High-Profit
Prospecting Handbook

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Mark Hunter, CSP
“The Sales Hunter”
Mark@TheSalesHunter.com
www.TheSalesHunter.com
Prospecting is not an activity. It’s a lifestyle.

When we prospect, we are on the front end of helping others see and achieve an outcome they didn’t think was possible. For me, this is why we prospect and it’s why I enjoy doing it. The ability to help others when they weren’t expecting it from someone they didn’t expect could help them is something I think we can all get excited about.

Prospecting is not merely conveying your price point. **Prospecting is about uncovering needs, many of which will be unknown even to the person who has them.** When we are able to help someone understand their needs and allow them to visualize the outcome we can deliver, then we are in a position to close a sale at full price.

Low price is not a prospecting strategy! A low price is merely an invitation to attract customers who will in turn leave you as soon as someone else offers an even lower price.

When we prospect with integrity, we will get customers who have integrity. As you read the book and work your way through this workbook, you will notice I do not include any of the techniques used by salespeople who display standards that would be seen as not having integrity.

The level of integrity you show is a reflection of who you are. Let’s not forget – the first thing people buy is us.

Finally, let’s remember that “sales is leadership and leadership is sales.” Everything we do requires leadership, and a true leader is not measured on what they say, but rather they’re measured on the result they achieve in those they lead. Putting that into a sales perspective means we can’t be focused on merely selling. Instead, we have to be focused on our customers achieving value from the outcome they realize due to what they buy from us.

I designed this workbook for you to use in conjunction with the book. You will notice references throughout this workbook to page numbers in the book. My suggestion is if you only have an audio or electronic version of the book, you take the time now to order a hard copy edition.
Chapter 1: What Does Prospecting Mean Today?

Write a definition of what prospecting was like 10 years ago:

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What is your definition today of prospecting?

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If your definition is not focused on you and the prospect, I want you to dig deeper into why. Yes, prospecting is a process, but it’s a process that is built around how you feel and your attitude toward helping others. Anything less than a 100% belief in what you can do to help others is saying you will never achieve the results of which you are capable.
Chapter 2: The Myths and Surprising Facts About Finding New Customers

Do you have a “prospecting culture?” What’s holding you back?

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Block in your calendar dedicated times each week to focus 100% on prospecting. Never block less than 2-hour segments. The total number of hours will depend on a number of factors. Regardless of how many existing customers you may need to manage, everyone must spend minimally 2 hours a week prospecting.

Create a list of all the activities you do that keep you from prospecting. After you’ve developed the list, mark those that are mandated by your manager or the company. Looking at the list you’ve now marked, focus on how you might do these activities differently to free up more time to prospect.

Go back to your list and be brutally honest with yourself on the things you do that are not mandated by your manager or company. Why are you doing them? What is the value they create? Most salespeople have created in their own minds work processes they feel are necessary, yet in the end, these processes do nothing but suck valuable time and resources away from prospecting.
Chapter 3: Major Factors in Successful Lead Generation

We can read and study all we want about how to prospect, but unless our own attitude about prospecting is in the right place, there is little chance we’ll ever be successful.

Review the questions on pages 21 and 22.

Dealing with each issue raised in these seven questions will have a much greater impact on your sales potential than what you sell and where you sell it. Sales is a mental game, and failing to win in your own mind first will block you from winning in the customer’s mind.

I have found incredibly talented salespeople who fail to succeed purely because of their mental state. You can know everything there is to know about your industry, your marketplace and your products and services, but it’s all for naught if your mind is not where it needs to be.
Chapter 4: Planning for High-Profit Customers

Are you prepared to throw out every process you’ve used up to now to prospect? Ok, this might seem radical, but if we’re really going to assess how we prospect and be prepared to make necessary changes, we have to have an open mind.

Beginning on page 31 and continuing through page 34 are a series of questions that will require minimally 4 hours of your time to answer. Don’t just answer them, but also ask yourself what changes you need to make. Pay attention to the headline on page 30 – Prospects Don’t Want Average. Be brutally honest – are you just average?

The 30 tactical questions are ones that typically require input from others in your organization. Don’t fall for the tendency to think you know what the profit picture looks like. It’s too easy for salespeople to overstate profit and it’s far too easy to not look at the big picture.

When I work with clients, these four pages will take up more than a full day to work through. The reason is simple – I designed the questions to get you thinking, and the answers will help you shape the development of your prospecting process.
Chapter 5: Fit the Prospecting Plan to Your Market

Review the questions on pages 38-41.

Your answers to these questions will allow you to begin developing your cadence – the frequency and style of communication you’ll have with prospects.

The answer to these questions is why I am a firm believer you cannot mimic a canned prospecting process another company is using and achieve the same results.

When I encounter salespeople who are struggling with prospecting yet exhibit a great attitude, I find the issue is nearly always the process not fitting the business. The questions raised in this chapter are far more important than you may initially realize. It’s easy to think success will come by merely copying another process.
Chapter 6: Time-Management Tactics

The most valuable asset you have is your time, not what you sell, who you sell it to, or anything else.

Review your prospecting activity before reading the book. How many times did you fail to follow-up? How many times did you start a new process but fail to carry it through? The greatest piece of advice I can give you is found in your shower. Take a look at one key word found on every bottle of shampoo – the word “repeat.” More than anything else, that single word will have more impact on you than any other single word.

When you master your time, you’ll find more than you ever realized. The comment I make is that sales is not customer service. It’s easy to have 100% of your time go to taking care of existing customers, thus you have little time to prospect.
Chapter 7: Are You Prospecting or Wasting Your Time?

This chapter is full of sources you need to be looking at for finding prospects. Before you start, don’t forget a phrase I like to use, “You can’t take a Wal-Mart shopper and turn them into a Nordstrom customer.”

The type of customer you wind up with is going to be no different than the type of prospect you go after. Know whom you want as a customer first, and then go upstream to find prospects who match that description.

One of the hardest things to do is deciding whom you’re NOT going to prospect. Each week I see salespeople chasing after leads that simply have zero chance of ever turning into a customer.

After you’ve read this chapter, take the time to look at your customers and where they came from. Compare this list to all of the prospects you have not been able to turn into customers. What do you see? Are there trends you can identify that represent areas where you need to increase your focus and other areas you need to ignore?

The outcome of this chapter needs to be you gaining minimally five more hours a week to prospect with higher potential prospects. Ask yourself how much more you’d earn each year if you had five more hours a week focused against high potential prospects?
Chapter 8: Are They Prospects or Merely Suspects?

Answer the questions on pages 68 – 70.

The best way to handle these questions is by developing questions you feel comfortable asking that line up with each type of prospect you have.

Your goal is to speed up your qualifying process. Yes, this is counter-intuitive, but I want to have fewer prospects rather than more. Is your pipeline full of prospects who are really suspects? Your goal is not to have suspects in your pipeline. Your goal is to have prospects you can close and, even better, close quickly.

Your absolute price point does not play a role in prospecting. Remember, you do not want to attract low-price prospects. If, however, you sell a high-priced item, then go ahead and introduce it early as a way of weeding out the low-price players. Be careful if you do choose to use this approach, because a prospect capable of paying a high price might be turned off to your high price if they don’t understand your value proposition.
Chapter 9: Best Practices for Making the Initial Contact

Make a list of 10 things you could share with a prospect that they would find of value. Don’t forget – your success or your company’s success is not something they care about!

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Chapter 10: Does the Telephone Still Work?

If you're not hesitant about picking up the phone and making prospecting calls, you can skip this chapter. If, on the other hand, you're hesitant and for that matter have a hard time getting phone numbers, refer to the list of sources you can use on page 81.

The telephone does work. I was with a company recently that has for the past 10 years made an average of 30,000 cold calls each year with a team of 4 salespeople. Each year the results have been nearly identical – 30,000 calls, 3,000 proposals, 300 customers. After 10 years, the company is still just as committed as ever to cold calling for one simple reason – it is cost effective and it works!
Chapter 11: Customer Engagement Dos and Don’ts

A key difference between average salespeople and great ones is how they leverage both their day and their calendar. I can’t begin to tell you the number of salespeople who I’ve watched move from average to great by simply taking advantage of making more calls at different times of the day.

Time management is the second biggest reason salespeople are not successful. (Number one is their failure to believe in themselves.) To master this, you need to do three things:

First, record for a two-week period everything you do, breaking it down into two-minute segments. You will be amazed at how many two-minute segments you waste.

Second, be fanatical about scheduling time to prospect. Block your calendar to prospect and follow-through, regardless of what else is going on. Don’t allow yourself to be taken away from doing what is scheduled.

Third, set up each day with a key activity you will complete each hour. As you become more productive, you can begin to accelerate it and begin scheduling a key activity to be completed every half-hour.
Chapter 12: Prospecting Tools – The Telephone

Review the 10 best practices on pages 91 and 92.

Score yourself on the 10 as to how you feel you’re doing today. Are there several you’re not doing well? I find even the best salesperson will have at least two areas in which they can improve. The ones on which most people need to focus the most are 1, 4, 6, and 8.

Numbers 1 and 8 are the hardest ones to master. Don’t fault yourself if you are struggling with them; mastering takes practice.

Once you feel you have them mastered, don’t forget about the list. It’s amazing how easy it can be to slide into bad habits. I tell sales managers to make this list something they review every six months with their sales teams. You may not have a sales manager doing this, but that certainly doesn’t mean you can’t go ahead and do it.
Chapter 13: Starting the Conversation

Take the scripts listed on pages 95-97 and work through them, making adjustments to fit your personality and market. Key is being comfortable with whatever you use. When you develop your scripts, keep them handy and use them as your guide and, more importantly, as your benchmark. Too many salespeople start off well, but quickly slide into bad habits because they failed to have a benchmark.

This is an announcement to veteran salespeople: Don’t skip this chapter! It can be easy to think you know what to do, but that does not mean there aren’t improvements you can make.

Too many veteran salespeople feel they can just “wing it” when it comes to making prospecting calls. Sure, they might be good calls, but are they great? Are they as good as they could be? I doubt it, and I’m being brutally frank in saying it.

Take the time to do the 6 steps listed below:

1. Review – Think through and develop better talking points.

2. Practice – Put it to the test by making prospecting calls.

3. Modify – Based on what you learned from practicing, make any additional changes.

4. Execute – Roll it out and go make it happen with your new talking points.

5. Review – Continually monitor your results, making adjustments along the way.

6. Excel – #SalesBoom … Make it happen by taking your results to the next level!
Chapter 14: Does Anybody Listen to Voicemail?

Review the three components of a great voicemail on page 104.

Review the 11 rules for leaving a great voicemail on pages 106-108.

I meet a lot of salespeople who feel they know how to leave a great voicemail. When I challenge them as to how long it is or what they say, I’m met with a blank stare. Using voicemail as a prospecting tool is something that has been overlooked for far too long, and as a result, most salespeople really don’t know what they’re saying.

Your ability to leave a strong concise voicemail is even more important today than when I wrote this book in 2016. Voicemail systems are quickly moving to voice-to-text technology, which means your ability to leave a tight, concise, clear message is even more important than ever. You may not have this feature on your phone, but rest assured many of your prospects do and it’s quickly raising the voicemail stakes.
Chapter 15: Email, Communication and Connection

Review the questions on page 112. Review the 10 rules of using email to prospect.

After you’ve reviewed the rules, go back and read the strategies on pages 115-117 and the samples on pages 118-120. It is absolutely essential for you to understand and apply each element of this chapter.

My big caution is do not allow yourself to think email is the only thing you need to master to be successful with prospecting. Not even close! I’ve seen too many salespeople starve because they put all of their effort into prospecting via email. View it as one tool in your toolbox; just never view it as your only tool.

Also do not allow yourself to believe you’ve found the perfect email merely because you’ve had a couple of people respond to it. Getting good feedback as to knowing what emails work best is hard, due to the many different factors that go into every email. Not only is it the content, but it is also the time of day, day of the week, and, of course, how the person receiving it even feels about email.
Chapter 16: Referrals and Other Major Pipeline Builders

Review the four steps on pages 127 and 128.

Build your calendar to allow you to apply the strategy presented on page 133. Regardless of how good you might be in getting referrals now, the strategy on page 133 will take your game to the next level. I have never seen the process not work. Many salespeople share with me that this single technique did more to change their business than anything else.

To help you make this process work, build out your calendar a quarter in advance. When you take the time to prepare months in advance, you’ll be in a better position to have the time to make the calls.

The only downside to the referral process described on page 133 is being so committed to it you allow it to be the only referral strategy you use. Just because you’re using this strategy does not excuse you from asking for referrals any other time possible.
Chapter 17: The Value and Pitfalls of Social Media

Don’t get me started on this one! I get pretty passionate about social media and, more importantly, how it can screw people up if you don’t use it right.

Pages 140-142 will help you define your social media strategy. My suggestion is you review your strategy every six months for one simple reason – things change quickly. What worked for you last year may be doing nothing more today than just sucking your time.

Never forget that even though you might be in an industry that does not use social media much, your prospects are still turning to Google to find out about you before they meet with you. The most likely source Google uses for name searches? You guessed it – social media! Go ahead Google your name and see what comes up.

If you don’t do anything else, you can at least make sure your profile is the best it can be on every social media platform where you have a presence. Identify a few peers who are doing it right on social media and mirror what they’re doing on their profiles. It doesn’t have to be complex – merely copy what others are doing.
Chapter 18: Prospecting via Social Media

Two words: Extreme caution. Using social media to prospect can quickly result in using your most valuable resource in the wrong manner – your time. My advice is make each minute you spend on social media earn its way. If your time on social media is not delivering an ROI equal to what you’re getting doing other things, then it’s time to question social media.

I strongly suggest setting aside one hour on a weekend or an evening where you do nothing but find content you can post, have conversations with people via social media and uncover new information.

Social media is changing so fast that even though I wrote this book just a year ago, it’s amazing what’s changed. Video is exploding in use, and depending on the industry you’re in, you may be sensing the need to leap into it yourself. If you are, let me say one thing – be cautious! Just because others are doing it isn’t enough of a reason for you to do it. Bad video is no different than a bad photo – it sticks around forever and will pop back up when you aren’t expecting it.

An exercise I do suggest is to follow 5 peers who you respect in your industry and pay close attention to what they’re doing. I’ve always felt when it comes to social media, the best way to know what to do is by watching those you respect. Also, be sure to check their profiles every few months and look for changes you may want to emulate. Learning from others sure beats having to figure it out yourself.
Chapter 19: Getting Past the Gatekeeper

Make a list of each type of gatekeeper you encounter. Each industry has its own styles and the more you can learn from one gatekeeper and how they responded to you, the better you’ll do with the next one.

There is no silver bullet when it comes to handling gatekeepers. The approach I tell salespeople is to keep a list detailing not only whom you encounter, but also what their roles were and how you handled them.

The list will do two things. First, it will give you insight you can refer back to when encountering another gatekeeper. Second – and I feel this one is even bigger – it will give you more confidence.

Gatekeepers by the very nature of their role encounter a significant number of salespeople, and as a result, they are diligent in sniffing out the bad ones from the good ones quickly. Your level of confidence will go a long way in helping you to be seen as one of the better ones, regardless of the specific approach you take.
Chapter 20: Winning at the Enterprise Level

This chapter is full of questions you need to review and, in particular, the roles people play on page 166. As with gatekeepers, I’ve found many similarities within industries. Use each company you’re dealing with as a learning experience to help you with the next one.

Notice the titles listed on page 166, and as you work with companies, be cognizant of which role each person fits into. Don’t force fit people, but rather use the list to give you ideas on how to stay ahead of what might occur. Use the list to guide you in the future, rather than to rationalize what happened in the past.

Keep the best practices listed on pages 167 and 168 handy. Use these as reminders to keep you from slipping into a bad habit the more you deal with larger companies.
Chapter 21: Is It Worth It to Even Try to Reach the C-Suite?

The questions on page 170 will tell you if you should even bother trying to reach the C-Suite. You’ll waste your time if you’re calling on the C-Suite purely to satisfy your ego or the demands of your manager.

At the bottom of 170 and continued on 171 are key items you must be aware of with regard to how you position yourself with the C-Suite. If you blow these, you’ll never get a second chance, not only with the C-Suite, but most likely with anyone else in the company. Take your time, prepare your moves, and when you do move, do it with confidence.
Chapter 22: Getting Past the Shut Door

How does your pipeline look? Is it clean and fast moving? If it looks more like a parking lot, congratulations, you’re playing a game with yourself and your boss.

Use this chapter for self-reflection. It’s your pipeline; not your boss’s pipeline. Ultimately, you’re the one who is going to be held accountable for it. If you’re wasting your time managing trash in your pipeline, don’t come crying to anyone else for not having the time to close the good prospects buried in the trash.
Chapter 23: Turning a Prospect into a Customer

The rules you need to adhere to if you want to be successful are found in this chapter. Don’t be the salesperson who does everything well, only to blow it at the end. Your bank doesn’t accept prospects. They only accept the money you get from closing deals.

The six questions reviewed in this chapter are the same ones I use with salespeople when I’m coaching them on their performance. Almost every time when helping a salesperson who has the right leads but can’t convert enough into customers, I discover it comes down to a major deficiency with one of the six questions.

If you’re not dealing with a slump, use the six questions as fuel to help you take your game to an even higher level.
Conclusion

Make a special note of the “Ten Things Top-Performing Salespeople do Regularly.” I guarantee you will raise your game significantly when you apply these things regularly.

When I’m coaching people on this list, I stress the importance of not trying to master all 10 things at one time. We’ll achieve much better results long-term when we focus on mastering one at a time.

Review the list and isolate the one you intend to focus on. Then build a 30- or 60-day action plan of how you will raise your level of performance with that one specific item. In theory, if you were to work on all 10 for 60 days each, it would take you 20 months to master all. That, however, is just theory. As you reviewed the list, I’m sure you found at least several where you’re already at what you feel is a high-level. That’s great! Now focus on the rest.

A word of caution regarding those items on the list you feel you’re already doing well. Just because you feel you’re doing well doesn’t mean there isn’t upside. I can’t stress the importance of never letting go of this list and using it months and years from now as a primer for you. It’s sad to see, but I’ve watched top performers get on the train to mediocrity, all because they stopped challenging themselves. Nobody will do it for you. It’s your decision as to the outcome you want to achieve.

Be honest about the below statements:

Areas where I excel:

Areas I will develop:
“Sales is not a science. It’s an art and it’s up to you to paint your picture.”

“Don’t let others define your level of success. Only you can achieve your level of success.”

“The greatest privilege we’ll ever have is helping another person achieve an outcome they didn’t think was possible.”

“If you don’t believe in yourself, how do you expect your customers to believe in you?”

“Sales is Leadership. Leadership is Sales.”

“The level of confidence you have going into a sale will determine the level of success you have coming out.”

“The only good sale is one that leads to another sale.”

“Pricing drives profit, and profit is at the core of each solution and opportunity for us and the customer.”
Mark Hunter, CSP, “The Sales Hunter,” helps individuals and companies identify better prospects, close more sales, and profitably build more long-term customer relationships. He speaks to salespeople around the world each year on how to increase their sales profitability.

Since 1998, Mark has conducted thousands of training programs and keynotes on sales. He is best known for his ability to motivate and move an organization through his high-energy presentations.

He spent more than 18 years in the sales and marketing divisions of three Fortune 200 companies. This level of experience is at the core of every program he delivers to thousands of people each year in the areas of sales, communications and leadership.

Mark not only has expertise in sales, but also knows how to communicate it to others. He speaks throughout the United States and numerous other countries. He has received the distinguished Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation from the National Speakers Association.

Mark is the author of “High-Profit Prospecting” and “High-Profit Selling: Win the Sale Without Compromising on Price.” Through his books, salespeople learn how to accelerate their sales motivation and success instead of jeopardizing profits.

www.TheSalesHunter.com
mark@thesaleshunter.com
402.445.2110
Stay in touch with Mark Hunter

www.TheSalesHunter.com
mark@thesaleshunter.com
402.445.2110

www.LinkedIn.com/in/MarkHunter
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