

## **E-LESSON #1: Prospecting Local Direct**

### **GENERAL AGENDA**

#### *HOW TO OUT-PROSPECT OLD PROSPECTORS*

*By Paul Weyland*



How many new local direct prospects are you running on your station in an average week? If you're an average broadcast salesperson the answer, unfortunately, is not very many. And one of the biggest reasons you're not running very many schedules for local direct clients is because you're not calling on them.

How can these local direct clients do business with you when they're not even thinking about who you are, what you do and how to get in touch with you? They won't call you. You've got to call them. If you could just contact several of these local direct businesses per week, get an appointment with them and then educate them about the benefits of using your station to bring them more business, you could close more long-term business and make lots and lots of money. But first, you have to prospect.

#### **Situation:**

It's unfortunately true that, with few exceptions, the average radio or television station will have fewer than fifty local direct accounts on the air in any given month. Even if you're in a rural area with a greater percentage of local direct business on the air, your station probably runs fewer than one hundred local direct accounts in any given month.

Think about this: You're probably sitting on a gold mine in your community. How many local businesses do you have in your coverage area? Look at the business white pages in the telephone directories in your signal coverage area. How many businesses are there in your signal radius? How many local direct businesses do you have on the air in a given month? What percent of the total number of businesses in your signal coverage area does your monthly number represent? Chances are that in any given month you are reaching fewer than one percent of the businesses in your community.

While it is certainly true that not all of those businesses would advertise on your station, it is also true that a vast majority of them are advertising somewhere, they're just not advertising with YOU. If you need proof, take a look at the percentage of the businesses in your market that have signed long-term contracts with the Great Money-Sucking Hole we call the Yellow Pages.

So, the Yellow Pages are successfully closing a vast majority of the businesses in your area compared to your point-something percent.

So, what's the problem? Why don't we have as many clients as other media, like the newspaper or the Yellow Pages? Could it be true that most local direct clients PERCEIVE that broadcast advertising is more complicated and confusing than print advertising? Could it also be true that local direct clients PERCEIVE that print advertising is more effective and cost-efficient than broadcast advertising?

It is also true that a business person's perception will never change unless he or she is educated. And, it is unlikely that a business will ever be educated properly unless somebody prospects on them first.

### **The Opportunity**

There are hundreds, even thousands of businesses sitting out there right now that are not being prospected by your company. How can these companies ever do business with your station if they're not thinking of you as a vehicle for bringing more customers to their businesses? How difficult are you making it for these businesses to do business with you when you're not contacting them and then teaching them who you are, what you do and how to get in touch with you?

We must never stop prospecting for new business. Business is everywhere and new businesses are always coming into your market. Remember: new business won't just come to you. You will have to go out there and get it.

New sellers should be spending the majority of their time prospecting for new business. Veteran salespeople understand that because of account attrition, they too need to be prospecting for new business.

You must accept that *knowledge* about what goes on in the town where you work and live *is power* in this business. Knowledge means money for you. If you find out about a new piece of business first, you will card it first and chances are you will ultimately reap the benefits. Accept that there are literally hundreds or thousands of businesses out there who have no idea **who** you are, **what** you do or **how** to get in touch with you, in every product and service category.

Most of these businesses are completely ignorant about issues concerning good marketing, good advertising, your station and the right way to run a successful campaign. Your job is to find these accounts, learn everything you can about their business and then educate them about yours.

***Here are some great ways to out-prospect other media reps in your market:***

1. No one else is fishing in our lake - Think of your station as a lake that contains thousands of fish. Other media, including the newspaper and the Yellow Pages, also represent lakes with fish in them. Think about product and service categories that are OVERREPRESENTED in other media lakes and very UNDERREPRESENTED on yours. For example, take the service category of attorneys. It is highly likely that your Yellow Pages is loaded with advertising for divorce attorneys. How many divorce attorneys are advertising on your station? Is it possible that very few, if any, are running commercials with your company?
2. Catbird Seat - In order to find out more about new businesses coming into your signal area and what they are up to, you must place yourself in some kind of “catbird seat.” This means getting involved in your community, joining or creating organizations that would give you access to businesspeople and other advertising decision makers. Volunteer to help with area cook-offs and other local festivities. Join a Rotary Club or another service organization. Join your local chamber of commerce. Go to the business mixers, meet people and pass out business cards. Visit merchant associations. These organizations are always looking for speakers. If you are so inclined, offer to speak to your group about the radio or television business. You might influence a decision maker and pick up a new account. I’ve picked up several choice accounts using this method.
3. Leads Groups - Join or create an organization with other types of vendors who are all interested in learning as much as possible about new businesses coming into your market. If such an organization doesn’t already exist, call a commercial realtor. Call someone who sells for a sign company. Call others who specialize in reaching out to businesses, such as someone in the office products industry, the printing industry or other business services industries. Agree to meet for lunch one day per week and discuss what new businesses might be moving into your town and how to reach decision makers. Every once in a while, you’ll get a real scoop on a new business or a radical change in an old business.
4. Construction permits/utility turn-ons - Go to your local municipality and see if you can get a copy of applications for commercial construction permits. Also, contact your local utility departments and find out whether or not there is a list of new electrical turn-ons available. Before construction ever begins, an electric line will be

installed. I had the heads-up on many new businesses using this method.

5. Go hunting - When I began running radio stations in Europe, I made a habit of going “hunting” in groups of three to neighborhoods we rarely otherwise visited. Most of the businesses in these neighborhoods were previously “invisible” to most of our sales group. We would fan out and canvass those neighborhoods. We would visit stores and look around. We’d find all kinds of marketing problems and ways we could help to solve them. Be sure to visit areas with road construction going on around them. You can help merchants in those areas that are under construction teach your listeners or viewers that those businesses are still open, and offer more convenient routes to accommodate shoppers. On occasion, we found some real jewels of accounts using this method.

Store employees tend to be very helpful. When speaking with them remember to always ask for the NAME OF THE PERSON WHO BUYS THE ADVERTISING. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT POINT because if you get the wrong person, then you’re on a wild goose chase. Store employees may tell you what inventory is and what isn’t selling at their stores.

Hunting is a great way to prospect and to know what’s going on in your community. Hunt every neighborhood until you are as familiar as a good cab driver with your community.

6. Open your eyes - Take the blinders off your eyes and ears. Take a closer look at the businesses you pass by each day driving to work and around your home that you just take for granted. Take another look at the businesses that you do personal business with but have never thought to ask about advertising with you. Make notes from the signs you see on cars and trucks. I got a big moving business account that nobody else in my market ever prospected just from calling the number I saw painted on the side of the truck.

7. Prospect other media - To me, it always did seem logical to monitor other stations and other media when I was looking for new business. After all, if a client is running on another station or media, it means that somebody else already did seventy five percent of my work. Some other media salesperson has already convinced the client that advertising is a good calculated risk. All I have to do now is to reach that client and convince him that it would be in his best interest to also teach *our* audience, *our* thousands of consumers, **who** his business is, **what** he does and **how** to get in touch with him. At times this

parasitical method of prospecting worked for me. However, oftentimes it took months to get the client to switch stations or media, and to finally give me a try. Other times I would find that the sales rep at the other station or media had not managed the client's expectations about results very well leaving the client soured to using my medium, or soured to advertising in general. Sometimes I'd find that some knuckleheaded one-man-shop advertising agency was also prospecting the same way I was, and they would wind up with the new business.

### ***Be on the look out for new prospecting ideas***

Those were just a few great ways to out-prospect other media reps in your market. Keep some kind of recording device in your vehicle so that you don't forget the name and location of a business that you think you should call upon. If you think about it, it's really true. We really are sitting on a goldmine. It is also necessary to prospect intelligently. New sellers should spend a vast majority of their time looking for new business and meeting decision makers, not sitting in the office on the computer. Seasoned reps should understand that there is always at least a twenty percent market attrition rate in this business. That means that for one reason or another, twenty percent of the business disappears and they should know that they too need to be prospecting for new business.

*There is an on-line companion video provided with this lesson.*

### **Local Direct Business Product Categories**

Try to come up with at least two businesses in each category that are not advertising on your station.

1. Air conditioning/heat
2. Apartment
3. Appliance
4. Attorney
5. Audio/Stereo Retail
6. Auto
7. Dealer new
8. Dealer used
9. Service
10. Parts
11. Body Shop
12. Bank/Financial
13. Beauty
14. Blinds/Window
15. Boats
16. Brake/Auto Repair
17. Bridal
18. Burglar/Security Alarms
19. Carpet/Floor
20. Cellular Phone
21. Chiropractor
22. Church
23. Clubs (nightclubs)
24. Computer Sales/Repair
25. Copier/Office Equipment
26. Dentist
27. Electric/Plumbing
28. Employment services
29. Exercise/Fitness Equip
30. Fence/Patio
31. Furniture
32. Golf Courses/Golf Supply
33. Homes
34. Home Renovation/Remodel
35. Home Center
36. Home Theater
37. Hospital/Medical
38. Insurance Auto
39. Insurance Home/Business
40. Insurance/Life
41. Internet ISP
42. Jeweler
43. Landscape/Lawn
44. Language school
45. Lighting
46. Lingerie
47. Liquors
48. Locksmith
49. Maid Service
50. Massage
51. Mattress/Bed
52. Mortgage
53. Motorcycles/Boats
54. Movers
55. Musical Instruments and/or Lessons
56. Optical
57. Package Pick-up/Delivery
58. Painting
59. Pawnshop
60. Pest Control
61. Pet Shop grooming and/or boarding
62. Pharmacy
63. Photo/Camera
64. Printers
65. Real Estate
66. Records/CDs
67. Rental Equipment
68. Restaurant
69. Roofing
70. Satellite/Cable

- 71. Sauna/Spa
- 72. Shoes
- 73. Storage
- 74. Swimming Pool
- 75. Tax, Accounting
- 76. Telephone System
- 77. Tire/Battery/Transmission
- 78. Travel
- 79. Tuxedo Rental
- 80. Vacuum
- 81. Video
- 82. Wallpaper
- 83. Water purification

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