Training To Sell Door-to-Door

By Gerald M. Dash • RCH Cable Contractors

One of the time-proven, best methods of selling cable TV, broadband or bundled services is through an effective door-to-door campaign. Cable companies have been selling services door-to-door since the very beginning of the industry and while the products have changed, the techniques that have lead to successful door-to-door campaigns are still very-much applicable.

To conduct a successful door-to-door campaign, two main components need to be addressed: the sales system and sales training.

The Sales System

For any company to be successful, they must have a sales system in place. RCH Cable Contractors, which have been providing contract sales services to the cable industry since 1977, uses a centralized approach for their method for achieving door-to-door sales called "APS" (Appointment, Presentation, Sales) for their over 900 field sales representatives and regional sales managers.

Briefly, the APS method of door-to-door selling is developed on the theory that the sale cannot be made on the doorstep unless that person is ready to buy at that moment. Therefore APS is designed with that thought foundation in mind and its techniques have historically proven to be successful when applied correctly.

Typically, the field door-to-door sales representative is approaching people who don’t know them. In order to build more profitable relationships with the customer, the sales representative may have to initially forego selling at the doorstep and focus on setting an appointment for the future. This approach is built into the APS method so that the sales person is geared toward scheduling an appointment for a presentation that, in turn, leads to the sale.

APS, like any sales system, is driven by goals set for the company served. These goals provide a higher penetration of subscribers as well as achieving customer retention, satisfaction and more revenue generating units.

When it comes to getting in the door to make a presentation, the goal is 20% or higher. The close ratio should be 85% or higher – sales to presentations. The minimum goal is three appointments with two sales per night on weeknights and six appointments with five sales on a Saturday.

Once the sales representative is in the door their job is to close the sale. A sales representative should start at the top with the full broadband program package and go down from there. They must involve customers with the decision making process and make their experience enjoyable. Finally, the sales person needs to educate the customer on services that are of interest to them to help build excellent retention and reduce churn.
Training Sales Teams is the Key

"It’s not enough to just recruit, we’ve got to educate,” says Robert C. Halgas, President at RCH Cable Contractors. Beyond teaching sales teams a mastery of the sales system, another area that must be covered is to thoroughly familiarize the field sales representatives with background information about the industry and make them aware of product knowledge that includes the client’s products and price structuring.

When putting together a two-day sales training class for a door-to-door campaign, companies should consider including the following areas:

Day One:
- Overview of the broadband cable TV industry
- The future of digital cable / HSD modem / telephone local-long distance services
- HDTV and home business networks-DBS / DSL / SVOD
- Internet applications
- Competition: dial up vs. HSD cable modems/ pricing and competition-cable vs. DBS.

Day Two:
- An overview of the sales system
- Efficient time management using
- The value of the sales system for weekly sales (quality not quantity)
- How to turn a "no" into a verified appointment at the door
- Bundled sales with in-home presentations
- Handling "no’s" after the first knock
- How to get in the door using the right techniques
- How to close a sales presentation
- Benefits and features of each service sold for the MSO client company

Non-Customer Classifications

One must remember that there are many classifications of non-customers and upgrades that sales people will encounter out of the 98 million US TV households. They are typically defined as follows:

1. Existing broadband cable customers (upgrades)
2. Habitual not home (non-customers)
3. Habitual "no's" (31% of US cable eligible households are not on broadband cable at any given time)
4. Senior citizens (55 or over/non-customers to cable TV, wireless cable and DBS)
5. Former cable customers (no balance-good customer)
6. Former cable customers (non-pay-bad credit risk)
7. Disgruntled former cable customers (good credit risk)
8. Current DBS customers (20 million)
9. An estimated 6 million US illegal cable customers (out of 98 million)