
Good News About Cold Calls!

by LENANN MCGOOKEY GARDNER

Looking to expand your customer base?

You can put your web site out there — but they probably won't see it.

You can do search engine optimization — but the rules for that seem to change daily, and most businesses are in categories that are populated with thousands of competitors.

You can do mass e-mail, but most people delete, without reading, dozens of e-mails daily.

You can do a snail-mailing, and if it's clever enough it will probably be looked at; the percentage of people who act on it, however, is likely to be tiny.

Or you can simply call.

While many professionals avoid cold calling, it can be highly successful — if you approach it with the proper attitude. In cold calling, your goal is to get appointments; to arrange to be face-to-face with someone who might spend money with you. Sales research tells us that more face time and phone time with people who can buy what we're selling equals more sales.

Here is a step-by-step guide to cold-calling success.

Escape Your Fear of Rejection

Remind yourself that any rejection you receive is a rejection of the interruption your phone call represents, not of you personally. Many people reject because they have been burned by cold callers and telemarketers in the past. Don't allow yourself to take their coldness personally.

Don't get cold, tough or pushy — people hate that. In your call, start with a clean heart position: a sincere desire to see your prospect get what he wants, whether or not he gets it from you. You're in business to be of service, and if you can help, great. If you can't help, that's fine, too, and be sure to say that you appreciate his time.

Create the Optimal Structure for the Call

Once you get the prospect on the phone, you have to pique their interest. Begin by saying something provocative, and ask her a question that is designed to reveal a challenge she may be facing.

Leave an Enticing Voicemail

If you miss the specific person you are trying to reach, leave a voicemail. Make sure that it is something likely to interest him and encourage a call back. Deliver the voicemail about as loudly, and at the same speed of speech, as the prospect's outgoing voicemail message. The last word of a voicemail is always your prospect's name, not "goodbye."

Then wait about 24 hours for your prospect to return phone messages in good faith. If she does not return your call, call again. Again, wait about 24 hours for your two messages to be returned. If you don't hear from Ms. Jones, leave one more message.

Write a Compelling E-mail

If you have left three voicemails each one day apart, you have maximized the likelihood of getting a return call. If you don't receive a callback, you may do one more thing — about 24 hours after leaving your third voicemail, e-mail your prospect. Utilize much of the same wording from your voicemails and consider do-

ing the e-mail in slightly larger than normal type so it stands out. If you've phoned for three days running, left an e-mail on the fourth day, and still get no response, assume your prospect has no interest and move on.

Keep Focused

If you happen to speak with your prospect, remind yourself of your clean heart position and be interested in your prospect rather than just advocating for him buying your product/services. Selling is not giving a speech about your services. Instead, selling is about inquiring about your prospect, honestly expressing an interest in him, and remembering that you are there to be of service, or, if you can't be of service, getting out of the way so his day can move forward.

The most important thing to listen for, when talking with a prospect is **pain**. Pain consists of:

- Things that are going wrong for him today.

- Things that have gone wrong for him in the past.
- Things that may go wrong for him in the future.
- Things that he has heard have gone wrong for others in similar circumstances to his.

When you hear **pain**, ask a question about it, especially if it is in an area that might be helped by your service or product. Whatever he responds, make sure he knows you heard, even if what he said is "negative."

Don't Forget Your Objective!

Remember that the goal of the call is to set an appointment, not to sell you or your services — just to have him agree that it makes sense to meet with you briefly. He will balance the potential benefit of such a meeting with the investment of his time, and make a decision about whether to make that investment. Your goal is to get a meeting date and time on his calendar before you hang up the phone. □



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