



Corsini's Point of the Week™

MARCH 1, 2010

Connect with the 'Invisible' Customer

Invisible buyers. That's a problem. In fact, as we pointed out last week, **it's the #1 problem salespeople are having in today's environment because it has become almost impossible to meet with people face-to-face.** Buyers have become invisible, in part, because of **the way we all work these days with email and voice mail running interference.** The other reason you're not meeting with people in person is because **buyers have unprecedented access** (mostly via the Internet and maybe even your own company's Website) **to the information they need to make informed buying decisions.** These days, if they need additional information, they might call you. But it's their call to make.

You can make the invisible visible again. Over the next few weeks, we're going to offer some tips on exactly how to do that. Yes, you still can gain access to buyers—but it won't be on the same terms as in the past. People are not willing to take time out of their busy day just so you can "pitch 'em." **So you have to give buyers a reason to want to see you—a big, real reason.**

First, reprogram your thinking. **You can't think in terms of you.** My ongoing work utilizing social media has taught me so many things about how people want—or even demand—to interact with others. It's not about the hard sell. It's not about your goals or bottom line. **It's about helping others and being perceived as an expert or a "thought leader" on a topic.** It's about being the go-to person.

So, before you even *think* about calling prospective buyers, put yourself in their shoes and then do this:

- **Make a connection with the buyer, aligning yourself with someone you both know.**
- **Give them a reason to meet with you: Tell them something they don't know.**
- **Know their business, and be prepared to tell them something they absolutely need to know.**

The old model of cold-calling strangers never was very productive, but it did produce some results. Best of all, you were able to actually talk to live people and work at forging some sort of relationship. Today, you get voice mail. **I suggest updating your tools. Use social media to see which personal relationships you might have in common.** Have that person Tweet, email or call the buyer in advance of your call. That endorsement alone might be strong enough to get you an appointment. But in today's environment it might not be good enough, so **be ready to tell the buyer something they don't know.** Also, **know the buyer's business well enough to tell them something they need to know.** In short: **Be prepared to bring it!** That means being an expert, a thought leader, a consultant—whatever. You gotta give people a reason to want to meet with you. And in this 140-character Tweet world we live in,

Quote of the Week

"The successful warrior is the average man— with laser-like focus."
— Bruce Lee

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you better be quick and to the point.

CORSINI'S POINT

Buyers will continue to be invisible if you don't change your selling strategy. Cold-calling strangers doesn't give you the access you need to make the sales you want. Make it personal. Figure out a common contact who can make a connection for you. Social media tools (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) are perfect for forging that important, initial common connection. But don't depend just on an endorsement. Be ready to offer a very good reason why someone should meet with you. Tell them something they don't know. Understand their business well enough to tell them something they absolutely need to know. That first meeting shouldn't be about what you sell—but about how you've helped other people succeed.

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