



THE REVENUE ACCELERATOR

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From the Editor

Welcome to the 26th issue of The Revenue Accelerator™. [Market Development Group](http://WWW.MARKETDEVELOPMENT.NET) (MDG) aims to provide practical revenue and profit generator tools for MDG clients, colleagues and friends. The Revenue Accelerator™ circulation has grown to over 3,500 business leaders worldwide since our first issue was published in 2006. We welcome any suggestions of articles or topics you would like to have included in future issues.

The guest writer in this issue is Joe Heaney, a business leader with over 25 years of progressive experience in diverse industries such as consumer goods, manufacturing, cleantech and construction.

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Focus On Your Existing Customers to Sell More

By: Eric Wiedenmann

Strengthening your relationship with your existing customer base whether you are a service or product company is the most effective way to increase your sales and profits. It takes about five (5) times more effort in time and money to acquire a new customer than it does to maintain and grow a current customer. Your company's customer care and operating teams play major roles in making this happen. If they are not operating effectively, your company is vulnerable to losing your customers to the competition.

The following tactics implemented in an effective and timely manner can help your company maintain its competitive edge and customer retention.

1) Provide Timely Responses:

Being responsive to your customers' concerns is a clear indicator of your company's desire to meet and exceed expectations. If there are deficiencies in how effectively and quickly you respond, your customers will question your commitment and begin to look for alternative solutions.

2) Improve Training for Frontline Staff:

Employees who have daily interaction with customers at all levels leave more of an impression than your customer acquisition team. Proper training on effective customer service best practices can make the difference between long or short customer retention cycles.

3) Offer More Proactive Solutions:

Your customers look to your company as an expert in the service of product that you provide. A proactive solution provider will add more value to the customer relationship, which will enhance customer loyalty. You can also increase sales relatively quickly and cost effectively by cross selling additional products and services to established customers.

Your established "book of business" is your most important asset. A business must continue to provide timely responses, improve frontline staff training, and offer proactive solutions to established customers if it wants to succeed long-term.



Stop Looking at Your Market Through a Keyhole

By: Joe Heaney

You've always positioned yourself as a provider of specialized solutions — a niche you had successfully defended for many years because of the high quality of your offerings. But much larger competitors are rapidly encroaching on your space. More troubling, competitors are also masterfully shifting the conversation — away from any focus on the kinds of problems that you

address and toward a focus on problems that the competitors were better positioned to solve.

Customer attitudes, preferences, and behaviors naturally change over time. But in the last few years — given the enormous economic and political upheaval, coupled with the ways social media and mobile technologies are upending how we interact and transact — attitudes and behaviors have been changing faster and more precipitously than ever before!

Don't know what to do about it, other than trying to compete more aggressively? Based on my experience, more strategic plays always trump plays that are simply more aggressive. You need to be able to see a bigger picture, the whole picture, and tell a more convincing story.

Start looking at the whole chessboard, not just the niche in which you play. Playing chess well requires knowing a lot more than simply what moves you can make on any given play. It requires being able to think many moves ahead, so that you can anticipate and execute series of plays that will position you for competitive advantage. It also requires thinking about getting into the head of your opponent as you play. It's much more difficult, but your chances of success go up exponentially when you can play this kind of game.

This analogy is particularly apt when it comes to dealing with changing buyer preferences and behaviors. One move by a key competitor or one set of moves by a group of angry customers — think Beef Products and its 'pink slime' — can turn a company's prospects of future success completely on end. But smart strategies — ones that take into consideration the whole chessboard make it possible for firms to anticipate, as well as plan, execute, and respond effectively when shifts occur.

The sad truth is that companies get locked into their own perception of value and lose track of what their customers value about their offerings. As Harvard Business School Professor Carliss Baldwin says "firms have a tendency to look at their navels".

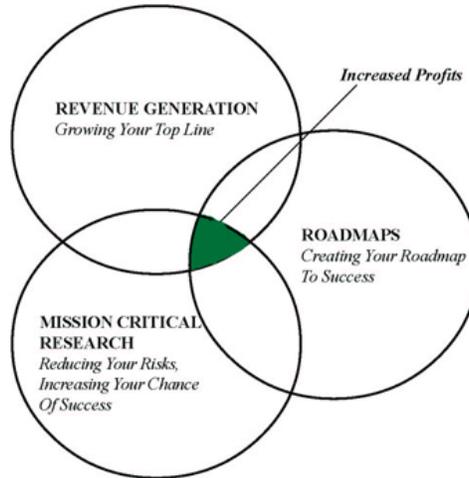
It's imperative you learn how to listen closely to the subtle and not-so-subtle changes in your customers' preferences and behaviors. Companies who lose sight of how they view their market, relationships, and how to create, deliver, and communicate value are bound to go the way of Eastman Kodak, Encyclopedia Britannica and a number of other prominent brands.

Take action NOW to change how you think about customer problems, talk about the kinds of outcomes you can enable, how team members communicate the company's value proposition, and — most important of all — to whom you choose to tell your story.

Joe Heaney is the CEO of Demeter Partners www.demeterpartners.com. He is a business leader with over 25 years of experience in consumer goods, cleantech, personal transportation vehicles, construction, retail and manufacturing. He has been CEO of 3 private companies and has served on a number of private and non-profit boards. Joe can be reached at 510-333-8009.



This Is How MDG Helps Clients Increase Sales Efficiently and Cost Effectively



Revenue Generation:

- Increasing Closure Rate
- Finding Untapped Markets
- Time/Territory Management
- Developing New Channels
- Business Development

Research:

- Helping Companies Make the Right Mission Critical Decisions
- Customized Market Research
- Competitive Intelligence
- Opportunity Identification
- Customer Surveys
- Finding Acquisition Candidates

Roadmaps:

- Strategic Marketing Plans
- Rapid Response High Impact Sales Plans

Contact [Eric Wiedenmann](#) to learn how [MDG](#) can help increase your company's sales and profit goals quickly and cost-effectively.

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