



## Cold Calling that Works!

---

Cold calling. Two words that often send shivers up a salesperson's back-- even if outside temperatures are warm. Cold calling is one form of prospecting that many salespeople don't do, do poorly or do sporadically. The reasons are many, however, in my ten years of sales training it boils down to:

- Don't know how to make an effective call. (Kind of like trying to ski a black diamond hill with no lessons.)
- The content of the call is not enticing to the prospect; therefore, results are minimal.
- The salesperson sets him/herself up for failure by assigning the wrong goal to the call.

Here are some best practices that will warm up your prospecting calls.

**Get a script.** The usual excuse from salespeople is that scripts sound canned and disingenuous. Salespeople would rather get on the phone and wing it. (But by golly, it's genuine!) A carefully crafted message will lower a prospect's defenses and quickly engage the prospect without sounding pushy or desperate. Scripts sound canned because salespeople forget there is another word associated with a script: practice. You must rehearse your script to reflect the right inflection and warmth. A great public speaker looks like they're saying the message for the first time. You can bet that speech has been practiced 100 times.

**Refine your elevator pitch.** Most elevator pitches are stuck on the first floor, in desperate need of maintenance. The biggest mistake is that salespeople talk about what they do versus problems they solve. The result is a bunch of salespeople talking about themselves. They also sound like their competitors by using words such as efficiency, quick turnaround and experience. The poor prospect really doesn't see or hear any reason to change--and doesn't. Great elevator pitches are real. They paint a picture for the prospect that clarifies how you can help their specific situation. Here are a couple of examples of the right and wrong way.

**Intellectual version:** We have superior customer service. (Yawn.)

**Picture version:** We work with clients who are tired of being stuck in voicemail trees and never talk to a live human being.

**Intellectual version:** We help companies grow their bottom line. (Yawn.)

**Picture version:** We work with companies who are tired of losing to price after spending hours writing proposals.

**Set the right goal.** Many sales teams are chasing the wrong goal when cold calling. Their number one goal is to get an appointment. They achieve the goal, get the appointment only to meet with a prospect with no need, no decision making ability and absolutely no money! There is only one goal in cold calling: to qualify or disqualify an opportunity. Just because someone wants to meet with you doesn't mean you need to. They might just be lonely! Set an appointment only when it is a good fit for you and the prospect.

Get a script, refine your pitch and work on the right goal. Make 2008 your best year ever in sales.

---

January 2008