

cpas in practice

Why CPAs Should Acquire a Systematic Approach to Selling

Improving Your New Client Acquisition Process

By Hugh Duffy, Build Your Firm



When firms adopt a systematic approach to marketing and selling, the results are far more effective than if using a fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants-approach. The logic is simple: A systematic approach is far more predictable and consistent in delivering the results desired.

Systematic Approaches Are Used Everyday

Consider leading athletes. The best athletes use a systematic approach to deliver consistent, superior results. In basketball, the systematic approach used by Steve Nash, Dirk Novitski, and J.J. Redick for free throw shooting is far more effective than the approach used by Shaquille O'Neil and Ben Wallace. In golf, Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson use a systematic approach for every shot—and just look at what they've accomplished!

Whether it's a system for processing payroll or interviewing for a job, there has to be a process in place to improve the end result and offer the best possible outcome. Think about it. Would you process multiple client payrolls using an off-the-cuff non-standardized process? Would you go into an executive interview with the company's president and just wing it? Of course not...

With this in mind, why would you go about marketing and selling services without having

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a system in place? Building your firm without a structured, well-designed system is like driving a car with your eyes closed.

Identify the Most Effective Sales System

The first step is to define what is meant by a system. A system is simply a series of steps designed to achieve a specific result. It contains a set of principles, processes, strategies, and approaches to deliver consistent, positive results on a daily basis. The second step is to identify systems that are critical to a firm's growth strategy.

Because the world is constantly changing, it's important to update the sales system to stay current with today's marketplace. The popularity of the Web and e-based communications nullifies

the use of dusty, out-dated sales systems and requires firms to re-evaluate how they communicate and interact with prospects and existing clients. For firms serious about growing business, the following are imperative for success:

1. A System for Lead Generation
2. A System for Converting Prospects
3. A System for Selling More to Existing Clients

The best way to identify and develop an appropriate sales system is to learn from others who have extensive experience with marketing and selling and have tested the effectiveness of their systems. The best advice is to seek out these firms, ask questions, and observe how they operate. From there, you can begin to build your own advanced selling system. And once you do, you will be amazed at how much easier it is to consistently grow your business. ■

Hugh Duffy is co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer for Build Your Firm—a leading practice development firm dedicated to the accounting industry. Build Your Firm works with small accounting firms providing accounting marketing, practice management, and CPA website development services. Hugh has 25 years of marketing experience and holds an MBA degree in Marketing from the University of Rochester. For more information, please visit BuildYourFirm.com.

State Board of Accountancy Considering Changes to Peer Review Rules

Peer Review compliance verification would reside with individual licensees – Comments taken until July 31, 2009

The State Board of Accountancy is considering changes to Peer Review Rules, which would place the responsibility for compliance verification on individual CPAs. The point of verification would be at the time of license renewal and would be similar to the verification of CPE hours.

"The State Board supports the concept that the purpose of Peer Review is to educate and help the individual CPA improve her or his own practice" said Mike Blackburn, chair of the Utah State Board of Accountancy. He continued, "The goal is to bring Utah rules in to compliance with recent changes in national rules."

The complete proposed rule can be accessed from the State Board of Accountancy website at www.dopl.utah.gov/licensing/accountancy.html. Public comment will be heard until July 31, 2009 at which time, the rule may become effective. The public may submit written or oral comments to the Department of Professional Licensing at the Heber M. Wells Building • 160 East 300 South • PO Box 146741 • Salt Lake City, Utah • 84111. ■