



Newsletter Vol. 16 - Introduction

Softengine News is dedicated to keeping you up to date with the latest information regarding SAP Business One systems, Softengine solutions and Best Business Practices.

What's New?

Spotlight on Product – SAP Business One Dunning System

Nothing means more to a company than its Accounts Receivables. Dunning Letters in SAP Business One help to promote better collection management, and can be very effective in collection efforts. Additionally, interest rates and charges can automatically be applied in the collection process. For obvious reasons, a complete and continuous follow-up of outstanding debts is essential for business whenever customer payments are not immediately bound to the delivery of goods and services or drawn automatically using direct debit.

The dunning system in SAP Business One enables you to trace liable customers who have not paid their open invoices within a given time span. It enables you to handle the process from, for example, sending a reminder to customers of their outstanding payments through to referring such customers to collections agencies.

The dunning system is composed of windows in which preliminary definitions are made. A step by-step Dunning Wizard guides you through automatic creation of dunning letters according to the selection criteria. The dunning system covers the following documents:

- Open A/R invoices, including invoices that are partially credited or partially paid
- Invoices that include installments
- A/R credit memos
- Incoming payments that are not based on invoices

One can choose from options to exclude any relevant A/R invoices from the dunning process - exclude a specific invoice or all invoices. If you print dunning letters, SAP Business One creates the dunning letters and saves the dunning run. In addition, the dunning level and the last date of the dunning letter are updated for invoices included in the dunning run. When a dunning letter is created for a customer, the business partner master data record is updated. On the Accounting tab, the Dunning Date field displays the date on which the dunning letters were created for the last time. To view the history of dunning letters and the list of all invoices, choose Business Partners Business Partners Reports ® Dunning History Report.

Are You a Best-Run Business?

The Smartest Small Business Marketing Strategy During a Recession

If a business wants to sell more, there are two things it can do: it can attract new customers; or it can entice its existing customers to come back and buy again. All the marketing efforts it makes are aimed at achieving one or other of those two goals.

In times of economic recession, it's particularly important for a small business to concentrate its efforts on marketing strategies that actually will drive more sales...and do so quickly and reliably. Not surprisingly, most businesses concentrate their marketing on getting new customers. Yet this is by far the more difficult of the two tasks. New prospects are naturally skeptical, and it's a hard, uphill struggle to persuade them to put their trust in a business for the first time.

Getting repeat business from existing customers is much more straightforward. The customers have already given their trust once, and assuming they've had good service and value for the money, they already are predisposed to buy again. Perhaps even to spend more this time. Existing customers are the best prospects for any business. It follows that one of the most valuable assets a business has is its customer list. If a business can collect the names and contact details of all its customers, it can often save a large part of its advertising budget and focus on sending out marketing communications, invitations and special offers to people who already have bought and are much more likely to buy again. The business can even go one stage further and create a sense of club membership amongst its customers. By inviting them to "join the club" rather than just hand over their contact details, and by inviting them to special "members only" events, or giving them discounts on particular products, the small business can generate a sense of loyalty in the same way that bigger companies do.

Another advantage of this approach is the referrals it can lead to. Customers can be encouraged to bring their friends along, and can even be rewarded if those friends become customers and join the club. This reinforces the sense of community, because the customers themselves have helped create that community.

What is vitally important in this marketing strategy is that the customer who's signed up should hear from the business regularly. If he gives his name and contact details in return for a promise of club membership, and then hears nothing for weeks on end, all goodwill will be gone. Having collected its customers' contact details, the business must make the effort to stay in regular contact with those customers.

Equally important is that the messages the business sends to its customers should not come across as an undiluted series of sales pitches. The customer doesn't want to be sold to; he wants to choose to take advantage of a special offer. And the prudent business will not only send offers to its customers; it will also send out other material that will be both of interest and of value to those customers.

Following this marketing strategy over a period of time can cement a small business into the community it serves in such a way that it becomes a focal point of that community. Very few people will want to "leave the club," and most will feel that it would be disloyal to buy elsewhere.

A loyal and committed customer base is the best basis any business could wish for in times of economic recession.

About the Author: Bernard Howes is founder and publisher of The Really Useful Newsletter™, a specialist marketing tool for the small business. <http://www.TheReallyUsefulNewsletter.com>

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Improving the quality and volume of traffic to your website is what Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is all about. There are some strategic things you can do to increase the chances of your prospect finding your website.

Some key facts to know:

- 64% of B2B decision makers use a search engine as their first source of information to make a business buying decision
- Out of the remaining 36%, 87% said they would likely use a search engine at some point before making a final decision

For more information about Search Engine Optimization (SEO), call or email Barry Lederman for additional details: 818.704.7000 – blederman@softengineusa.com.