

-- Speaker 0 00:04 Make it right. The manufacturing podcast,

Speaker 1 00:09 motivational speaker and author Jim Rone spent his life sharing great lessons and one of those was how to handle setbacks and disappointment. He said you've got to learn to handle the winters because they come regularly. Some are long, some are short, some are difficult, some are easy. They can be economic winters, social winters, personal winters and right now many of us might be going through all three at once. Jim Rowan's solution to handling the winters, it was to get stronger, wiser and better. Welcome to the maker ripe podcast. I'm Janet Eastman and this week on the show or going to help to try to get you to do just that. Adjusting your sales and marketing approach may help you whether this current economic climate and engage with customers in new ways they need right now. I'm pleased to have Todd Hockenberry back on the show. He's the owner and founder of top line results where it helps B to B business owners and leaders grow their business. Hi Todd. It's really great to speak with you again. How are you?

Speaker 2 01:10 I'm doing great, Janet. Thanks for having me back on the show.

Speaker 1 01:13 My pleasure. So from your standpoint, what do businesses need to be doing right now? Like what does that business landscape look like for those B2B business owners right now?

Speaker 2 01:24 Yeah, there's clearly something new, right? We've not experienced this. I'm 53. I've not experienced this kind of an immediate disruption in, uh, in, in my career, certainly. And I don't think anybody has, I think you'd have to be pretty old to, to have something like this to back to the great depression. But, um, the difference is this is, this is got an end point, right? We can see the end to this. So while there's a lot of uncertainty right now, we do know that we're going to come back out of this on the other side. So we're counseling people when I'm working with my clients, talking about what they can do now to be prepared when, when social distancing starts to let up and we can get back out and we can get back to business and we know that's going to happen. So that's where there's uncertainty, but there's also a light at the end of the tunnel when I'm an optimist. And I really believe that we're going to fight our way through this pretty hard when we come back. And I think we're going to see some new opportunities for business owners. We're going to see new behaviors by consumers and buyers. Uh, I, I just think there's a really big opportunity for the companies that are thinking the way buyers want them to think and to be positioned for that when it happens.

Speaker 1 02:28 What should sales teams be doing right now when they want to reach out to their customers?

Speaker 2 02:35 Well, I, I think the, the key thing here is, is to get your mindset right. And what I mean by that is that, that we should have got banished this type of thinking from sales, the thinking that selling you something you do to someone that you have a list and you run down the list and you just make the calls where you just blast out those annoying emails or, or you just, you know, do value really weak followups. Right? This is the time where we have to all recognize that we need to come out of this and start to be selling like people want us to sell. And that is being a human and treating people like human beings and not just a number in a, on a, in a CRM or a name in a on a list. Um, it's time to really understand that selling is something you do with someone for their benefit first.

Speaker 2 03:22 Put them first. I just saw a survey today, Janet that said that, um, they surveyed, I think it was Gartner surveyed marketing managers and ask them if they built their marketing strategies based on, on their customer's outcomes or customer's issues. And it was less than 50% of people said they did that. I couldn't believe that. That, and that was marketing managers admitting that they are not building their strategies based on their customers and their customers' needs. And again, this sounds so simple, but you, we all know this. When we get, when we get these communications and we get into sales situations and people treat us like something less than human, that's what you're recognizing. So I'm hoping that smart companies, and I would love it if every company, but I doubt that's going to happen. We would put away these --

-- , these annoying old mindset type of tactics and really start to think about how they can help first treat people like humans and get their minds right.

Speaker 2 04:15 So that's number one. I think it's a, it's a gut check time to think about how you really view sales, really think about it. And I would, I would challenge CEOs, business owners, leaders to look at your marketing, look at how you create a website, look at the emails you send out, and really put yourself in your buyer's shoes and your prospect's shoes and see if you would really want to receive that stuff yourself. And if it's really focused on them. So a good transition to that is we've been counseling our sales clients to really use the phone and it's so easy just to hit send on an email, but yet it's the worst communication possible. It's the lowest common denominator. It's one dimensional, it's very basic. And it's so easy to ignore people right now. Want to talk to other people. It's their home.

Speaker 2 04:59 They're not in their office, they're not traveling. So they w they're available. They want to talk to people, they want to hear from you. They want to know that you're there. They want to know that you care. They want to know how you can help them today, keep their business afloat, solve the problems of keeping their customers and, and how they can continue. They can be ready, help them be ready for when things come back. Um, I mean I could go on and on and what sales teams should be doing or they should be thinking about innovating in their business in terms of how they approach their market and, um, how they can use video and, and zoom and other ways. I just did a demo this morning with a friend of mine who has capital equipment sales and we ran through a video demo where they, they couldn't go to trade shows probably till the fall and they missed three of their big trade shows.

Speaker 2 05:46 So they were creating virtual demos of their equipment online and using tools like zoom and GoToMeeting. And it was really powerful and they never really thought that before. That's what you have to start doing now. You need to innovate and thinking about how people want to be reached, what they need and how you can reach them. I there's lots of other things too. I, I've worked with clients right now on cleaning up their CRM and, and getting their data right and working on messaging and, and lots of things they can be doing to get better at the basic skills of selling. So now's the time to really hone your craft and get better as an individual professional and as a team.

Speaker 1 06:25 I think it's interesting that you say it's so easy to send an email and you know, just push that Senegal, okay, I reached out. Right, but it's such a capo because I think w well more now more than ever, people want that human touch. And you said that, but over the last week, I can't tell you how my email inbox has just multiplied. I'm getting emails from people I've never even heard of because everybody's sending an email. And I think if somebody does actually pick up the phone and actually physically talk to somebody, you're going to stand out from the crowd because you're not just, you know, mass blasting. You're taking the time to find out how that individual on the other end of the phone is doing.

Speaker 2 07:10 It's exactly right. Yeah. And I, I think this is the best test from marketing and sales tactics there is do I like this? What I like this, if somebody did this to me, would I respond if somebody sent me this email and I, very few people run things through those tests. I even go further and I say, I say to CEOs and leaders, I say, look at your website, would you, would you look at that? Is that interesting? Is that going to engage you? And usually the answer's no. It's all about our products because our nice pictures of our building or equipment or something like that. Um, but right now, I mean, I, I would, I would swallow my email. I don't even know if that's a thing, Janet. But I would, I would, I mean right now everybody, everybody, if you say, and I'm telling my clients, if you send an email to somebody, don't mention coven 19 or coronavirus in your emails.

Speaker 2 07:54 People are so tired of getting them, give them something that they, they can, they can help them, right? I mean, starts to remain. If you're going to send an email then at least make it, um, like one of our clients did recently, they --

-- deal with electrical equipment and some buildings are shutting down or or facilities are shutting down. So they said, here's the 10 steps you need to take if you're going to shut your building down to prevent your equipment from being damaged, we're here to help if we can. Now that's a powerful email, right? If you can, if it's a targeted audience and you know, that's an issue, that's the way you want to approach it. But then do I really care about your policies internally? I kind of don't.

Speaker 1 08:29 Yeah. Yeah. So right now, Todd, I mean it is kind of, it's an interesting time. It's a bit of a downtime, but it's not, people are still working, but they're not sure what they should be working on. And for salespeople should they actually be selling right now?

Speaker 2 08:45 Yes. If your defined selling is helping somebody solve a problem, yes, you should be doing that. And, and um, if you think selling is just cranking through a list, like I was saying before, no, don't do that. You're gonna know everybody and you're gonna hurt yourself in the future. But if you're dealing with a mission critical, a customer that has to be open than that has this fits healthcare or transportation or um, anything that's kind of be government facilities, right? Whatever's needs to be running right now. You're, you owe it to them to tell them how you can help them stay ahead of the curve and deal with whatever problems that is you solve. You owe it to them. Right? And, and that's the place you want to get to where you don't think of it as interrupting them or annoying them or cold calling them.

Speaker 2 09:29 You think of it as, I know I have so much value that I would be, it would be wrong for me not to tell you and so I'm going to reach out to you. That's where you want to get where you feel like I'm such an asset as a salesperson. My company is so helpful to this target market that we serve, that my obligation is to reach out to you. If you can get there and if your, if your mindset's in that mode, then go go call people today, run down your list, call them the column with value call column with something that makes a difference for them. If they're your existing customers and they've been with you for years, call them right now just to tell them you're there to show them you care. Ask them how they're doing and ask him if there's anything you can help with.

Speaker 2 10:07 Right? There's nothing wrong with that if they're already your customers, but so prospects, yes. If they're, if you again, but it has to be helpful. If you think you're going to sell something, not if you can't make a very good value argument right now, you can't make your case for change. People aren't going to change right now. Right. They're only going to do something new if they absolutely have to. So you better be, it better be urgent or the reason for people to change. So I, I, I'm a fan of it if, if you, if your mindset's right.

Speaker 1 10:37 Okay. So what are some of the best practices for salespeople who are working from home? Because presumably this is maybe something they do occasionally or a bit, but not, you know, 24, seven right now.

Speaker 2 10:49 Yeah, I've been doing this for about 11 years and uh, before that on and off, I had worked from home. So a couple of best practice kind of things. Um, have a schedule, stick to your schedule and get up, start work, plan your day, uh, block off time. Um, and, and you know, I'm not a big multi-tasker. My wife, well, let me back up. I, I want, my brain says I can do it, but my, my, my history and my, my productivity says I can't. So I, that's the big one I fight is not being distracted and not getting pull back in email because at heart I'm a Salesforce and so I want to take the call, I want to respond to that email immediately and I have to fight that because it's not the most efficient way to work. If you do, what you're going to find up doing is you're gonna at the end of the day and go, what did I do today?

Speaker 2 11:38 You know, I kinda just did a bunch of stuff, but I didn't really do any big things. So I like to make sure I don't multitask so I won't have a quiet room, shut the door and tell the kids when I'm working, put a sign out if you have to. I also think in terms of scheduling, I like to active and passive work. So what I mean by that is if I'm writing or if I'm solving problems for clients, are working on a deliverable for a con --

-- sulking project, I'm going to block that out. And then I'm going to alternate that with more passive work and that might be thinking and strategizing things where I can take a walk or go sit up back on my porch and think a little bit where I'm not just heads down on my computer all day long. I like to alternate.

Speaker 2 12:19 Um, there's a, there's an also another one I think I've found very helpful. Um, and I didn't do this until recently and I, I regret regret not doing it. It's called eat the frog, which is an old, which is, which is an old Zig Ziglar line. So I stole that from him. And the idea there is that we come in at the beginning of the day, take your one or two items that you're kind of not looking forward to doing that you may postpone or procrastinate on and do them first. Eat that frog right off, right off the bat and then it's done. And it's behind you. Because if you don't, it's going to like follow you all day and it's kind of a mental weight that's there. So don't just, don't procrastinate, just do that thing first and then it's off your plate. You feel great.

Speaker 2 13:01 I like a chunking my work, like I mentioned before, there's a technique called the Pomodoro technique, which is setting a timer for 20 minutes or 25 minutes and then just totally focused on that one thing for that long. And then when the alarm goes off, you'd go to something else or take a break. And um, you'd be surprised what you can get done in 20 or 30 minutes are really focused work. I'm not a big fan of stacking calls either, so I recommend breaking things up. I don't want to have five straight phone calls for five hours. It's just a lot. You get that, that your mind starts to wander. So, and I, I like to prepare for the day before, uh, the evening before for the day and then, and usually on Sunday evenings for the week. And, uh, I don't want to go into it just thinking, well I'll get these things on eventually cause I end up not getting them done.

Speaker 2 13:49 So I think planning and having goals that you want to reach and then breaking those things down and scheduling them is the key. But, um, you know, have a nice place to work. Um, find a quiet place to work. Some people like to get up and get a shower and shave and dress like they're going to work. And I don't think that's a bad thing. I've, I've done this long enough that I don't know. Well I live in Florida, so dress up clothes for me is, you know, golf shirt and shorts. So, um, so I'm pretty comfortable but whatever you're comfortable with, but also it keeps you in the moment and focus I think is what you want to do. And um, I like working from home cause I think there's actually, if you do it right, there's less distractions in the office. And um, so I'd recommend salespeople think about how they can really take advantage of this time right now.

Speaker 1 14:31 Yeah. I've found actually working from home, I'm far more productive and far more focused than I've ever been. And you can get, you can hammer a lot of work in five to seven hours that you know in a normal nine to five work day at the office that you didn't get half the stuff done. So it can be really effective. But you're right, you have to set those parameters, you have to shut the door, you have to focus and you can't be going and putting in a load of laundry or you know, cutting the lawn between things because that is not working. So <inaudible>.

Speaker 2 15:02 Yeah, that's a good, that's a good point. Janet. I think you're right. I think if, if you're disciplined, most people can get done in four to five hours what they would do at eight hours at work. And that's if you stay focused, if you really dig in and do it. And then again, I, I might argue with you a little bit on that. I, I oftentimes like a lunch, I'll go run an errand or I'll take a walk with my dogs. Like, I, I want to get away a little bit. Things I couldn't do in an office, but I'm not going to do it for two hours, typically. Maybe 15 or 20 minutes. But it's a good break right now. I'm refreshed and ready to come back and hit go after something in more with more focus attention.

Speaker 1 15:38 Yeah. I think, and it all depends on, on what you're like for me, if I take that break, I'm, you know, I'm pretty much done for the day, but if I stay on it, I can power right through. Right. So, yeah. Yeah. So let's talk a little bit about what marketing can do to help in a time like this an --

-- d moving forward. Like when we come out the other end of this thing and people get back to their offices and get back to work and things start to get back to normal. Where's marketing in all of this?

Speaker 2 16:07 Yeah, marketing is similar to sales. I think the, I mentioned one before where you say, I said create virtual events or a trade show. Uh, that really boils down to content. I think it's time for marketing up, update up their content game and uh, create more digital online content that is really built from a customer's point of view. And I think SEO is important right now a lot of people are searching, we're monitoring search on a lot of different topics for our clients and we're seeing some decreases in some areas where we see some spikes and others. So you've got to know your audience, what they're searching for, and then match content to those searches so you can get found, which is kind of the classic inbound idea. I'm also a big fan of aligning your marketing with your sales teams right now. This is a great time to interview sales people or other subject matter experts and get really good detailed insights from what's going on in the field and then create content around that as opposed to just kind of a writer or a marketing person sitting in a room, you know, get out there in front of your customers or at least get in front of your sales people that are talking to your customers so that you can hear from them directly.

Speaker 2 17:15 What's going on and then write and create content around those things. And that's a great way to align sales and marketing. Um, I'm a, I'm a big fan of looking at my, your website and put a, put a hard lens on it and say, you know, Hey, what can we do better here? And, and, um, and, and look at how people actually engage with your website, understand things like click tracking and heat maps and other tools like that that are readily available. And, uh, watch how people experience your website and get, get better at it. Make it better. I mean, I don't assume that what you have is what your customers want or is easy to or if it makes any sense to them even. Uh, I think marketing can also be thinking about outside the box a little bit. I know you and I both love podcasts.

Speaker 2 17:58 Um, I'm seeing people to get into podcasts and very niche audiences and do really, really well with them. And, um, podcasts are really growing in terms of their, um, their reading, people comfort with them. And, and, and, um, the engagement level people have on podcasts is amazing. You know, they'll listen to something for 20 minutes or longer, whereas your email barely get through the subject line, right. So if you can create a niche podcast in your area, um, and I know a guy I was just talking to this morning, he's got a podcast on materials testing, so really niche manufacturing thing, but it's really good. It's, there's, he's the only one doing it. So there's a lot of Greenfield space out there I think in podcasting for niche audiences. Um, and, and again, if you use podcast the way I use them, I guess on a lot of podcasts, but I run my own and I, this is actually a little secret sauce on podcasting.

Speaker 2 18:53 I actually invite people on my podcast that I want to be my customers. So, so instead of calling them up and you know, uh, talking to them about my services, I, I, it's a way for me to do this myself to potential customers and give them something of value. First. They get an episode, we promote it, they promote it, they look good, I make them look good. It's a really great way to introduce yourself to people. Um, so yeah, I think I'm thinking about things like account based marketing. If you haven't been doing that, um, eCommerce or we're adding things like advisory services to your offering. These are all things you could consider, but maybe the biggest one I think marketing can do is dig back into your value proposition. Think about your value statements and the what your customers, what you're really about and what your customers want and make sure all your messages and everything you're creating is a, is a tuned to that. That's probably the big one, especially after that survey I mentioned earlier that I just read about <inaudible>

Speaker 1 19:48 <inaudible> you just mentioned too that, you know, SEO, if you've got your SEO right, it can be really powerful right now. Let's talk about why being inbound is more important now than e --

-- ver because I guess simply people are just not out there and they have a lot of time to be sitting there on the internet looking around. So if you've got the right search terms and whatever that inbound could be coming your way.

Speaker 2 20:09 Yeah, I, I, there's no question digital is growing. I mean, it's, I guess it's not that big a secret, right? I mean, everybody's going online now, but again, I think the, the opportunity is a standout from the crowd, right? If, if there's more content and it certainly in my world, the sales and marketing world, there's a flood of content coming out right now. So again, how do you stand out and how do you create, um, something that is, is going to jump out at people and make them want to make that click and come and find you. And again, I think it's time to go to the next level cause that's what people want and are in my book inbound organization, we the point that organizations need to change because expectations are different from the buyers and I think that's going to continue to accelerate where the companies that are not human not helpful, that don't have helpful websites, don't have content out there that's going to solve problems when they look, when they're looking that don't have sales people that aren't helpful first.

Speaker 2 21:05 I just think those buyers are going to punish those companies. And uh, I think inbound is, is a mindset, right? It's the same mindset. It's customers first. How can I help you? How can I educate you? And then once I give you something of value, then you're willing to go to the next step and have a conversation with me. That's the recipe. The reciprocity principle and human beings are like that. I think more than ever now we're, we're looking for that human connection. We're looking for people that care about us first. We're looking for those, those kinds of connections. And when you see it in a, in a company or a sales team or a marketing effort, right, you kind of know it when you see it and it's attractive and that's never going to change. And I just think that aspect of inbound is going to be more important now than ever.

Speaker 1 21:47 <inaudible> can you leave us with a couple of tips on, you know, just how companies should be positioning right now for what's next?

Speaker 2 21:55 Well, I'd go back to some of the things we said at the beginning. I, you have to know your audience. You have to know what their issues are now and then you have to be adjusting. So positioning right now is about adjusting and I think it's about throwing out some assumptions you may have had. And I think this is the time to talk to your customers now more than ever. Ask them how they can, you can help them. Ask them where they're going. Um, just worked on a survey today with one of our clients that they're asking them very detailed questions about where the market's going, cause they wanna understand how they can respond and help them and they built up enough credibility that they'll get that feedback from the marketplace. So I think that's it. That's it. Positioning for what's next is, is uncertain right now, but we can start to make assumptions and start to build some models around that.

Speaker 2 22:41 So, um, and I wouldn't wait until it's all the way back. I would start setting my company up now to be, have the right mindset and then the right attitude and the right tools and tactics moving forward. So, so if you're outsourcing your, your call or meeting scheduling to a third party call center that's just blasting people through a list and you're hoping to get 1% response rate or something like that, this may be a time to rethink that because I think that type of strategy is going to become less and less effective all the time. So to me, positioning is about mindset and then focus on your customers and work backwards from there.

Speaker 1 23:19 Yeah, I think that if people are, you know, having a tough time right now and you reach out to them and you know, just give them an ear and see if you can try to help them, that's going to sit with them for a very long time and probably work for you in the future. So a very good points. Todd, thank you so much for your time

Speaker 2 23:38 now. My pleasure. Thanks for having me Janet and best of luck to you and all your, all your audience and your customers.

Speaker 1 23:43 Yes, thank you. Um, Todd Hockenberry is the founder and owner of top line r --

-- results and if you're looking for a better understanding of what it means to really be customer focus, check out a podcast that I did with Todd back last summer, episode 58 of make it right and Todd shared some tips on how to get customer focused. That is our show this week. Please check out our Twitter and LinkedIn feeds that are on our podcast page and subscribe and share this podcast with your friends and colleagues through iTunes, Google play, Stitcher, Spotify, and YouTube. You can also check out Todd sport. He's the coauthor of inbound organization, how to build and strengthen your company's future using inbound principles and make it right. Podcast is brought to you by Kevin Snoop, leadership advisor and author of the bestselling book, make it bright five steps to align your manufacturing business from the front line to the bottom line. I'm Janet <inaudible>. Thanks for listening to the makeup right podcast.

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