

LESSON 4: Business Performance

Growing Sales God's Way

Jesus left his family carpentry business at 30 years old to go into full time vocational ministry. Although He only served three years, His long-term results are remarkable!

While He began with nothing, almost 2,000 years later, His organization, the Christian church, boasts an estimated 2 billion customers. Moreover, these customers contribute more than \$100 billion annually in America alone.

Jesus laid a great foundation with a small handful of people and prepared them for growth. The way He did all of this is instructive to how we should establish and expand our businesses today. Specifically, Jesus modeled “trust” as an organization’s currency for growth and for accomplishment.

In this lesson, we will examine how Jesus began forming and growing The Church and use the acronym TRUST to learn and apply His actions to our organizations.

THE CONTEXT

If you only read the account of Jesus calling out his first disciples in Matthew 4, you might think Jesus attracted some gullible strangers. We read that the brothers Peter and Andrew were fishing when Jesus told them “Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

To our amazement these men leave their nets and fishing business to follow Jesus. Except, when you examine all four gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—you discover that the story is much more involved.

Here's a summary of what really happened. John the Baptist, while baptizing people in the Jordan River, cultivated a following of disciples and experienced great influence. One day, when talking to some of his disciples, Jesus walked by. As John's eyes followed Him he said to his disciples, "There goes the Lamb of God."

These Jewish men knew what that phrase meant. John was testifying to his belief that Jesus was the Messiah. In response, Andrew found his brother Peter, and the two of them returned and spent a minimum of one day with Jesus.

As the story continues, we understand that Jesus spent 40 days in the desert in preparation for the start of His ministry.

Shortly thereafter, we encounter Jesus preaching by the Sea of Galilee. He spies his friends Peter and Andrew and heads in their direction, ultimately climbing into Peter's boat. Jesus then asks Peter to row out from the crowd so that He can preach from the boat.

Jesus knew that Peter and Andrew had been fishing all night without success. But after preaching, this carpenter turns to these professional fishermen and tells them to cast their nets on the right side for a "catch." Initially they complain that they had fished all night without success. But out of respect for their new friend, they cast their nets, only to be stunned with likely the greatest catch of fish ever.

It is within this context that Peter realizes who he was talking to. Peter falls on his knees in repentance. It is then when Jesus says, "Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" and Peter and Andrew gave up everything to follow Jesus.

Now that you understand the details of this story we can take a closer look at Jesus' model of influence through the acronym, "TRUST," which stands for:

T estimonials

R elationships

U nder promise and overperform

S erve the needs of others

T ruth

Testimonials

John the Baptist possessed great favor and authority with his own disciples. When John claimed to them, “There goes the Lamb of God,” he was giving a testimonial for Jesus. John vouching for Jesus laid the foundation for others to accept Jesus and to want to learn more.

In business, testimonials from trusted customers or highly respected leaders is one of the best entry points you can have with a prospect. If a prospect doesn’t know you, but they trust a customer of yours or a highly respected leader, they are more apt to give you a chance to discuss your product or service.

Relationships

Although Peter and Andrew trusted John and his testimony of Jesus, they still needed to see for themselves. Jesus spent at least an entire day in the beginning with Peter and Andrew. He shared his heart, his mission, and enough of himself to begin building trust.

While we need to be selective with whom we spend time, and how much time is spent, investing personal time with your best prospects or customers is critical in building your sales.

On Rick’s first day as a commercial lender his new boss said, “Rick, we’re next door to one of the largest hospitals in the city and we have yet to land a single business account. Your goal is to build relationships there that land us some accounts.”

At first Rick could only get time with the controller of the hospital. But he invested time with that person and built enough trust that when the hospital hired a new CEO the controller recommended that he go to Rick for his personal banking needs.

Rick leveraged that opportunity to build a strong personal bond with the new CEO. Playing golf and attending events together gave the quality time necessary for Rick to build a relationship of trust. Eventually this led to Rick landing a \$70 million trust account and an opportunity to bid on a \$3 million loan.

Under Promise, Over Perform

Jesus told Peter to cast his nets over the side for “a catch.” Jesus didn’t tell Peter, “I’m going to give you such a big catch that your boats are going to begin to sink.” Instead, he understated what was about to happen, making the result even more meaningful.

In business, many business owners and salespeople oversell their capabilities. Unfortunately, they promise the moon and then under produce or can't produce at all, resulting in a disappointed customer and broken relationship.

To build trust you should make small promises in the beginning. At the same time, it is critical that you look for ways to exceed those promises. Over performance will result in pleasantly surprised or even stunned customers, as were Peter and Andrew, and will win you great favor.

Serve the Needs of Others

Jesus knew that Peter and Andrew were professional fishermen. He also knew that they had been fishing all night without any success. If you have ever had a dry spell when your skills just weren't producing the results you expected, you can probably relate to Peter's and Andrew's likely frustration and need for affirmation and success.

Jesus knew that Peter and Andrew needed to experience vocational triumph. While Jesus met their need by providing a miracle, he also designed it so that they were able to participate in the achievement. **It wasn't the preaching that turned Peter's heart**, it was the amazing catch of fish that led to his repentance and desire to follow Jesus.

In sales, we need to put ourselves in our customer's shoes. We need to consider their vantage point and their needs and look for ways to humbly serve and meet their needs. This will pave the way for your company's success as well.

Truth

Jesus was a truth teller. As Jesus spent time with his potential disciples, they learned that he didn't pull any punches and spoke the truth. In those early stages of building trust, if Jesus would have been caught in a single lie, it would have completely undermined John's testimony that Jesus was the Messiah. Instead, these men learned that Jesus told the truth, even when it was painful.

In business, the fastest way to lose customers is when they catch you stretching the truth or telling a boldfaced lie. If we lie to them during the selling process and don't deliver, they are likely not to return and perhaps worse, share their jaded opinions with others. Be careful what you promise and the claims that you make. **Speak the truth, and when the truth can be difficult, deliver your message in a loving and caring manner.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Out of the five attributes in the TRUST acronym, which one has caused you concern or trouble in the past? Explain why you think that one is challenging for you?

2. Share a time when something you did to a customer undermined their trust in you and in your company. How did experiencing the customer's disappointment make you feel? What did you learn?

3. Consider your staff, how might each one help or undermine your desire to implement TRUST into your business? How might you overcome those challenges?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Testimonials

1. Write down three customers you believe have had great experiences with your business.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

2. Next to each name write a word or phrase to describe what they were most appreciative of regarding your product or service.

3. Schedule a call or meeting with each of these customers. Ask if they would consider providing a testimony that can be used in your marketing efforts, including your website and/or social media. A video testimony is preferred. Help them to script the testimonial to assure they cover the words or phrases mentioned in step "2".

Relationships

1. Write down your three largest customers. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best, rate how strong of a relationship you believe you have with each customer.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

2. If that rating is less than desired, what are some steps you can take this month to enhance that relationship?

3. Discuss with the group any challenges or concerns you have in improving those relationships. They may have some ideas on unique ways to build a stronger customer bond

Under Promise, Over Perform

1. Consider the beginning stages of your sales process. Especially think of a prospect you have worked with recently. What promises, if any, have you made in the past that were unreasonable or unfulfilled? How might you modify your approach to improve your relationship going forward or reverse any harm you caused?

2. In the beginning stages of courting a potential/new customer, what is a small promise you can make that you can easily keep and exceed their expectations? Can this be standardized early on so that you have an opportunity to build trust quickly? How will you implement this?

Serve the Needs of Others

1. Give thought to a customer that you believe could do more business with your organization. Brainstorm all that you know about that customer and what their interests and needs might be.

2. Develop an action plan to meet that customer's needs, even if it might be outside of your normal program or process.

3. What can you design into your sales process to assure that you are taking time to ask and listen to your customer or prospect's needs?

Truth

1. Consider and talk with your staff about what lies they believe are sometimes told to your prospects or customers. Consider your marketing materials, website, etc.
2. Consider making a commitment to be a truth teller and ask select staff to hold you accountable to the truth.
3. Consider surveying your customers periodically and ask them if they have ever felt your company under delivered, deceived, or lied.