

FIND THE TIME



F For every sales professional, including business technology salespeople, finding the time to fit in all the things you must do during the business day to succeed can feel impossible. With packed to-do lists, clients to take care of, unexpected phone calls, not to mention multi-meetings constantly vying for our time, the first task we tend to push to the bottom of the list (or discard altogether) is prospecting.

This syndrome of procrastinating and avoiding prospecting reminds me of when I was in college and I would procrastinate on starting a paper. I would be surprised that the little work I did resulted in a poor grade. I know now that had I put in a little time each day instead of trying to cram the night before, I would have received a better grade. Unlike college, we can't fail at making a living. Making time for prospecting - and yourself - is not just a priority, but a necessity.

To create the opportunities that you need to succeed, do these five things and you will have ample time to prospect:

1 The first thing you must do is **schedule a meeting with yourself** to prospect. It's not enough to say you will get to it. Schedule a meeting with yourself on your paper calendar or with a tool like Microsoft Outlook. This appointment should be viewed with the same importance as one that you schedule with a new prospect. If something came up that stopped you from attending a meeting with a new prospect you would, of course, reschedule that meeting. Right? The same applies to a prospecting meeting you schedule with

yourself. I recommend that you *schedule four 90-minute sessions per week; and keep those appointments!*

2 The second thing you must look at is **how many distractions are eating away at the time** you have scheduled for making meetings? Take a piece of paper and make note of every time you are pulled away from your task during your 90-minute prospecting session. Are current customers calling you on your cell? Then turn off your cell. Is it too loud in the bull pen? Then reserve a conference room for yourself and make your calls in peace and quiet. Is your tech department coming to you or your manager asking you questions during your scheduled meeting with yourself? Put a sign up on your cubicle that says "*conference call in progress.*" Is the receptionist putting through customer calls? Ask her to hold calls for that hour.

If you feel that your current customers will not get their needs met

if you're out of the loop for a whole hour, then prospect for 45 minutes straight and then stop to check your messages for the final 15 minutes of that hour. If there are any urgent customer issues, email them to let them know you're "on it" and then go back to prospecting for an additional

30 minutes. After you're all done prospecting, then you can "put out the fire." Remember that if you were with a customer in their office, you would be unavailable to anyone else for that time. Treat prospecting with the same respect. If you can identify the things that are

preventing you from completing your prospecting goals for the day, then you can fix them.





Make the time—make the meetings—to make more money!

3 The third thing that eats up salespeople's time is **research**. You must research prospects in preparation for calling them. What makes the difference is when you do the research. It is better to separate the research from the dialing. Don't do them at the same time because you will not get enough dials done in 90 minutes. Research is best done during off selling hours.

4 The fourth way to maximize time is to **use all of it**. I always say, "If you eat three times a day you should prospect three times a day." You don't eat a six foot sandwich on a Monday and stay full for the week, do you? It's the same for prospecting. Nourishing new opportunities takes continuous effort. Try making three prospecting dials every time you get in your car, before starting the engine. This daily practice can very quickly add up to 50-80 dials in a week. You and I both know what that would do to the amount of meetings you can schedule each week!


5 Another technique that many sales people find beneficial is **emailing on the weekend**. Try sending 10 prospecting emails on the weekend.

This not only saves time during your work week, but also shows your prospect that you are available 24/7.

The way you go after a prospect is the only way they will know what kind of rep you will be once you get the account.

Finding the time to fit prospecting into your weekly schedule is a challenge, but it's achievable.

Without committing the time you need for prospecting, the meetings won't get scheduled and the sales can't happen.

Make the time – make the meetings – (and you will) make more money! 

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