

## FLEXIBLE INSIGHTS

# Stand Out from Your Competition

**D**id you ever notice how sometimes we forget or lose sight of what our real advantages are over the competition? Perhaps it's

time to revisit your company's basic sales and marketing fundamentals in an effort to energize sales, create new business opportunities and increase profitability.



Calamusa

As suppliers to the flexible packaging business, most of us possess a unique ability, technological advantage, or specialty that has positioned us to serve our customers in our own unique way.

Sometimes these advantages become blurred when we get caught up in our day to day activities in processing an evolving competitive market environment. Competition comes in many forms. Sometimes it's from the large entity with protected supplier status or smaller more agile companies positioned to provide excellent quality and unique capabilities.

### A valuable tool

We know that some of the new marketing trends being implemented by our customers to energize their sales are to use packaging as a more effective tool to stimulate flat or incremental sales, "get the consumer's attention," differentiate their packaging from the competition, offer "value added" line extensions, and provide convenience to the consumer. These are the very trends that

we, as an industry, communicate to our customers as to how innovative flexible packaging can and is being used as a valuable tool to grow the market, increase sales, and provide consumer convenience.

Consumer product companies that have implemented these package marketing strategies have been amazed at the results. They have captured new sales, increased their market share by creating new customers, or taken them from the competition. As a result of changing their marketing strategy they have stimulated flat growth or mature product categories and along the way they have created a new level of brand loyalty.

### Differentiate yourself

We have the same challenges as our customers! We are also competing for a customer, an account, the sale.

**We all need to be more conscious of what makes up our specific selling advantage.**

Aren't our objectives the same as our customers'? Should we not also find ways to differentiate our capabilities and products from our competition? When was the last time your company offered a new "value added" product or service to its sales strategy?

Are you giving your sales staff the tools they need to compete?

Be sure that your customer clearly understands your company's talents and strengths. Find unique ways to

"stand out" from the competition. Don't assume anything; it may be time to reacquaint your customer with "who you are" and "what you and your company have to offer." Is it the ability to run short runs, provide superior print quality, better registration control, "just in time" shipments, whatever. Make a list of your strengths, correct your weaknesses, and create a selling strategy around these strengths and abilities. Don't take for granted that your customer knows what your company's strengths are because it may have been some time since they were updated.

### Be creative

Look to broaden your sales and marketing horizons by reaching beyond your comfort zone or traditional customer base. You may be delighted to find that new or more profitable business could be right around the corner in a new

account or market segment not traditionally served by your company. Be creative and search out new prospects and business opportunities. ■

Dennis Calamusa is founder and president of ALLIEDFLEX Technologies Inc. a Sarasota, FL, based consulting-sales and marketing company providing global flexible packaging machinery solutions to the North American market. He can be reached at ph: (941) 923-1181, e-mail: dfcflex@hotmail.com, or visit [www.standup-pouch.com](http://www.standup-pouch.com).