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CHUCK TALK: Whether lawyer, doctor or dentist, sales are part of growth

BY CHUCK MACHE

I listen to talk radio, particularly sports talk. One of the hottest topics, if not the hottest, is whether the San Francisco Giants should bring back Barry Bonds. For the two people on the planet that don't know, he will be a free agent once the World Series is over.

One morning last week, the host was emphasizing the impact that Bonds has on revenue by his presence in a Giants uniform. This particular discussion wasn't the usual swirl of banter over making the best decision to produce a winner, his diminishing skills and the negativity that surrounds the alleged steroid issue or the importance of him breaking the home run record as a Giant.

It was specifically about his influence on the numbers. Keep him or lose him, how does it affect company revenue? I think one of the quotes was something like, "At the end of the day, management is focusing on how many rear ends he will put in the seats of AT&T Park and what that means to revenue."

I found the host's opinion to be honest, refreshing and cuttngly truthful. It got me thinking about industries outside of the standard "sales driven" ones that use armies of salespeople (big or small) to proactively bring revenue through the door.

Smart companies in nearly any industry are making key decisions based on their impact on revenue. If they aren't, I believe you'll find a company that's either struggling or existing well below their potential. I further believe that there are a tremendous amount of organizations living well below their potential because they are not focused on being revenue driven.

Most people, when they think of the words sales, customers and revenue, tend to think of those companies that have prototype salespeople whose purpose is to push the product and bring the revenue in the door. I must admit, in my work, that is my sweet spot.

In industries like real estate, mortgage, broadcasting, telecom and technology, proactively marketing products and services is the primary strategy. They have salespeople whose compensation is tied directly to bringing revenue into the company.

But what about those industries that don't get their revenue through a salesforce model. Aren't they "revenue driven?" Aren't firms in the legal, accounting, dentistry, medical and architectural fields, for example, revenue driven? I mean, call their customers clients or patients, but aren't they really customers?

Many of my articles can be found on dozens of Web sites under various topics of executive management, sales management and leadership. They are usually on sales and marketing sites. But something interesting has begun occurring.

A Web site dedicated to lawyers requested to put one of my articles on "Understanding Your Sales Team" on its Web site. It wanted to change the word "salespeople" to "business developers." I said OK.

I mean call it a patient or a client, it's a customer. Call it a business developer or an account executive, it's a sales rep.

Here's the deal. In industries such as legal services and accounting, to actually proactively "sell" is considered distasteful. To directly pursue revenue in this manner doesn't work. The key is to "attract" your customers (I mean clients).

Since I'm not directly involved in any of these industries, I'm going to make an educated guess. They have meetings on revenue and how to bring it in. They struggle with partners and associates who do not "indirectly" hunt for new business. Those that "attract" and bring in the clients are the kings and queens.

This is my message for the not so obvious industries that need to sell: Bring in the revenue by bolstering your "attraction model" or settle into a company that is mediocre.

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