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The INTELLIGENT GROWTH Ezine

Volume 2, Issue 8**October 2005**

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Dear Douglas,

One of the biggest barriers to the growth of any organization is the ability to systematically get new, qualified and interested prospects into your pipeline. Filling a pipeline has always been challenging -- Today it is tougher than ever.

Announcing Our New Blog!

We are excited to announce the launch of our new blog! The response we have received to The INTELLIGENT GROWTH Ezine over the past year has exceeded our expectations. The most exciting thing for us is the number of comments we get when we encounter reads of the ezine. It tells us that not only are people reading about our ideas, they are thinking about them as well.

To enhance this experience we have launched a new blog (for those still stuck in the 20th century blog stands for web log). This is your opportunity to capture our latest thinking. To get a view into our "fast-growth" diary.

The blog will not only provide the type of content you have become familiar with, but you'll get observations, success stories and other thoughts that are important, but may not make it into an ezine.

Visit our blog at:

<http://www.4syndication.com/blog.do?blog=17>

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• Filling Your Pipeline, Part 1

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE AN UNLIMITED NUMBER OF QUALIFIED PROSPECTS INTERESTED IN DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU?

What is your biggest challenge with regards to growth today? If you are like many of the companies that we are working with, one of the primary ones is getting people started in your sales pipeline/funnel. Today, even the most successful companies are telling us that once they have a qualified candidate in their pipeline they are fine, but that getting people into the pipeline is tougher than it has ever been.

In this issue of The INTELLIGENT GROWTH Ezine I will provide you with an approach that will enable you to make significant progress in adding people to your pipeline. To do this, I will briefly explain the primary cause of this problem, introduce you to an INTELLIGENT GROWTH Concept(tm) that address this cause, and provide you with some ideas for making these concepts work within your company.

SELF-SELECTION – THE PRIMARY CAUSE

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We live in a time and attention economy – your customers and potential customers don't have enough of either. They barely have enough time to understand their own situation. They are no longer willing to spend time trying to understand yours. Until you get someone's attention, though, you have no chance of getting their time. Most sales organizations are still stuck in an industrial age paradigm of marketing communication. These companies either market solutions that are too complex for their customers to understand, or they make claims like the one that led off this article. Solutions, though, is today's meaningless buzzword.

Think about this for a moment. If this were an advertisement or letter promoting a seminar where I promised that by attending you would generate more qualified prospects than you could handle, would you believe me? Most likely you would not. The reality is that your potential customers don't believe most of what you say in your marketing, either. Customers are more cynical today than they have ever been – and they have good reason to be. Customers are looking at your advertising, talking to your salespeople at trade shows and networking events, and talking to other customers. A recent Gartner Group study revealed that failure rates for some technologies' most common solutions are higher than 65%. Simply put, customers no longer believe claims.

Let me re-iterate one of the most common concerns that has been expressed to me – "We do great once we get a qualified prospect in our pipeline, our problem is getting more people into the pipeline." At no other time over the last 20 years have successful businesses expressed less concern to me over closing ratios and more concern over getting the process started.

It is difficult to get people into your pipeline who no longer respond to industrial-age marketing strategies. No longer falling for techniques designed to mask the underlying industrial-age paradigm, customers are adapting by becoming more self-reliant – not because they want to, but because they feel as though they have no other choice. Your potential customers are diagnosing their own issues and entering conversations with you after they have decided that they have a need, and, all too often, after they have decided what solution they need. They also do an unprecedented amount of research on their own. This results in prospects going through more self-selection before contacting you. The good news is that there is a higher likelihood that when a prospect gets in contact with you, they will buy.

The bad news is that you are positioned as a commodity upon that contact, as you have failed to create value in your marketing process. (For readers who want to learn more about value creation in the sales and marketing process, send an e-mail to info@imaginellc.com with “value creation” in the subject line. Make sure you give us your phone number so that we can confirm your desire to receive the issues.) The other bad news is that there are a significant number of qualified buyers who are selecting themselves out of contacting you, and you are losing the opportunity to accelerate your growth and position yourself as a true value-added resource.

THE UPSIDE TO ALL THIS CONFUSION

Those companies that abandon industrial-age based marketing strategies will have a sustained advantage over their competition. First, most companies will be unable to exit the industrial age paradigm of marketing, and the winners of the future will be the companies that are

being founded today without the remnants of industrial based thinking. Second, information overload provides an ironic opportunity. As people learn to ignore the abundance of information being thrust upon them, there will be less competition for companies with meaningful marketing. One of the concepts we have written about, and do extensive consulting and coaching on, is what we call Building The Bridge(tm). Bypassing competition is the whole point of Building The Bridge. (For new readers who would like to review our issue on Building the Bridge, e-mail us with Building the Bridge in the subject line.) When you focus your marketing and business development efforts on making your potential customers feel understood your pipeline will fill.

In our next issue we will introduce a successful methodology so that you can fill your pipeline with qualified prospects. In the meantime, if you want to keep up with Imagine Sales Consulting's latest thinking, visit our blog at:
<http://www.4syndication.com/blog.do?blog=17>

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• **Congratulations Katie**

We are excited by Katie McDonald's decision to return to school and pursue her degree full time. Katie began with Imagine in our early days (okay, June last year) as a summer intern. We enjoyed having her so much that she decided to stay on full- time. Many of you know Katie as the person who always answers the phone. In addition to that Katie helped ensure there was order in our office and that we could find the information we needed, when we needed it. We'll miss Katie, but we're glad she has decided to return to school

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