

Business Development for Everyone

Get Your Employees Involved in Sales and Marketing

By Linda Sparks

In today's economy, it's more critical than ever to get the most out of your marketing budget. While many organizations tend to scale down marketing investments such as advertising, public relations and direct sales activities during lean times, they rarely scale down their business development goals proportionately.

Yet stakeholders continue to expect increased performance and the pressure to deliver these business results can become stressful. This reality encourages savvy business leaders to look for ways to get more results out of their existing system.

If you are one of those savvy leaders looking for a way to get greater results from your shrinking marketing budget, you may need to look no further than your own back yard. Most organizations have untapped potential buried inside their own employee base. Mining those untapped resources may take little more than creating a new awareness for everyone's role in the business development process.

But, how do you do that? Here are some ways to maximize employee effectiveness drawn from our new book, *Business Development is Everyone's Business* (BDEB).

Taking inventory

To discover the depth of your business development resources you will need to take a new kind of inventory. Instead of counting up all of the product or raw materials on hand, take a new look at all your employees regardless of their area of assignment. Use the worksheet below to plug in the total number of employees where they fit and then add them up.

GETTING the Work	DOING the Work	SUPPORTING the Work
Sales Marketing Advertising Public Relations Management	Project Management Customer Service Project Teams Management	R & D Staff Development Facilities Administration Management
# of Employees	# of Employees	# of Employees

This new total represents the combined resources available to help you develop business. You might be wondering why you classify employees into these three categories when ultimately you add them up for a total. While BDEB is a total involvement philosophy, it is based on the idea that people contribute to business development while performing their routine activities. Let's examine this further.

Defining business development

Business development can mean different things to different companies. For most companies business development activities range from prospecting and relationship building to writing proposals, negotiating and closing the sale.

We define business development as the positive and proactive representation of your organization to everyone with whom you come in contact. It's how you answer the questions, "So, what do you do?" or "What does your company do?" It's how your employees serve both internal and external customers. Using this definition, no one is left out of the business development equation.

Consider the sheer volume of connections that are made every single day when your (insert your total here) employees come in contact with your organization's Five Groups of Influence™: clients, prospects, suppliers, employees and the community. Adopting BDEB simply means that wherever they are and whatever the circumstance, employees should consider themselves their organization's best ambassadors as they make these natural connections.

Some possibilities: Your next key account could come through a casual connection between an employee and someone they meet at their kids' soccer match. You're standing in line at the movies and you see someone you know and they ask you "where are you working now?" Your receptionist and customer service staff probably have countless daily opportunities to connect with people.

Putting BDEB into action

It is always best to shift to a BDEB philosophy in a systematic way. Just declaring your business as a BDEB organization will not make it so. Consider the following list of ideas for putting BDEB into action for your business.

- Educate all employees about your products/services, clients, suppliers and key prospects
- Develop a 30-second information soundbite that describes your organization and elicits more questions — then encourage your employees to use it
- Understand where your business really comes from and share that with all employees
- Provide all employees with copies of your organization's marketing and product literature
- Regardless of title, give every single employee a business card. Business cards are a source of pride for employees and they are 3.5" x 2" highly transportable advertisements that are fairly inexpensive compared with other forms of advertising
- Help every employee understand how, in the course of doing their regular job, they can actually contribute to business development

BDEB principles work because they follow a natural order of things; they leverage your current assets in a practical way. And, BDEB is a self-funding proposition. You are already making a substantial investment in your staff and BDEB helps you get an



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exponential return on that investment. So go ahead, maximize the natural connections that exist between your employees and their Five Groups of Influence™. You just might find your organization meeting those incredibly unrealistic revenue goals after all.

INFORMATION LINK

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