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## The Best Is Better

By Dean W. Morley

Service drives sales in every type of sales career. There are many stories about salespeople losing credibility after a sale, or request for information, due to lack of follow-up. Foodservice selling is unique because your account relies on your service as well as honesty.

Because the DSR contacts the customer weekly, and sometimes twice or three times a week, there are several factors involved servicing accounts. It is the same when prospecting for new business. For some a certain percentage of accounts will order on-line. Mistakes can happen when ordering on-line either by the customer or inside sales representatives. Therefore a follow-up by the DSR immediately after delivery is essential to correct any problems. If the account is some distance away from your daily schedule a phone call will take care of any problem or question. A personal contact can be made when you are in this customer's area. Keep your daily schedule in place otherwise you will create further problems. Customers expect you will be there on time. They don't want to hear about excuses.

Pre-qualified prospects are potential new business and should be seen weekly the same as a current customer. Contact the prospect at a pre-determined time every week. Present special board ideas with new products on the market or products not on their menu. Always present good quality products. Involve your prospect by asking questions about what products are used for the menu. Prospects want to see what kind of sales and service person you are. If they need information get back to them immediately the same as you would with current accounts. Presenting quality products to all of your accounts is part of your service.

After opening a new account contact this new customer the day of delivery making sure everything delivered okay. Do this by phone or in person. Show your appreciation by sending a "thank you" card with a personalized note. The worst mistake would be not seeing the new account on time or on the specified day the next week due to lack of territory management.

How do we accomplish our objectives? The underlying factor is razor-sharp organization. The professional approach is to take a specific time to organize our next week's daily customer contacts, prospecting, information follow-up requests, product category goals, product presentations and all sales tools. Organizing daily contacts can and should be done evenings during the week as well.

Extraordinary service drives sales!

Dean W. Morley was a DSR for 20 years. After retiring in 1998, he devoted his time to foodservice sales training. He was also a longtime contributor of DSR articles to ID. This is his first column since he recuperated from surgery.