

The Business of Remodeling

BY CRAIG DUROSKO, GMR, CR, CGP

A Recipe for Success

A recipe allows you to do something over and over while achieving a consistent result. Someone who is preparing a meal from a recipe for the first time will follow the recipe precisely, measuring or weighing each ingredient, and adding them in a specific order.

After using the recipe for a while, however, they might add a dash of this or a splash of that, varying taste or look slightly each time. Or they might forget to add an ingredient because they are cooking from memory. Or maybe they want to add something new or change the ratio of ingredients. The result may be similar to the original, but it probably won't look or taste the same.

A RECIPE FOR SALES

If you are responsible for lead generation or sales, you need to set up a recipe for success—a system that can be repeated again and again in different circumstances, yet still achieve a consistent result.

In the cooking example above, the cook has become “unconsciously competent.” The meal may be a success, but when you ask them to do it again, they may not be able to reproduce it.

The same thing can happen with sales unless you have a recipe—a repeatable, scalable system that can be taught to others. It's not enough to be a successful salesperson; to teach and mentor others you need to know what makes you successful (“conscious competence”). Often, the key to sales success is in the little things, like the ability to set realistic expectations or skill in listening. Without a recipe, these skills can't be passed on to others, so the recipe—and the outcome—changes.

Creating a recipe for sales will not only create consistency, but will make it possible reach ever-higher revenue goals. And it may also make it possible for you eventually to transition out of sales all together and let your team take over.

This way of thinking also applies to lead generation. I'm sure you are doing specific things now

that generate repeat business and referrals—follow-up visits with clients, thank you notes, or asking for referrals, for example. If you had a marketing recipe, you could ensure those behaviors always took place. And it would also be easier to delegate those tasks when you can't do them because you're too busy.

CHANGING THE RECIPE

Baking a dozen cookies for family and friends is different from baking 30 dozen cookies for retail sale. Quantities and bake times change. The same is true of your marketing and sales recipe as your goals, or your business environment, changes.

For example, if you want to increase revenue in the coming year, you will need more sales or bigger projects or both. If a salesperson saw 90 people last year and sold 18 projects, the close ratio would 20% ($18 \div 90$). To sell 20 jobs at that ratio, the salesperson would need to sit with 10 more prospects. That means your marketing efforts would have to reach enough additional people to generate 10 additional qualified prospects. Follow the recipe, but change the quantities.

TESTING THE RECIPE

The only way to know if a recipe is working is to continually test the results. For the chef, that means being sure to taste the dish while it's cooking. For remodelers it means tracking results.

You may already know what is working for you, but if your goals change, you may need to try

something different—a new “ingredient.” And you will need to track the results to know whether or not it worked as planned. Here are some marketing and sales metrics you will want to compile:

- Leads by source (referral, direct mail, etc.);
- Sales calls per week/month/year;
- Contracts signed;
- Close ratio (contracts \div sales calls);
- Average job size (dollar amount);
- New networking/business events;
- Contacts with past/current clients;
- Number of mentions in the media;
- Referrals and repeat customers.



Set up a recipe for success—a system that can be repeated in different circumstances yet achieve consistent results.

As you review your goals for this new year, write out a plan to achieve them as if it were a recipe that someone else will have to follow. Start by listing every step in the process, and be sure to include all of the small details. If there are backup processes or contingency plans, include those as well.

As the year progresses, and you begin to track results, you will be able to see which parts of the recipe are being followed, and which are not, where it's working and where it needs tweaking. **PR**

Craig Durosko is the founder of Sun Design, a design/build firm located in McLean and Burke, Va., that is celebrating its 25th year in business. The company has won more than 80 design and service awards and was recently named one of the “Best Places to Work” in Virginia for the second year in a row. Durosko can be reached at craig@sundesigninc.com.

Read more from Craig Durosko at www.ProRemodeler.com.