

Tis' the season... to sell!

Ebenezer Scrooge, hero of Charles Dickens A Christmas Carol, once proclaimed “Christmas is just an excuse to pick the pockets of a poor business man.” This year don't let the holiday season pick your pockets. It is tempting to write off December as a “bad month” and take it easy for a few weeks. Before you decide to go into hibernation please consider the following points:

- There are 20 selling days between December 1st and the end of the year. December represents 1/12 of the year on everybody's calendar. If you waste this time you lose more than 8% of your year, as commissioned salespeople this means we reduce our income by more than 8%.
- Prospects are often in a good frame of mind in December. In addition to the usual joys of the season, retailers are often experiencing their best month of the year. Listening to “The Carol of the Cash Register” makes prospects more inclined to listen to your presentation and puts them into a mood to buy.
- Non-retail customers may be slow in December. This means they will have the time to meet with you. December may be the only month when you can get a large block of uninterrupted time with many prospects.
- As the last month of the year, December is when many customers plan the upcoming year and set their advertising budgets. This is an opportunity to get our products into the buying cycle.
- Some clients need to spend some cash before year end for tax purposes. If they had a very profitable year or have excess cash on the books, they may want to invest in advertising rather than give it to the IRS. Some customers like to sign a contract at the end of the year and pay for the entire run in advance. If they pay for the advertising in December the expenditure is recorded in the current tax year. They will get a lot more for their money from a good advertising program than they will from Uncle Sam.

- Sometimes it is easier to reach decision-makers in December. That “gate keeper” who has been giving you the cold shoulder all year long may be on vacation. This gives you a chance to see the owner and present our products to them.
- January is coming. Constantly prospecting is the only way to keep your “pipeline” full. The leads you uncover in December will become advertisers in January. Keeping the pressure on in December will pay dividends in January when you get those holiday credit card bills.
- The competition goes away. If you’re cold calling when the competition is shopping at the mall, who do you think will win the business?

“A body in motion tends to remain in motion, a body at rest tends to remain at rest” is a law of physics and of sales. “Coasting” for a month will cause you to lose momentum and make it hard to get moving in January. Coming into January at full speed will bring rewards all year long. By maintaining your pace and keeping the pipeline full you will make your January and 1st quarter objectives, setting yourself up for a banner sales year. A weak January is hard to overcome and forces you to play catch up all year long. Winners keep running until they hit the finish line. Don’t waste valuable selling time in December and you’ll start 2006 and finish 2005 as a winner!