


I find I don't have to follow-up on my emails to them — responses are prompt. Their attentiveness has caused me to quicken my responses, especially to text messages. Using digital tools effectively, Generation Y reps have grown their territories faster than their predecessors.

Now, back to our sales challenge. My advice to the young person in my opening

paragraph was: (1) go meet the customer face-to-face; (2) ask relational questions to see if you can gain access to their world; (3) if you succeed, they probably don't have a relationship with their existing vendor and will share issues of concern; (4) get a commitment with pricing to close the business. If the customer is not willing to go down this path, they are just price shopping. By providing a quote all you are doing is enabling the customer to try to lower their current supplier's pricing. When your competitor has to match your pricing, beware he will do the same on other competitive accounts. My experience has shown that most customers ask for bids because they aren't satisfied with their current supplier.

The rep invited me to lead the sales call so she could see how the sales process unfolds with an experienced professional at the helm. We were fortunate that the customer had made a change for better pricing the last time they bid their business and were disappointed with the results. We secured the business with higher pricing and better service.

The Next Gen's attributes described above were evident during this learning experience. On her next call, she was off and running, not needing me on this activity again ... *time well spent.* 

Time well spent



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I love working with Millennials (Next Gen, or Generation Y). In my senior years, I have had the privilege of working with the brightest young minds as they progress into outside sales. A new rep came to me recently and asked how best to handle a request to quote (RFQ). She had received it on a Tuesday and the RFQ was due on Friday. The bidding company was not in our sales history file, but a Google search revealed it was a 20-year-old research pharmaceutical start-up. The rep was eager to hear how I would approach this challenge.

Before I tell you how this sales situation developed, I want to outline why I have such respect for this young generation of professionals. Here are some of the Millennial attributes that I find admirable.

Respect for authority – In my five decades of sales management and training, I have not seen a group so eager to learn from their elder's experiences. And it's not only those with gray hair they seek out. I have watched them interact with leaders of various ages. The Millennials were reared by a generation of Baby Boomers who taught them the value of honoring those who could mentor them with superior, well-developed, and proven skills.

Schedule everything – I get great satisfaction from closely managing

the details of life and Millennials do as well. The sales system I have developed requires using many closely monitored habits that are "common sense but not always common practice." If followed, they produce results. One example is maintaining a calendar of confirmed appointments with "places to go, people to see, and things to do." Like me, Millennials operate with a detailed 30-day calendar. With this group I don't get call reports with comments like, "the person I went to see wasn't available."

“By providing a quote all you are doing is enabling the customer to try to lower their current supplier's pricing...”

Tend to be assertive – This new generation has strong views. They are polite, but will cut to the chase when needed. While they respect authority, they make sure their opinions are heard and considered. Millennials know they can count on me to support them when they are dealing with dubious customers; I know they will make their clients keep their commitments. Neither I nor this group of young professionals has much patience with deadbeat customers!

Want fast, immediate results – Millennials envision the world as a 24/7 work place; their foot is on the gas pedal.

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