

# STEP 8—Educating Your Customers About Your Services Can Create More Business

When you've used all the tools at your disposal to close more sales be sure to grow your sales by asking happy customers for new referrals.

How the prospect views the outcome of a building or remodeling project often depends on the selling process. If you do the best job of educating your prospect about everything they need to know to make the right choice, you are the one who has the best chance of creating the sale.

Among prospects who don't buy, many report that the contractor didn't do a good job of:

- ▶ Keeping the appointment (this can't be overstated—instead of being “that guy,” be the contractor who shows up when promised).
- ▶ Informing the prospect—thoroughly.
- ▶ Demonstrating conditions in the home clearly.
- ▶ Returning phone calls promptly.
- ▶ Presenting options to economize.
- ▶ Explaining and helping with financing options.
- ▶ Keeping in touch with those who didn't buy.
- ▶ Following up with previous customers.

Since trust is one of the main ingredients present when you make a sale, focus on repeat and referral prospects who's trust you've already earned. Stay in touch with your previous customers to be rewarded with repeat or referral business.

Another important tip: After the order is signed, don't rush out the door. It's vital to “cement the sale” by reinforcing the wise choice the

customer has made and asking for referrals at the same time.

**Cement the sale:** Ask the prospect, “What was the single most important factor that caused you to choose my business?” Whatever the response, you reply: “I agree with you. Many of our customers say the same thing.”

**Ask for referrals:** At the moment the sale is made, the customer's opinion of you is at the highest point ever. You might ask: “If you were to recommend our services to someone else, what would you say to them?” Listen to their answer, because it might be surprising! Use this information to your advantage.

**Then it's the right time to say:** “Mr. Customer, you might remember I mentioned that 80 percent of our business comes from repeat and referral business. If you should run across anyone who would appreciate the kind of work we do, would you let me know how to contact them? Would you be willing to write a review on sites like Angie's List?”

Start making it a habit to ask for referrals at key points in the sales process:

- ▶ After the sale is finalized.
- ▶ When you collect money.
- ▶ During your follow-up contacts.

While people don't like to be “sold” anything, they do enjoy making wise buying decisions aided by a consultant who can solve problems. Choosing a contractor is one of the most important

decisions a prospect will make. They like to feel that their contractor really cares about them and their problems, and they want to enjoy a friendly relationship with the contractor they choose. The most successful contractors use today's technology and tools to educate and inform their customers. We create a relationship that begs to be continued—remember, your prospects and customers will likely live in a house for many more years. Keep in touch using these simple tools:

**Letters:** Write a letter to remind each of your customers about your services and ask for more work and referrals. Avoid the busy holidays when people are drowning in letters and cards from family and friends.

**Emails:** Use email to get monthly or seasonal messages in front of past customers.

**Social media:** Some savvy contractors give a \$25.00 discount on a project to the customer who “friends” them on Facebook.

**Major visibility:** Use truck signs, job signs, and trailers with wraps. Place door hangers on the door of every house on both sides of the block where you're working.

**The Customer Touch Points tool shows the ways you can reach prospects throughout your relationship with them.**

# Tool #8: Customer Touch Points

Building strong, close, and lasting relationships with customers is an ongoing process. From the first phone request, to the satisfied handshake when the job is done, you have opportunities to connect with your customers in many ways.



For more sales and marketing insights, look for the **Selling Efficiency Series** on your **NY Home Performance Portal**.

*Mike Gorman is the leading expert in teaching contractors how to best position and price their business to increase sales. He's an award-winning contractor, author, and consultant.*