

# JUST CHECKING IN...

DELIVERING A MESSAGE WITH IMPACT



# Just Checking In...

## **Selling today is tough, but getting responses from customers is even tougher.**

Sales teams try various ways to reach customers, however, for the most part, their communications are left un-responded. Part of the reason is the sheer amount of communications that everyone receives. The other, is the approach sales teams use in making those communications.

Let's start by looking at the amount of communications you receive. Think about all the emails, texts, Tweets, and social media alerts you get on a daily basis. Do you have the time and desire to open all of them? If you're like most people the answer is "not at all". Not surprisingly, your customers feel the same way.

To quantify what this might look like for them, according to an article in the May 2014 issue of the Harvard Business Review\*, "the average executive in the 1970s received about 1,000 external communications per year. However, today the average executive receives over 30,000 per year."

It's no wonder emails are piling up in Inboxes or making a quick trip to the Trash folder. There are only so many hours in a day and only those emails that generate interest or provide some value for the reader get opened.

## **Just following up:**

What's surprising to me, is that if only emails that create value or generate interest are getting opened, then why are so many salespeople sending emails that say "just following up", or "just checking in"?

Where in those statements is an incentive to open the email or read further?

## **So what can be done to overcome this issue?**

One simple approach is to make sure your emails highlight something that the customer will want to read. A good place to start is current market information regarding:

- best practices in the industry
- disruptive events
- industry events
- new technology
- company news (theirs or a competitor's)

The list above contains information they would want to know, or need to know to support their jobs. By providing it, not only does this demonstrate that you can be an information resource for them, but also positions you to become perceived as a thought leader in your market.

I find that most executives don't have the time to read all the industry publications they receive. There is just too much published on a daily basis to absorb it all.

That's why it's important to do the reading for them. Scour your sources to find specific information, the juicy tidbits, that you know are important and provide them on a timely basis, in as brief a format as possible.

As I'll highlight below, if you follow this with a statement about how the product/service that you provide relates to the information, then you'll be able to generate an email that has a high probability of getting a response.

## **How do you get this information?**

Information is available from a variety of sources, but I find the easiest way is to use Google or Yahoo Alerts. By setting alerts for company, competitor and/or market information, you can receive a steady stream of valuable information. Additionally, you

can use the company's website to find press releases that identify news on their initiatives or organizational changes.

Additional market information can also be found in industry journals, publications, and from the range of resources you have within your business network.

### **Delivering a message with impact:**

Once you have this information, you're ready to draft an email that has impact. To illustrate how to do this, take a look at the two initial email sentences below and see which one would entice you to read further or provide a reply:

1. Hi..., Just checking in to see if you got my last email, and would like to schedule a call to talk further about the new technology from my company.

Please reply with a time when we can meet or have a phone call to follow-up on our previous conversation...

2. Hi..., I just read an article in the WSJ that XYZ Company (a major competitor of theirs) has introduced a new service. If you were not aware of this already, I thought you would want to know (see attached link).

As you may recall, the technology we discussed during our last meeting will not only position you to be able to defend against their new capabilities, but also provide you with a demonstrated market advantage.

Which email would you read and reply to? You can expect with very high probability your customer will reply to the second one as well.

We've all sent the "just following-up" emails, and I am as guilty in doing so. As much as I hate to do it, sometimes I don't have anything new to offer, but also have a need to maintain a presence with a warm prospect.

And when I send these my response rate is not stellar. However, when I send a value oriented email, 8 out of 10 times I get a reply on the status of the sale I'm pursuing or a positive response to a request for a meeting.

If you'd like to learn more about creating messaging with impact, and developing value with Buyers in today's markets, visit the Selling Resources page on our website, [www.tritonconsult.com](http://www.tritonconsult.com), or contact Triton Consulting directly at 978-232-1113.

\* HBR, May 2014, Your Scarcest Resource, Michael Mankins, Chris Brahm, Gregory Caimi, p.74-80, figure p.76

*Today's buyers continue to evolve, and the approach to selling needs to adapt to those changes. The papers and content I write are based on the in-depth analysis of over 25,000 sales calls and client interactions, and were written to help sales teams develop and hone their skills.*

*Sales - it's in your DNA! Find it, develop it, and unleash your potential!*