



7 Quick Ways to Stimulate Sales

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Some ideas for stimulating sales have become marketing classics. They aren't expensive, nor are they complicated, but they'll work for almost any business and can be implemented with little more than your customer list, a bit of word processing and a good quality printer plus some envelopes and postage.

These certainly aren't new ideas, but they've been road tested in countless applications and have proved to have lasting appeal.

The gift voucher

The aim of this strategy is to add to your customer base by getting existing customers to introduce new ones to your business. It's especially useful in the lead up to a gift giving time such as Christmas.

Offer existing customers the chance to buy a gift voucher at a discounted rate. For example, *'Give your friends a €50 gift voucher for Christmas – yours for just €40'*. Yes, it does mean giving a bigger discount than usual, but it also means that new customers who get the vouchers come into your business and are likely to purchase more than the value of their gift voucher when they're there.

The market research survey

You can never know too much about your customers, so work up a questionnaire that will give you information you can use for future marketing. Ask them to provide details that will help you fulfill their needs more effectively. This will provide useful information in itself, but to encourage their response and maybe make some sales, send it out to your customer base with an accompanying certificate, product list and a discount offer. Everyone completing the questionnaire and returning it with an order will receive a discount (the value on the certificate) off the usual price of the products ordered.

The '10% off everything' sale

This is another very simple way to stimulate sales. Offer your customers a flat percentage discount on everything they buy for a limited time only. Make it a condition of the offer that they bring the communications piece with them when they make their purchase – the ad from a paper or your direct mail piece or whatever. Don't promote the discount at the point of sale; this is a restricted offer and you want it to be seen that way.

The package deal

This is a simple one. Take product A and product B and offer them together for a price that's less than if the two were purchased separately. The real genius comes in when you're selecting the products. If you have a slow mover, combine it with something that's 'hot' and offer the two as a package deal. Promote it by stressing the savings. It's even better if the two are in some way related – a pen and box of fancy paper, for example. Give it a name like 'Our Desktop Special' and get it out there.

The bonus offer

'Buy product A and get product B free!' Package an expensive item with a bonus lower priced item and promote them for the usual price of the expensive item. This is another good way to get rid of slow moving or superseded items. Once again, look for a relationship between the two products and try to find a catchy name for the bonus deal.

The 'out of hours' sale

'By Invitation Only' reads the promotional piece, and it's announcing a sale for regular customers only, outside of normal trading hours. If you deal in seasonal stock this is a good way to move it out at the end of the season. You can offer a flat discount on everything, plus a special discount on 'selected' items that you're especially anxious to move.

Advise customers on how to use your products

Many products have more than one use. Kleenex tissues can be found in almost every home today and they're the first thing you think of when you have a head cold. But they were first marketed only as a way to remove makeup. It wasn't until a market research survey found that people were buying them to blow their noses into that manufacturer Kimberly-Clark woke up to how they should really be promoted.

Whenever you market the products you sell, be sure to tell prospects about all the ways they can be used. There are over 2,000 uses for WD-40, for example. Do a bit of investigation into the products you are marketing and you could find that sales can be increased simply by telling customers about all the possible ways to use them. It's a great idea for point of sale promotions.



Want to find out more? Need some advice on sales and marketing?

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