

SELLING

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THE FRONT LINES OF BUSINESS

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Hunt down every sales opportunity

By Jenny McCune

Opportunity lurks everywhere for **Byron Whealen**, national account manager for **Xpedite**, a multimedia message provider. It's just a matter of not letting opportunity pass him by.

And it's certainly *not* a matter of sitting back and waiting for opportunity to knock.

Whoever he's on the phone with or sitting next to in a bar better watch out. One of his biggest clients and best friends is a man whom Whealen happened to sit next to. "I started chatting with him about what I do for a living," Whealen says. The two started out as fishing buddies, but eventually the friend became one of Whealen's regular clients and an excellent lead provider.

But Whealen isn't a barracuda or a cutthroat competitor. "To me, the fun part about selling is meeting people," he says. Whealen has networked at football tailgate parties, at church – pretty much wherever he encounters people.

Persistence pays

As national accounts manager, he's responsible for landing and nurturing major national accounts. He sells them broadcast messaging services, which include everything from sending out plane e-ticket confirmations by e-mail to sending out recorded voice messages to a financial



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institution's delinquent accounts.

When Whealen lost a major cruise line as an account, he didn't give up. He kept calling his contacts within the company over and over again. "I won them back," Whealen says. "They eventually realized that we

had the best value and features, plus they had local support by using us."

The account came to its senses in part because Whealen was diligent about educating them about how Xpedite would do a better job than its competitors.

Enjoy your work

Selling has to be fun, Whealen says. "If you take it too seriously, it will eat you up. You've got to try and make it as enjoyable and as fresh as possible, call after call."

He's enjoyed selling since he was a youngster. His first sales opportunity: Selling hot chocolate to skiers waiting to use the main gondola in Vail, Colo.

Whealen also learned a lot about sales while working at the various restaurants his father owned. "I think sales is 80 percent of the stuff we would do in my father's restaurants," Whealen says. "It's talking people-to-people. It's communicating with them and understanding what people need."

Continuing service

Whealen sees few downsides to selling. In fact, his least favorite part

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Previous experience: Eleven years with **Xpedite** in various sales and sales management roles. Prior to joining **Xpedite**, he worked for **Pitney Bowes** and **Minolta**, and has 20-plus years of sales experience.

Secret of his success: Focusing on networking, persevering and knowing his company's services thoroughly.

What motivates him: "What's on the plate for each day is different. Also, the freedom. It's a lot different than working behind a PC every day."

Best advice: "Don't ever give up. The next call might be the largest opportunity that you've ever uncovered."

What drives him crazy: "Reports."

How he copes: "By not putting them off."

Secret weapon: "Creativity." He finds out what a prospect enjoys doing (playing golf, watching a football game, eating a nice dinner) and invites the prospect to do that activity with him. ■

of the job is being a top salesman (He's won numerous salesman of the year and sales manager of the year type awards). "You have to be very driven to succeed and once you succeed, then you end up putting a lot of pressure on yourself to keep on succeeding," he says.

His favorite part of selling for Xpedite is the ongoing nature of the sale. "It's not like selling someone a fax machine and say-



ing 'See you in five years,'" Whealen says. He and a team of customer service and technical folks keep working with the customer in a consulting capacity.

"This isn't a sale when I see them, they sign the contract and I'm gone," he says. "This is a sale when almost daily or weekly, we are in conversation, and clients become friends and business partners." ■

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