



WORKSHOP: EFFECTIVE FOLLOW UP

SESSION 4: THEY WANT TO RENT – BUT NOT FOR A WEEK OR MORE

## SESSION 4 – THEY WANT TO RENT – BUT NOT FOR A WEEK OR MORE

Kenny Pratt here. Thanks for joining me in this fourth of five sessions in the Effective Follow Up Workshop. In this session we are going to talk about those times when the prospective customer indicates a desire to rent, but doesn't need the storage space for a week or more.

I know you are busy, so I want to help you make the most of the time you spend with me today. If you are listening to the audio version, what I want you to do is to take a minute and grab a piece of paper. It will be much more efficient to take notes as you go. By taking notes and writing your ideas, you'll have to listen to the audio fewer times for it all to make sense.

If you are reading the written version of this session, then I would encourage you to take notes in the hefty margin.

### OK, NOW THAT YOU ARE SETTLED IN, LET'S ROCK THIS THING

So, congratulations! You were able to help your prospect see the value of storing at your location and you invited them to move forward in some way and they took you up on the offer. Perhaps they reserved the storage space. Perhaps they committed to coming to your location to finalize the paperwork.

This is great progress, but take a deep breath and keep your sleeves rolled up a bit longer. You still have work to do.

The follow up we are discussing here in this session is different than what we were dealing with in the last session. Your prospect hasn't told you that they are still shopping around (even though they may be), but instead they have indicated some level of commitment to renting with you. That commitment may be quite solid, in the form of a deposit, but more likely it is in the form of a verbal indication to come down and check out your property and/or rent a space. You may have an actual appointment, and if you can get one, by all means you should. However, in my observations it seems more likely that your prospect has indicated his or her willingness to move forward and because they don't need the space for a week or more, you only have an approximate idea of when that is going to happen.

Whatever the level of commitment, you don't want someone to swoop in and steal your prospective customer, so you need to stay in the game.

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### THE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are my specific recommendations. I recommend you follow up once with your prospective customer a couple days after the initial contact because even though you

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Psst... remember to take great notes in the margin

think they are moving forward with you, they may still be shopping. You want to make sure you are still in the game.

Here it gets just a little more tricky so give me you full attention for a second. If the prospect indicates they will be renting sometime in the next month, then you will want to be in contact with them once per calendar week until the week they need the storage space. During these interim contacts you will be solidifying any vague appointments and turning them, as much as possible, into concrete appointments with a specific date and time. The week they need the storage space you will follow up with them the day before the appointment to confirm the appointment.

If they can't keep the original appointment then you use the opportunity to reschedule.

Occasionally you'll have a prospect who is shopping more than a month in advance of their need for storage. In this case I would recommend that you follow up once a few days after the initial call and then again once a month until you are within four weeks of the approximate rental date. Once you are about four weeks away you can shift you frequency to approximately the once per calendar week schedule outlined above.

Of course these rules aren't hard and fast. There is no foolproof system that allows you to turn off your brain. These recommendations are intended to give you a good starting point and an idea of what an effective follow up plan looks like. At the end of the day you will have to use your best judgment about the timing of your follow up and put your follow up actions on your calendar.

If you have not been strong at follow up before taking this workshop you may lack confidence in your follow up skills. The natural outgrowth of a lack of confidence is that you will be hesitant and will likely follow up too little. I urge you to experiment, to practice with coworkers, and to learn by real world experience. You will make mistakes, and that is perfectly ok.

The best thing you can do if you are going to make a mistake while learning to optimize your follow up activities is to goof up by making too much contact, rather than too little.

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#### FINDING REASONS TO CALL

You are going to be following up with your prospective customers more than you are probably accustomed to. The next question then becomes, "What the heck am I supposed to say when I contact these people?"

Finding a legitimate reason for the contact is easier than you think. The final follow up call is the easiest because you are simply confirming the appointment the next day. But what about the one or more interim contacts?

Here are some ideas.

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- One reason to call is to check in to see if they have additional questions or concerns. That would sound something like: "Just giving you a call to see if you've had any questions or concerns come to mind since the last time we talked." Some variation on this theme can be used multiple times.
- Another reason is to move from a general time for them to come to your store to a more specific time. That would sound something like: "I know you said you would be coming in sometime the middle of this week. Is there any chance we could firm up a day and time because I want to make sure I'm here and ready to give you my full attention at a time that is convenient for you."
- Another alternative is to let them know that an even more desirable unit has become available. That would sound something like, "I know we talked about a 10x10 storage space. I just had a space come available on the front row. In my opinion the front row is more secure because I can see it when I step out of the office for any reason, and people at the gate can see it even before they come onto the property. Would you like me to reserve that space for you? (Or, would you like me to move your existing reservation?) By the way, when did you plan on coming in because I'd like to make sure I'm available with my full attention when you come."
- A call that sweetens the deal is always welcome, so you might consider offering a coupon for one free box or some other discount. That would sound something like: "I know we talked about your storage space a few days ago. Just in case you were putting together your packing supplies, I wanted to let you know that we have a new promotion where we are giving away a free box. Are we still on for the storage rental next Wednesday?"
- Rather than give boxes away, you might simply call to let them know you sell boxes less expensively or better quality than The Home Depot. That would sound something like, "I forgot to ask you when we spoke last whether you are still packing or looking for moving supplies. If you are, some people don't think of their storage place as a good place to get boxes. I'm just bringing it up because our boxes are meant for moving and storage and surprisingly, they are less expensive than what you would find at Home Depot or Lowes. Also, I just want to confirm, are we still on for Wednesday?"
- Another reason for calling could be to raise their awareness about the importance of a high-quality lock. That would sound something like, "I just wanted to give you a quick call because I forgot to mention the importance of your lock in our conversation the other day. I thought you might be preparing

you things for storage and may be looking for a lock about now. You are welcome to bring any lock you like, however I would recommend a high security disc lock. It is you your best deterrent to any theft or vandalism. You can pick a decent one up at Home Depot or Lowes. We also sell a really nice lock here if you just want to make it a one-stop trip. Are we still on for Wednesday?"

So there you have several examples and I'm sure with a little effort, you could come up with others.

In each of these scenarios, you are checking in with your prospective customer with the aim of firming up an approximate time or to confirm an actual appointment. You are also giving the prospective customer an opportunity to alert you if they have found something else or if a competitor has grasped their attention. Knowing about problems in-advance of the date your prospect needs the storage spaced will allow you to go into recovery mode if they have started to abandon you for a competitor. If you discover a problem with the pre-arranged timing, then you are in a position to reschedule the next steps to move the rental process forward.

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#### ONE LAST FOLLOW UP THE DAY BEFORE APPOINTMENT OR EXPECTED RENTAL

So, we just covered six reasons you might use for an interim follow up call. The last step in the follow up process is to confirm the appointment. This follow up usually happens the day before the appointment and is very straight forward.

The recommendations about how to effectively follow up with your prospect the day before the appointment were covered in detail in session 3. If you haven't consumed session three, then after completing the Fast Action Workbook for this session you should go back to session 3 and get the tools you need to effectively follow up right before your appointment.

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#### HERE'S THE QUICK REVIEW

So let's summarize. Effective follow up is a good business practice, even when you believe you have your prospective customer is committed to renting from you. Follow up will save you from losing sales to competitors.

Breaking it down step by step...

- Plan to follow once up a couple of days after the initial contact.
- Calendar follow up calls once a month if the rental date is more than a month away.
- Calendar weekly follow up contacts for each of the four weeks prior to the rental.
- Use the interim contacts to solidify the actual date and time for the rental.

- Confirm the appointment with your prospects the day before the appointment. This will serve as a reminder and give you an opportunity to reschedule if necessary.
- Put each of the follow up contacts on your calendar.
- Plan a reason for each follow up. Brainstorm your own reason or borrow one of the reasons above.
- Make the follow up calls with an attitude and demeanor that expects that the prospective customers will be happy to reconfirm their commitment to storing with you.
- If you discover something has come up, or that you misunderstood the time they needed storage, simply back up and start again as though you are setting the original appointment.

Well, that wraps up Session 4. For a good refresher and to get the most out of this session, check out the Fast Action Workbook.

Up next you will learn how to go beyond the phone and use other means of communication like voicemail, email and even text messages to facilitate your follow up efforts.

So, thanks for joining me. I'm Kenny Pratt signing off until next time.