
MODULE 6 - Sales & Customer Management

- 6.1** Generating New Clients
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Customers are the most important piece of any company, so finding and building relationships with them is critical in order to be the best and first called company in your area. Effectively communicating what you are doing and how you will be doing it is going to build their trust in yourself and your services, so don't overlook the importance of customer service even if what you do on a job-site is the best in town. People need to trust people in order to let them work on their buildings. This Module will explain how to find potential job-sites, the people who manage the properties that they are on, and how to build long lasting business relationships.

6.1 Generating New Clients

Finding Job-Sites

The vast majority of the work you do will be because you are proactive in sales. Finding work won't be as easy as placing an advertisement and waiting for the phone to ring. In order to get your name recognized and trusted, advertising and social media needs to be in place; however, your jobs will come because you are doing the work for the client on day 1, which is finding graffiti on their property that they don't even know about. This can make advertising, customer acquisition costs, and marketing expensive or confusing in a niche market like graffiti removal. If you're the one doing all of the work, why even advertise? The answer is that you don't want to have a customer never hear of your business until you call one day and start talking about graffiti. Other reasons are because some people won't know your services are available or they've been using your competition for years.

The easiest way to provide your service and grow your business is to find the graffiti that is already out there and work backwards from the traditional way of selling. In most industries a typical sales call is done when someone is in a specific industry and might be a potential client for you. You show them what your product or service can do for them, provide your price, and then ask them for the sale. You might have to work at building the relationship and eventually they'll come around to using you and/or your company if they think your product could work for them. With graffiti removal it is a bit easier in the sense that you know they need your service before you pick up the phone.

You already know that graffiti attracts more vandalism, drops property value, is required to be removed by bylaws, tenants don't want it on their businesses, and so on. For these reasons, you know that it is in the building owners best interest to deal with the graffiti issue sooner than later. It's your job to bring this maintenance issues to their attention and provide a solution through the services you provide.

Finding graffiti and providing a quote to a building manager is the best and most successful way of acquiring sales. There is a surprising amount of graffiti on properties that building owners and managers have no idea about. Even businesses that have graffiti on the front of their stores often won't even realize they have graffiti. Many clients will even deny they have

graffiti when you contact them, so it's important to have your "ducks in a row" before you call anyone.

Driving, biking, or walking are easy ways to cover ground in a city and find graffiti. When you see graffiti, take a photo of the building's address and then photos of all the graffiti you can find on that property. There is a high probability that there is more than just the obvious one you noticed at first. You should also look for patterns or paths when you see graffiti. It is often done by someone who is walking somewhere, so they will tag along the way. Once you see 2 tags you will probably start to see where they were going, depending on the distance. If you see 2 tags, start to think of who this person is and where they could have been going. If one starts at a bus stop, where could they be going? Is there a movie theatre, bar, skatepark, or somewhere else that could be a place someone who fits a taggers demographic could be going? Finding 2 or more pieces of graffiti will often lead to multiple quotes for you, so be ready to walk in some unusual places and look all around. Graffiti often has a pattern, but it may not be obvious.

As you are taking photos, talk to some of the store owners or managers in the buildings. Most likely they rent space in the building, but they can give you the name of the property management company or building owner. The building managers or owners are the only people you want to contact. Passing your card along to the shop owner to pass along to the building owner seldom happens and you can't rely on other people to do this part of your sale. You need to talk to the manager of the building directly in order to have success in selling your service.

Sales calls can and should be done anywhere. Once you have taken your photos of the building address or street name and graffiti, look for a lease sign in a window, such as a vacant store within the same building if there isn't a store manager in any of the other shops. The main purpose of your business is to build a data base of local building owners or managers. Having this information available in the future will be worth every second you spend on it.

There are 2 ways of going about this task. One is to contact people from wherever you are at the time you find the graffiti, such as a store manager/owner. This can be great if you are capable of doing all of your quotes and organizing photos from your phone or laptop in your vehicle. If your database is only available on your computer that is at your office, perhaps the next option is a better option because you won't be spending time re-finding a building manager who is already in your database. The second way of finding jobs is to collect as many photos as you can in a period of time and contact everyone when you're back at your desk/office/computer. This can be the most effective because you stay on one task and cover a lot of ground, but you need to find the balance between finding graffiti and finding out who to contact. You don't want to spend 3 days finding 100 photos of graffiti then contacting people with old photos of graffiti that could have been cleaned up or had more graffiti added to them.

Finding customers can be time consuming at first, so plan your week on the weather, jobs, staffing, etcetera. The easiest way to manage a day of sales will depend on what you like to do personally, but a good start would be to find graffiti in the morning and contact the building managers in the afternoon. If it is sunny outside and suppose to rain the next day, then try finding graffiti all day and do sales the entire following day. You will have to find a system that works for you, but as long as you're looking for graffiti and getting quotes out shortly after, you should be on your way.

Common places to find graffiti are on commercial buildings. Downtown areas, strip malls, alleys, back of buildings such as staff areas, near bus stops, close to high schools, corner stores, previously tagged areas, and so on. There aren't many places that don't get hit with

graffiti, but you should be able to recognize who is likely to accept a quote and starting with your database each time is a good idea. If you've worked for them before, they'll most likely hire you a second time, so keep your sales going with these customers.

Residential clients are also good to have and they can be easier to contact by knocking on their door or leaving your card in their mailbox. Many residential locations with graffiti don't have the same budget as commercial buildings do. This can be a common roadblock because they will do it themselves if it's a painted surface, or they will leave it on their building if they aren't being asked by bylaw officers. A common thought process is that it will just reappear if I remove it. Residential graffiti removal jobs are more likely to be accepted if the graffiti is not a painting job.

Finding Customers

As a graffiti removal service provider, your target audience will most likely be property/building managers, building owners, corporate company maintenance divisions/janitorial departments, and companies that own their own buildings. This gives you a huge possible demographic to try and reach, but there are some great underlying opportunities that will work in your favour.

Building managers often manage multiple buildings. This is a great opportunity as a niche maintenance service company. By reaching 1 property manager you could potentially be extending your services to tens, or hundreds of buildings. Building a relationship of trust and consistency with one property manager will be more valuable than spending \$100 per month on a newspaper ad that will reach thousands of people, but non-qualified customers. This means that you're wasting your advertising dollars if you could simply spend some time on the phone, in person, or through email with a property manager instead. If you are offering house pressure washing, news papers might be a good avenue to explore because older demographics still read newspapers and they would likely need someone to provide that service for them.

Graffiti removal customers can often be found with some work on the phone and at a computer. Make your own database for customers and start contacting them with your information. Even if they don't have a building with graffiti on it, your information will be useful to them when they do require your services. They might even know of a building or 2 that they manage that has graffiti and will ask for a quote on it. Get to know the property managers in your area and work on these relationships.

Building owners (who manage their own buildings) are very similar to property managers. People who own commercial buildings often own more than one, or they know other people who own commercial buildings as well. Find out if they own other properties and add them to your database. Your database will save you hours of research when you see graffiti, so if there is ever an opportunity to add to it, don't hesitate.

Companies that own their own buildings (think national or international restaurants, big box stores, etcetera..) will often have a division that manages the commercial maintenance on them and outsources the work. Getting one job for a large corporation could mean getting all of the graffiti removal jobs at all of their locations that you are willing to travel to. Once you are set up as a vendor for them (usually some paperwork to prove you are insured, have a safety plan in place, capable of doing the work, and will abide by their policies while on the job-site) they will be easy to contact and getting future approvals on a quote will only take minutes.

Most people will welcome having an extra set of eyes on their property from time to time. If you are patrolling an area of town and know who owns each building, there can often be some

reason to contact them and give them an update on it if something is wrong with it, other than graffiti. For example, if you're looking for graffiti on a building, you may happen to notice that the building has an issue that may not have been identified yet. This is a great opportunity to call the owner and let them know that they have a broken eavestrough or that a vehicle may have backed up to an area and caused some new damage. This shows that you're looking after them and they will find this invaluable. Building relationships come in a variety of ways, so don't rely on graffiti as the only opportunity to have a quick chat and move on. Next time you send a graffiti removal quote to them you will probably be on the top of their list of companies to use.

Your goal is to know who owns or manages every building in your area and which ones have graffiti on them.

Sales Calls

If you don't have a specific address in your database yet that you need for a quote, follow this model to locate the correct person to speak with. As you may know from your other services that you've sold, you don't want to rely on people who don't do the hiring or manage the maintenance on a building to pass along a quote. They can forget to do it, which leaves you having to follow up and often realizing they didn't do what they said they were going to do, or you have even contacted the wrong office/division in the first place. People also like to assume, or tell others, that they have more control in a company than they do. Make sure you give the quote to the person who will be making the decision directly.

Try using these statements until you find what works best for you.

Introduction < *Hello, my name is (your name) and I'm calling from (your company name)* > ...

"I'm looking for the maintenance manager of your building."

or

"I've noticed your building at (address) has graffiti on it and I'm looking for the owner or building manager. Can you put me through to them?"

or

"I was working in the area and noticed that your building has graffiti on it. Do you know who I can send a quote to in your company?"

Before you know who the manager or decision maker is, don't dive too deep into the details. Save the information for the correct person. If they ask you to send it to them, ask who you can address the email to in order to get a name. Or simply ask them who it will be forwarded to for your follow up call. This can help ensure that they will pass it along or else they will look like they didn't do their job. Be friendly, but persistent and direct.

Once you've located and contacted the right person, there are some easy ways to close a sale and even easier ways to never be allowed on their property again. Friendliness is the answer to both of these situations. Remember that whoever you call about graffiti removal is just realizing that their building was a target of vandalism and the person who could be making money off of this issue is also the one informing them of it. There aren't too many other

examples of this situation in other industries where a cold call from a sales person is telling them they have a completely unexpected bill coming their way regardless of what they say. For example, if you notice water pouring out of an area of your house or building, you have to deal with it, but you are the one calling the plumber. It feels a lot different than if a plumber pulled up to your house and said you have an unknown leak that's damaging your building and I'm here to fix it. The first scenario feels like you noticed something, you are the one being proactive, and the plumber who shows up in 15 minutes is the hero. The second approach can feel suspicious as to how they knew about damage before you did.

At the end of the day, they are a victim of a random act of vandalism and you are there to make a sale. Your job is to bridge their immediate feelings with a solution that brings them back to feeling in charge and relieved that you were there to help them. Another good way to give them more control in their current situation is to also provide them with a quote for your GPP as well as the one time removal quote. By having more than one option, they will then be in a situation where they get to make a financial decision as well as whether or not to go ahead with your quote. The more power and control you can give them, the better and more comfortable they will feel, which can lead to securing the job.

The following quote can help guide your sales call when informing people that they have graffiti.

< Introduction >

"Thanks for taking my call. I noticed that your building has graffiti on it and was wondering if you'd like a quote for the removal of it?" This is a very subtle and non-intrusive approach and takes the urgency out of the equation, which can keep emotions steady, as well as puts the decision in their court.

A common reply is that they already have a company that they use, or that they don't think they have the graffiti you are talking about. A simple reply back with *"Ok, I might be able to save you some money if you'd like a quote to compare it to."* is a good start, or let them know you can send them photos as you *"might be confused on the address."*

You can also let them know if you noticed that their neighbours buildings were hit too, if they are, which is extremely common. This feeling of not being the only one who is in this predicament is comforting information to give someone. Firstly they don't feel like they were specifically targeted and secondly they are part of a group now and not alone as a sole victim. They may want to talk about what is going on and feel flustered at first, but talk to them and be understanding. Being empathic for a few minutes on the phone could bring you this job as well as all future jobs on all of the buildings that they own. Your other services could break into their company database through graffiti removal and take over some other needs they have as well. There are typically much fewer building owners or managers that you will deal with than actually buildings, so spend time and build a relationship when you are able to find one of them.

Often the end of a conversation will result in a definitive yes or no. If they are leaning towards, or even saying no, then ask if you can send them the quote so they have your information for future considerations. Once they have had time to process the vandalism they are more likely to make a decision in your favour. They may also have wanted to look into your company some more, see your professionalism, or they could have been taken too off guard at the time. If you do send an email, follow up with a call 2-3 days later if you notice the graffiti is still on their building.

Sales Email

Email is obviously how businesses run these days, which is great for the graffiti removal industry because a picture says a thousand words. Always make sure to include a photo of the graffiti on their building if you are sending a quote. This is your best sales tool along with your social media and website, which should have your before and after photos on it.

When sending an email, make it look professional and formal. You are asking for money to do a professional service, so any act out of the professional arena will give the vision that your work will be the same.

Email subject: Graffiti removal quote for (property address)

Email body: Hi (*client name*)

- Nice speaking with your earlier

or

- Thanks for taking my call. As we discussed on the phone earlier, here is the quote for graffiti removal at (address).

Let me know if you ave any questions or would like us to schedule this work.

Thanks,

(email signature that includes your name, company name, website, phone number, social media handles).

If you also mention at the bottom of the email that you will follow up in a few days, make sure that you do follow up in a few days.

If and when they reply for you to proceed with the job (either on email or phone), reply to them with a thank you for the work, let them know when the work is scheduled, and be sure to hit the mark on the timeframe. Don't overpromise and underdeliver. Your quality and professionalism should be the main differentiation between your competitors.