

The Seven Best Things You Can Do To Promote Your Cleaning Business –



A Free Report From Newton Fox Business Development Specialists

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Introduction

The contract cleaning (CC) industry is worth an estimated £4.5 billion per annum in the UK but it's a crowded market. There is an ever increasing amount of competition (start-ups via redundancy etc.) than ever before chasing fewer and fewer contracts.

As a CC company your competitors are chasing **your** clients right now and yesterdays' methods of sending out mail-shots alone simply won't work effectively enough anymore.

More than ever we need to get brave or get broke when it comes to promoting our businesses and go out and take what is our fair share of this huge market. There is a huge return to direct sales (tele-sales) in the last three years but for the CC industry it could be argued that it never really went away.

For example, telesales has been proven to increase take up rates from mail shots by up to 40% and of the top 5% of franchisees surveyed recently in one particular company all confirmed that telesales was their number one method to gaining new business. We're now going to look at how increasing your sales activity will have a direct effect on your business.

1. Procure Good Data – You're Gateway To Better Sales

Every campaign we conduct starts with the target market. Many professional marketers insist that target market is 90% of the issue when it comes to any kind of marketing at all. We need to know we not only have the right audience for our sales activity but also that the data is of good quality.

So, great – how do we decide what data to buy then? Well, first of all, we need to look at what is working for us right now. For example, if we have a good relationship with junior schools then it would make sense to make contact with more of the same. (Gaining a testimonial from our existing client base is also a great idea prior to making any new calls as this will lend real weight to any future sales activity).

Data is selected on three criteria – geography, industry sector and size. Geography can be determined by a radius from a flag in the ground (25 mile radius of LH1) or by postcode, town or county. Industry sector is either via SIC (specific industry sectors) or simply a 'layman' style listing such as newsagents, hairdressers etc. Size is determined via number of employees or turnover.

We have a superb data provider who's details we'll gladly pass onto you should you want us to.

Once you've bought your data you need to arrange it in such a way that it gives you the details you want from it at any point in the future. For example, you may want to know all the renewal dates within a three month period so you can write to them or email them.

Alternatively, you may wish to email all schools with over 250 pupils within a 10 mile radius of BB1. You just need to give some thought to how you expect to have to use the data in the future and what information you'll need to extract from it at any given time.

If you'd like one of our templates please don't hesitate to ask as it will at least give you a good starting point perhaps?

2. Write A Powerful Script

Let's be clear on something. The only thing that comes off the top of your head is dandruff. If you're going to call a company and ask for an appointment or just to introduce yourself you're going to need a script, pure and simple.

A script (or call frame as we call it) helps you steer the call in the direction you want it to go in. It's not designed to read out load word for word but it is there to help remind you of your opening statement, your objection handling strategy and a host of other things.

A call will go the way you want it to go provided you plan properly. Here are the five component parts of a good 'sales call' –

Getting Past The Gatekeeper.....

No such thing as a gate keeper

I hate this phrase. It immediately conjures up images of old battle axes with their arms folded snorting fire and brimstone. Often modern companies don't have a receptionist (the correct title I believe) anymore any way because they work in an open plan office. You could be talking to the decision maker!

Best way to get past him/her is to not try

It never fails to amaze me why people get uppity about the way in which they are treated by the receptionist when all the time they are looking over his/her shoulder to speak to someone "more important" and being so obvious about it. The message they get is "Do as you're told and get out of my way underling". Talk to **them**. Treat **them** as the prospect because for now, they are.

Get the name and use it (but don't overdo it!)

If they give their name as part of their telephone answering routine write it down but don't use it yet (too familiar) You will get plenty of opportunity to use it and if you end up having a nice little chat (this is your aim by the way) then when you use it at the end of the conversation then s/he will be flattered. If you ask for his/her name and use it next time you ring ("Hi, is that Jenny?") she'll love you. Carry on talking to her for a little while "We spoke a couple of weeks ago if you remember, you were full of a cold?!" Validate her as an important person because your success is in her hands so don't forget it buddy.

Take notes on what they say

Note down everything s/he says, you never know. I once asked a receptionist how Rhodes was as she'd just got back (she'd told me two months previous) – she thought I'd remembered her holiday

destination and was impressed. Be careful though, don't be over familiar too quickly as this is the quickest way to turn someone off.

 **Illicit their help and advice**

Explain a little about what you're trying to do. Don't be another faceless sales person. Describe how your trying to build up your business by contacting local companies but it's so difficult, everyone seems so busy these days (this is after s/he's told you the person you want is in a meeting) What would **you** do Robert?.

 **Ask for a better time**

If you've built rapport enough they may tell you that s/he's always in a good mood on a Friday afternoon?

 **If all fails ring out of hours**

Admittedly you will come across a real zealot every now and again. Respect them for this (genuinely) and understand they are just doing their job. Then ring when they've left for the day!

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Once past the 'gatekeeper' we need to talk to the decision maker. This is arguably the most important part of the call.....

Addressing the Decision Maker

 **Have a strong, direct opening statement prepared designed to evoke high interest**

"Good morning Miss Jones, my name's John Smith and I'm calling on behalf of ABC Cleaning Contractors. In a recent poll our current clients scored us 100% for reliability and quality. What %age would you give your current cleaning company for the same thing?"

 **You have 4 seconds to get another 30. You have 30 seconds to engage fully**

You may feel the above to be a bit racey for your liking and prefer to open a little more gently but get over one of your best features quickly as long as you can back it up. "We've recently won a ABC award for greatness so wanted to talk to you about that" Gentler still would be to say that you are simply looking to introduce your company to them and would like to **show** them how you operate. To show is not something that can be done on the phone "10 minutes to simply show you what I do and how we're different form the rest" Use gentle language, look at possible ways to, explore potential opportunities to, simply making a polite request to look at etc

 **Ask good questions to get good answers**

Asking good questions is absolutely key to a successful sales call. Most sales people try to tell the prospect all about their products way before they have enough information to do so. This causes the prospect to terminate the call much earlier than they perhaps would have and it's all over. Premature evacuation I call it. Ask open ended questions (old but still true) what, why, who, where and when. They've got something in place. Ask about it, particularly what they like so much. They'll tell you. Take notes. Ask what else they like. They'll tell you. When you've finished asking say "Let me tell you all about us, and then go on to describe a service which ticks all the boxes they've just drawn for you. Very powerful. Also, ask questions like "What marks out of 10 would you give your current providers (recent research done shows reliability and not price to be number one consideration) for

say reliability and quality? If they say 7 then ask “So what would they need to do to get a 10? Listen, then go on to tick those boxes.

Also ask, “If there could be one thing that you would want to improve regarding the service you’re getting what would that be? This is designed to get them to focus on a not so wholesome aspect of the service they’re getting. You come back with shock and horror aplenty. “Really, they keep leaving the internal office doors unlocked” How does that make you feel? How long has this been going on? How much longer are you prepared to tolerate this? Is there anything else they’re not getting right for you? etc

Empathise and establish rapport

In a similar vein ask about their operation in general and what issues they might have regarding any aspect of the maintenance and running of the building. The chances are they are responsible for maintenance and a host of other things. By putting yourself in their shoes instead of just banging on about cleaning you can establish a wider rapport. Ask about them in terms of how long they have been there or, if talking to a business owner, how long the business has traded for etc. If you are the owner of your business don’t miss the opportunity to empathise with questions about the economic climate, staff turnover, trade deficit, anything really. I know people who get onto football very quickly – whatever works for you and more importantly them. Very difficult to do well and easy to be cheesy but after a while you’ll soon see an opportunity.

When appropriate, match your services to their requirements

Go over what they have said is important to them regarding the cleaning contractors and ask that you have the full picture. From this confirm that you would like the opportunity to show the prospect how you go about providing your services and so would appreciate 10 minutes (no longer) of their time in the next week or so. No pressure, no hard sell and certainly no obligation. Just a sensible, grown up chat about the ways in which your service may benefit their operation.

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The next stage is handling any objections that may arise. Objections are a good sign but be ready for them at any stage.

Understand then deal with objections

If you get an objection that’s good. They wouldn’t bother giving you one if they weren’t interested. Most common objections are:

VERY HAPPY WITH CURRENT SUPPLIER THANK YOU – Your response should be along the lines of “Great, I appreciate we are not the only quality provider of cleaning services out there. What particularly do you like about them? They will tell you. You ask what else. They will tell you. You now have a couple of options. Often if a company has used the same cleaning firm for a while they have simply accepted that there isn’t a better service out there. This is lazy really and a smoke screen. You can suggest that the service they are getting truly sounds great but point out that your services are constantly being updated to keep up with latest legislation, best practice etc. Apart from anything else it is merely good business practice to invite quotations from alternative providers on a regular basis for all your core activities. There are a couple of features to our service which are unique. I would very much like to show you how we could bring added value should the day come when you wish to confirm that the service you’re getting is indeed the best available. Option 2 is the good old feel, felt found technique. One of my favourites. “I understand how you feel Mr Jones. The thought of changing contract cleaners can be daunting. Many of our current clients felt this way when we first

approached them. However, once we showed them how we operate and the added value we bring not only did it persuade them to switch to us but they have found it to be the best thing they ever did. Will you at least allow me the opportunity to show you how our service works, even if for future reference only.

NO MONEY IN BUDGET FOR CLEANERS THESE DAYS – Option 1 “I fully understand how careful companies have to be at the moment but it seems a shame that they have to work so hard and still have clean up after themselves. That’s why we have introduced a range of services designed to suit all budgets. You may be very pleasantly surprised at how economical our services can be. Would you allow me 10 minutes to come and show you how we could do this?

Option 2 – “OK, I get that. Every company is watching every penny right now but let me ask you something if I may/ Who is doing your cleaning at the moment? If its staff what affect is this having on their morale? If it’s you what is this saying to the staff? If its not being done properly what is this saying to your visitors? Are really saying all of this is not worth £19 per week to you? Really? –brave but effective if you’ve read the person right.

THERE’S ONLY TWO OF US HERE AND WE EMPTY OUR OWN BINS THANKS – “Respond with specialist cleaning, spring cleaning once a year etc

WE HAVE OUR OWN IN HOUSE TEAM THANKS – “That’s great, you’ll not be needing us then. However, we do provide specialist and holiday cover cleaning staff on an as required basis. We also provide free training for specialist cleaning tasks and offer advice on latest best practice, health & safety issues surrounding cleaning etc May this be of interest?

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To help persuade our target that switching to us is a good idea we must.....

Use leverage

Persuading a company to change contract cleaners can be a tricky business. Even if the company is only fairly happy with the incumbent they’d often rather stay with them than go through the hassle of changing. This is where leverage comes in. You have to give them as many really good reasons to change as possible and to do it at the earliest possible time. What this leverage will be is up to you. First month free (gasp) provided they tie in for 2 years? Free spring clean every March. Free trial alongside their current provider to assess service levels. Free training to existing staff. Whatever it is it needs to be good. It could relate to something they’ve said to you during your conversation. So Mr Prospect, if we could guarantee that all our staff will have completed their duties by no later than 6am each day including a Saturday at no extra charge you’d be interested enough to at least see me?”

Once we’re sure we’ve done enough to convince the prospect that they should take our approach seriously we should then.....

Ask for appointment (only ever sell appointment)

Another common mistake made by sales people is their annoying habit of not actually asking for an appointment. Imagine that? You’ve gone through all this and then don’t even ask for a date. Only ever ask for an appointment though. Don’t try to sell all your services over the phone – it won’t work. Make this request soft. “I’d like to show you how we work and this takes about the same time as it does to drink a cu a coffee. If you’re not interested by the time we reach the bottom of our cups then I’ll walk away and never trouble you again – have we got a deal? Don’t let them wriggle off the hook

at this point. If they've no diary to hand simply get their e-mail address, pick a date two weeks hence and say "I'll book us in for then and confirm on e-mail. If you can't make it just call me to re-arrange. People are lazy – he won't call, you'll get to see him. Remember- conversion rate on the phone – 1%. Conversion rate face to face – 66%. Make the appointment!!

3. Get Good At E-Marketing

Email marketing is much under-valued as a credible sales tool these days. Thousands of business enquiries are generated and sales completed daily all courtesy of email marketing. Therefore, getting good at this would seem sensible; especially as there are only a few rules governing how to go about it.

Basic Rules

E-mail marketing is *interruption* marketing. The person getting it is doing something else at the time. For this reason you need to explain the benefit of reading the rest of the e-mail in the first sentence. Basically, you've got about four seconds tops to stop them deleting your message.

Another common mistake people make is with graphics and pictures of any sort. Most people set their e-mail with a viewing pane which displays typically the top third or so of the e-mail. If this area is designated to showing a picture of your shiny new product all your recipient will see is the little symbol in the corner telling him or her to download the picture. He won't bother! There are lots of other common mistakes we must avoid if our e-marketing is to be a success but let's now concentrate on the do's instead of the don'ts.....

So, good rules to follow for e-mail marketing include:

1. Subject Line – Very, very important element. It needs to be good enough to make the recipient want to open the whole e-mail.
2. Four second rule – you now know what that is! The first sentence needs to be about *them, not you!*
3. If you're going to use pictures (sometimes essential I know) then make sure they appear in the bottom two thirds of the e-mail.
4. Be specific, don't waffle.
5. Offer something really good for free or greatly discounted. The more generous you can bring yourself to be the more impact you're going to have. Think 'loss leader.'
6. Don't crowd your message – often a simple text based message with little or no bells or whistles can be the most effective.
7. Call to action – tell them what you want them to do – preferably at least twice. If you're not sure what you want the next step to be they'll do nothing.
8. Have a deadline – if you act *before the 31st March 2012* you'll receive this lovely set of Crystal glasses worth £149.00 absolutely free.
9. Contact details – have at least two ways to contact you and make sure there's a link to your website, but links are a subject all on their own.....

Using Links

With volume e-mail we need to know who's interested, and in what. If you do have a multiple offer and want to gauge which recipients are interested in what then you need to provide links for each element of your service or product range. By doing this you can then proactively call these people to set appointments or provide further information etc

Dedicated Phone Line

Also helpful can be a dedicated phone number than can be hooked onto your existing lines but will produce a separate report showing how many calls are received etc. This is very helpful to monitor activity and to accurately gauge what return you're getting from your –e-mail activities.

Who To Target

One of the most important elements of e-marketing is choosing your audience. You can choose by region, post code, industry (SIC) coding, number of employees and turnover. For business too consumer data you can choose age, income bracket and area. If you're unsure then simply look at your current client list for an indication of where to point your attention.

Good Follow Up

So far, so good. You're recipient has opened your e-mail and done what you wanted them to do. You now need to be ready with the follow up procedures to secure the sale. This could be further information, available dates for appointments, sending out free samples or organising demonstrations.

Whatever it is it needs to be ready so you don't lose momentum. It would be a shame to go to all this trouble only to find that you've lost the sale because you weren't ready to follow up.

Record All Outcomes

You need to know how this campaign went from start to finish so you can learn from it and improve for next time. Only by recording all activity, even that which lead to 'nothing,' will you give yourself an accurate picture of what went on. Also, details of those who didn't buy now but showed interest can be harvested for future drip marketing campaigns and future consideration.

The data you collect is valuable to you so you need to store it carefully.

Styles

You need to decide on the overall style you would like to adopt. Newsletter, special offer, formal text based letter, humorous; these are all acceptable as long as they are done well and adhere to the above criteria.

Once you've completed your e-mail you need to test it out on friends, family, colleagues. Get them to be honest and listen to the feedback. You will learn what works and what doesn't quite quickly.

4. Use Direct Mail – How To Use ‘Snail Mail’ To Your Advantage

If email marketing is misunderstood then direct mail should take out a court injunction against all those who have bad-mouthed it in the last ten years because it's a great way to promote your business if done well.

As with all marketing it has some simple rules to follow and we have a 40 page document detailing exactly how this clever route to market can work wonders for you. To condense this report (ask for a copy by all means) here are the most important concepts to grasp:

1. Target Market – the more specific you can be the better your marketing. To talk to schools about their particular problems and then go on to explain how you (and only you) can solve them is really powerful.
2. Have a striking headline that is designed to get them to respond to you immediately.
3. Make them an offer they can't refuse (see above).
4. Sell limitation - you see this on TV every day – the offer ends Sunday at 5pm so hurry! While stocks last! Book early to avoid disappointment! Selling scarcity with a time limit is essential to get people to act now.
5. Tell them what they need to do to respond and make it easy for them. If you don't know what you expect them to do to respond then how will they know?
6. Write the envelope by hand and mark it 'Personal' – this will stop the 'gatekeeper' opening it.
7. Provide social proof – any claim needs to be backed up. We saved ABC Motors £4,500 pa in cleaning bills by changing the way they clean their premises – we'll show you how if you agree to meet by Friday 10th.
8. Always follow up every single letter – unlike email you are sending letters to well researched prospects that would prove very worthwhile clients.

Direct mail is a different strategy to e-marketing in that it's much more targeted and requires detailed follow up each time you do it.

5. Make An Offer They Can't Refuse

We once worked with a photocopying company. They needed to set themselves apart from the hundreds of other companies they were competing with. We asked them what was the one thing their competitors daren't promise but their customers would really appreciate.

They said that guaranteed 24 hour delivery of new machines would work very well but it was difficult to promise. We got them to guarantee 24 hour delivery or they got the machine for free. Risky? Of

course! But, the gains in business (and they were significant and instant) far outweighed the cost implications.

What's your offer? What can you do to stop your potential customers in their tracks? Free cleans? Free gifts? Added value at no added costs?

Whatever it is it needs to be something so special they just can't say no. We've seen companies gain new business purely via this one technique.

6. Create A Call To Action

As already mentioned, your target market needs a push to act. People are inherently lazy and if they can put it off until tomorrow they will. You need to create something that means they have to act in a certain timeframe or else they'll miss out.

The most effective way of doing this is by combining the above point of an attractive offer with a built in time delay. "Remember, the first companies to respond to this email will receive a gold watch worth £239.00 absolutely free. You get the idea!

You also need to be absolutely clear on what you expect of them in terms of timeline and activity. Then you need to make it easy for them. Respond by simply putting 'Yes' in the subject line and return before 5pm Friday 17th and we'll do the rest – thank you.

7. Record, Follow Up And Never Give In!

Recording the outcomes of our sales activity is absolutely crucial if we're to succeed long term. Most initial sales activity won't instantly lead to an appointment or a new client. Early contact might lead to requests for literature (which should be as good a quality as you can afford) and require some sort of follow up action.

Logging down renewal dates and plotting the right time to call back for example can yield great results and takes little effort to do. This is where perseverance and tenacity comes in to play, not to be confused with simply mithering the life out of people. Calling back at an agreed and strategically appropriate time is a mile away from just putting call after call in hoping that the three year contract they told you about 2 months ago has somehow disappeared.

Contracts do fall through but 6 monthly calls for those declaring that they are extremely happy with the service is quite enough.

The more you do of this the better you'll be able to judge just what is the right amount of contact. If you're friendly, polite and professional you will rarely go wrong so good luck and keep smiling!

If you'd like any further information regarding any of the content of this document please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at any time. You can call 01204 352380 or email our MD Chris Newton at chris@newtonfoxbds.com.