

## BEER MAT MENTORING MEETING NOTES

### (9) Sales and marketing

So: you have set up a fabulously successful rural business. Now you want to grow sales even more so that you keep daughter's horse in pony nuts or run away to the Seychelles.

Sales is key. If you don't nurture and breed customers fast, the business will be in trouble.

#### **Because they're worth it**

The mix of activities you employ to drum up business depends in part on lifetime customer value. How much profit will your average customer generate per year and how many years do you estimate that they will stay with you? Multiplying these figures together tell you how much a new customer is worth to you and therefore how much you are able to spend to win each new customer. It's not worth making individual sales visits to prospects if lifetime customer value is only £50. But a visit might be worthwhile to sell a £10 item if frequent long term repeat purchases are expected.

Your sales activities also depend on the type of business you are in. An innovative product might do well at an exhibition or county show. A guesthouse might print attractive postcards; this is probably the only industry where customers might send your sales literature to prospects (their friends and relatives) and pay the postage to boot.

#### **Make friends and influence people**

The starting point is networking: getting the word out to family, neighbours, friends, friends of friends (via referrals), and attending any events where participants are likely customers.

At an event, arrive when the doors open and bring business cards that say what you do. Go up to individuals and small groups, introduce yourself briefly, and ask what brings them there (or whatever is appropriate). Show an interest in them and they will ask about you. Explore links. The greatest success comes as a by-product of generously helping others. Nevertheless, they are not a prospect, draw the conversation to a close at a suitable point and meet another group.

Can you succinctly describe what you offer? What is it, what's special about it and how does it benefit the customer? Benefits are quite different from features: the edges are rounded (feature) for a comfortable grip (benefit); all staff are members of the trade body (feature) for complete peace of mind (benefit).

Almost every business needs to engage in some activities. In particular, build a good web site and use social media. If you are selling creative products (say natural wool or craft kits), encourage clients to share what they have done with them on your Facebook page and also on Pinterest / Instagram / WhatsApp. If you are offering expertise, tweet pearls of wisdom and follow and reply to others in the field to build your own followers. Write a blog and tweet the link. Or offer to write a column in a local magazine.

### NOTES