up of the contacts you make?
- ▶ And sales leads – how many 'No's' do you get before you give up?
- ▶ How much business could you be missing out on by not following up?
- ▶ What about following up sales letters or direct mail, have you ever tried it?
- ▶ How could you improve your follow up and follow through?
- ▶ What impact could this potentially have on your business?

How to use this information

If you can see the value of follow up and want to test out the impact it could have on your business, set yourself some goals and targets.

Think follow up and get the business that others miss out on