The 90 Day Contact Program

The one thing you must do to grow your business

SHIFFT

Hi –

My name is Russ Cummings over the last 34 years, I have been working with dynamic family and privately owned businesses that want to grow to the next level. I help them develop clear growth strategies, increase sales, reduce costs and make more money.

This 90 Day Contact Program is one key elements for success. This short guide will explain it all.

Here's why your business needs a 90 Day Contact Program…

Research has shown that unless your contacts have a meaningful contact from you every 90 days they will start to forget you. A simple contact action, like a newsletter, phone call, etc., will re-imprint your business with your client, whether they read the newsletter or not.

In addition, Too many businesses rely on social media as their primary contact channel for clients, referrers and prospects.

The challenge with this approach is that its largely poorly targeted, single channel and very passive - we are relying on your contacts to log onto a platform and view your post. We are also very inconsistent in who, how and when we contact the important people for our business.

My experience is that if you don't have a systematic process for ensuring that you regularly contact your clients, prospects and referral partners then you are missing out on opportunities and limiting your business growth.

Building a systematic Contact Program

The perfect Contact Program has 4 key components.

- **Clarification** - who should we contact and why?
- **Tailored Activities** - define the potential contact activities that we can use.
- **Scoping** - for each Contact Type develop a customised contact program based on matching appropriate activities and resources.
- **Systematic Implementation** - systematise your contact program to drive delivery on a consistent basis.

My experience is that clients who have systematically implemented a 90 Day Contact Program in their business significantly grow their business (often by a factor of 2 or 3 times), improve their relationships with clients and build stronger referral network partnerships. It is the only piece of advice that I give that is compulsory because it works!

Clarification →

- Creates focus
- Identifies priority contacts
- Analyses your contacts

Tailored Activities →

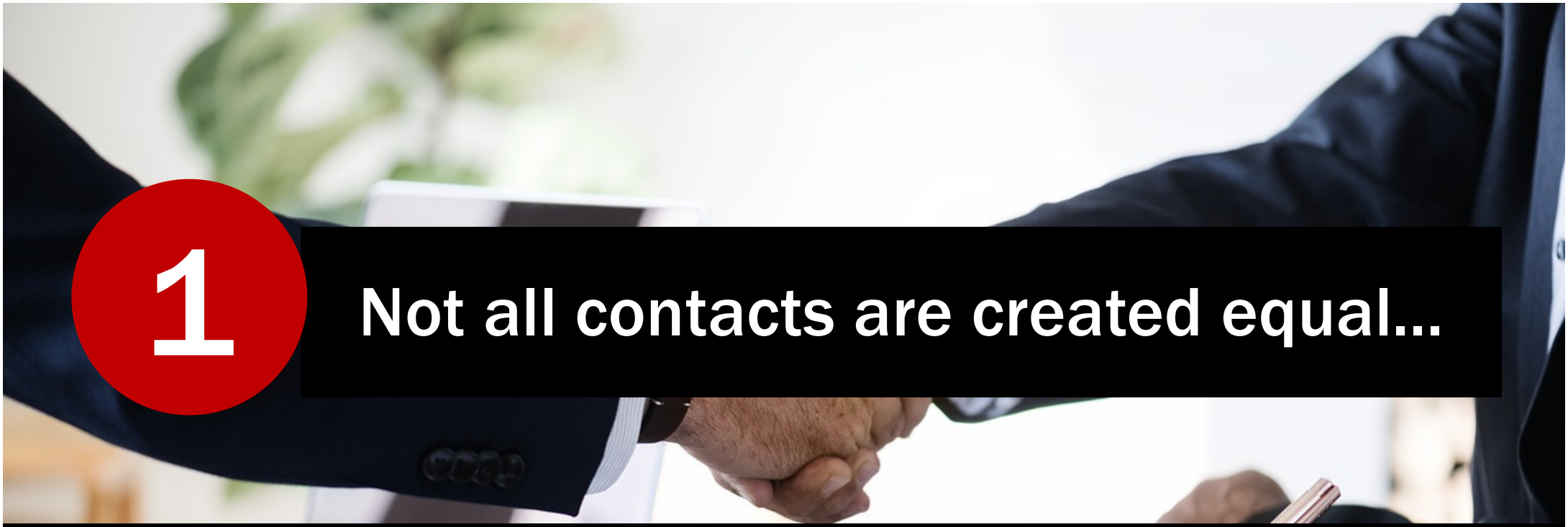
- Focuses on relationships
- Highlights the opportunities
- Brainstorm new ways

Scoping →

- Match contacts to activities
- Sets a clear contact plan
- Establishes a contact rhythm for your business

Systematisation

- Set up simple processes
- Introduces some discipline
- Regular contact even when you're busy



1 Not all contacts are created equal...

The squeaky wheel gets the oil

Too often in business we spend more time looking after the clients that complain, cause issues, fail to pay their accounts and are generally difficult to deal with. As a result ,we often neglect our best clients and fail to contact and service them regularly.

Don't make the mistake of confusing transactional activity with meaningful contact that enhances your relationships.

Grade your Customers

Grade your customers by establishing meaningful criteria and scoring.

Example criteria: Sales $, Potential growth, fit with your business, capacity to pay, etc. Pick the 3 or 4 most important criteria – "Less is more!" Then, create a scoring scale by giving each criteria a score out of 100. The total scores must add up to 100.

Develop criteria and scores for clients, prospects and referrers. Use a simple spreadsheet or CRM system to make this easier.

Score each client in your contact database and sort them based on their Total Contact Score from highest to lowest. Look down the scores – you will find that there will be natural breaks in the scoring that will enable you to identify "bands" of scores.

This should allow you to identify your A Class, B Class, C Class, etc., clients. As a rule of thumb, you should have no more than 20% of your clients as A Class. You can do the same for prospects and referrers - but suggest you limit the number of grades to 2 to minimise complexity.

Criteria	Weighting	Scoring Notes
Sales over last 3 years	40	1 point per $1K. Max 40 points
Potential growth	30	Great potential 30, Reasonable 15, Poor 5
Fit with our business	20	Good = 15+, Av = 10, Poor = 5 and less
Pays bills on-time	10	Good = 7+, Av = 5, Poor = 3 and less
TOTAL SCORE	**100**	

2 What should we be doing with our time?

Tailored Activities

Build relationships

Brainstorm a list of the potential contact activities for your clients, prospects and referrers that will help you build stronger relationships.

The standard activities are: phone calls, site visits, meetings, tailored emails, newsletters, lunches/dinners, group events, special events, birthday cards, Christmas cards/gifts, etc. Social Media posts are not usually part of this direct contact program se they are a “passive” contact that relies on your contacts logging on to see your post.

In coming up with your list, think of the activities that are potential relationship building activities rather than transactional activities.

For example, you may have regular meetings with your clients for business purposes – this is not what your contact program is all about – it’s about building relationships.

A contact program meeting is more about “how are we going?” than the next sale or service activity.

Events can be a range of activities that I usually divide into “Group" and "Special Events" where “Group” is an event like a seminar or social drinks evening while a “Special Event” is a more intimate event like an invitation to a sporting or cultural event, where numbers are limited.

Take the opportunity to brainstorm new and different ways of contacting your database. For example: for Referrers offer them a "reverse seminar", where they come to your business and tell you and your team about their business. This is a great way to build a strong relationship. What other activities make sense for you?

Customers	A	B	C	Hot Prospect	Prospect	Hot Prospect	Prospect	Suppliers	Centres of Influence
ACTIVITES	EXISTING CUSTOMERS			COMMERCIAL		GOVERNMENT			
Newsletters	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	6m
Phone Calls	M	6m	A	A		6m			
Visit	Q	A		6m		6m		S	A
Gifts									
Chris									

3 Customise your Contact Program

Frequency Key:

M = Monthly, **Q** = Quarterly, **6m** = six Monthly, **A** = Annually, **S** = Selected people only, ✓ = Yes

Match your customers and activities

The next step in the process is all about tailoring your activity frequency to specific contact groups.

The bottom line is that everyone on your contact database needs to be contacted at least every 90 days - more frequently is ok - less frequently than 90 days (eg.120 days between meaningful contacts) is not acceptable.

Create a Contact Matrix (see above) where you list "Activities" down the LHS and your Contact Groups across the top. Then for each Activity and Contact Group determine the frequency that it will occur.

For example, you may decide that you have a meeting with your A Class Customers once per quarter (90 days) and your B Class Customers every 6 months and C Class Customers annually.

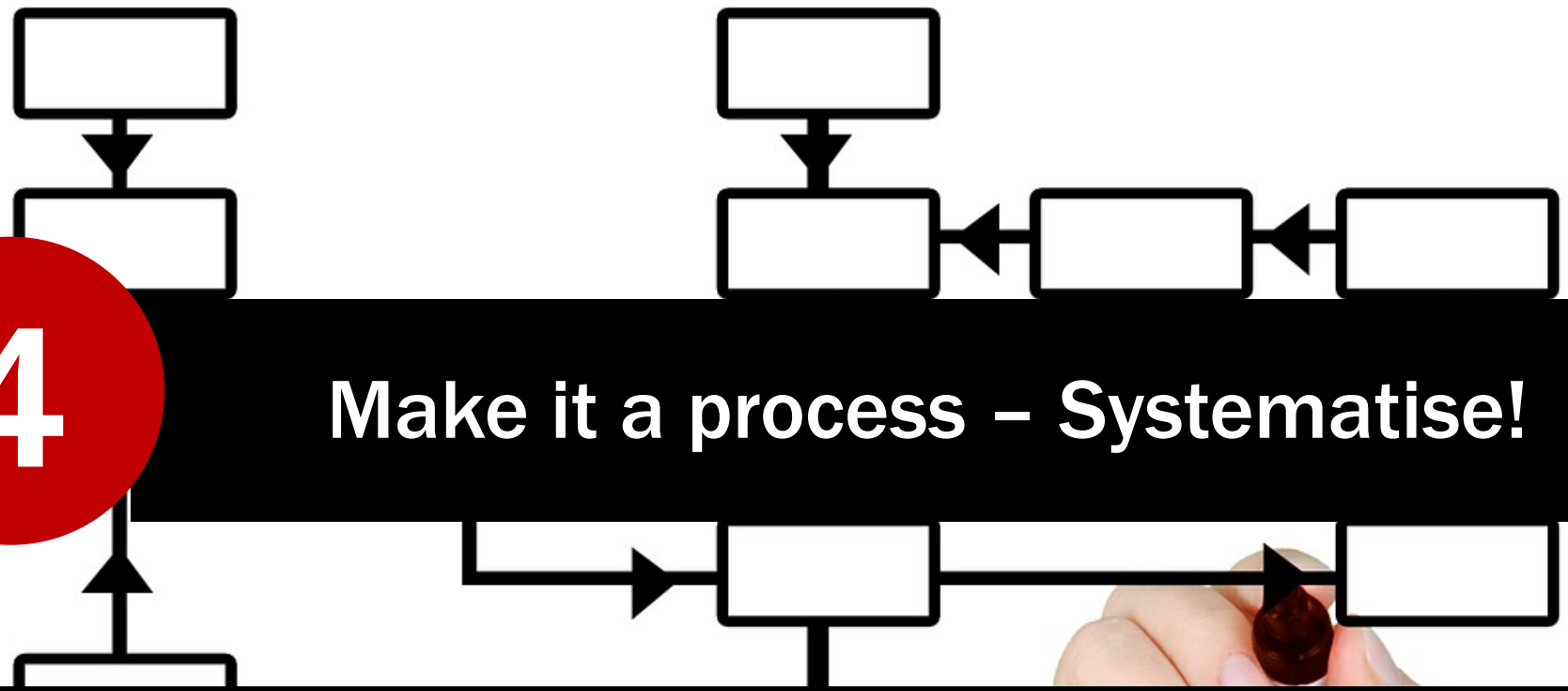
Work down the "Activity" list allocating frequencies to each Contact Group ensuring that in every column there is at least 1 x 90 Day contact frequency.

Use a broadcast tool like a newsletter as the base 90 Day Contact activity - everyone gets your newsletter every 90 Days.

For some activities you might not have a frequency e.g. events and in this case, I just decide whether I would invite "All", Selected" or "none" of a particular Contact Group.

Review your plan… does it make sense? Are you spending quality time with your A Class contacts? Are you spending too much time with contacts at the bottom of your rating? I know it will look daunting… until we make it a system!

Take the time to map activities that build relationships.



4 Make it a process – Systematise!

Leverage the tech to make it a system!

Systematise

The key to a successful Contact Program is to make it systematic so that you continue to do your marketing even when you're busy and avoid the "feast and famine cycle" that plagues many businesses.

To do this, you can use a spreadsheet, CRM, Outlook or index cards (if you're "old school") – any tool that allows you to organise your activities.

I find that either Outlook or a CRM (like Insightly.com) are the best solution.

Use the Tech!

Select a contact (start with your A Class Clients), look at your Contact Matrix and your first contact activity and frequency, for example: phone call – Quarterly.

Set a reminder in Outlook (or CRM) to call that client on a particular day and make it a "recurring activity" set to every 3 months.

The reminder will now appear on the date you selected and also remind you to call every 90 days. Do this for all contacts and activities spreading out the workload.

For events, newsletters, etc., you can tag them in your CRM or add them to "Contact Lists" in Outlook/CRM so that you can email them specifically.

For bigger lists, you may need to use a Campaign App like MailChimp or Zoho to avoid getting blacklisted as a "spammer".

You then need to set reminders to send newsletters, etc., for particular lists.

5 Make it happen – Lift off!

Make it happen

Now that you have your reminders and activities set up your system, you need to act on each prompt.

Set a dedicated time of the day - after lunch is a great time when energy levels are low.

Do not ignore the prompts as they will build up quickly.

If the system asks you to call Client X, then make sure you find 10 minutes to call them in the next day or so.

You can often save these calls for when you are traveling (use hands free, if driving).

Set up an Annual Calendar

The old fashioned wall-mounted versions are excellent for this.

Plan your events, newsletters, mail-outs, cultural and sporting interactions, etc.

Take note of public holidays and plan around these dead zones for many businesses.

Schedule preparation for activities so that they are organised, well-presented and you give plenty of notice, where required.

Be systematic.

Monitor your progress

There is little point in doing this if you don't hold yourself and your team accountable.

Use your CRM or an Excel sheet to track the number of activities you are doing against your plan.

Include discussions around your contact program in your team meetings. Monitor and celebrate your successes.

This is important because although you will get some immediate responses, it will take 3-6 months for the Contact Program to really ramp up.

Focus and discipline are your keys to success.

6 How to Turbocharge your Contact Program

Power Tips

FTI "Failure to Implement"

is the classic reason while most projects like this fail.

We go to all the trouble of planning and setting up the system and then fail to act on the reminders. Understand the importance of regular, systematic contact with your contacts and you will make it a priority.

Have the FOCUS to make great calls and the DISCIPLINE to do them in the timeframe you have set.

Plan your activities

What will you say in your "calls" and "meetings"? Script them at first so that you have thought them through.

Remember, each call/meeting/event is an opportunity to strengthen the relationship with your clients, prospects and referrers and are more about relationship than selling.

They are not "sales calls" even though they may develop opportunities.

Prioritise your time

Spend more time with your A Class Clients, Prospects and Referrers – it's a basic premise of the whole program.

Answer this question:
"If you have a spare business hour, then who should you spend it with?"

If your answer is not one of your priority contacts then think again!

Free Resources

If this program has got you thinking about how you can grow your business and you're keen for more, then head over to our website www.shifft.com.au.

At Shifft, you will find a wealth of materials and resources from blogs on a range of business topics to recordings of our webinars, to videos on business topics and our free business diagnostics where you can quickly identify key issues in your business or the limiting factors in a change process that you might be undertaking. Best of all – its free!

Contact Us

Contact Us
If you would like to contact us to discuss how we might work together, then please call, text or email Russ on the details below.

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Email: russell@shifft.com.au
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Tailored Support

We offer a range of services to assist you to grow your business. Each service is tailored to your individual needs and budget.

For some examples service packages and prices visit the website.

After an initial discussion, we will use one of these packages as a starting point to meet your needs.

Resource Links

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