

# COLD CALLING TIPS



Cold calling is a necessary part of this business. If you want to grow your business, you have to contact new prospects, and cold calling is still a principle way to do that. Though, in this marketplace, it's more challenging. These tips will help you handle cold calls like a pro:

## **Warm Up as Many Cold Calls as You Can**

When possible, precede your calls with a mail or email campaign. Before calling, send the prospect a short, personal letter or email to introduce yourself and describe your services, and indicate that you'll be calling in a few days to gauge interest. Then, promptly follow up. Wait a couple of days for them to receive the initial communication, then call. This allows you a "warmer" introduction; you can introduce your call by saying that you're following up on the material you sent.

## **Know What You're Talking About**

Make sure you're up to speed about your community and industry or market news. You want to sound plugged in and connected whenever you call prospects, and be able to discuss with them how your products or services fit into the "big picture." If the prospect asks you a question and you don't know the answer, it's fine to say so—but always find out the answer to their questions and follow up with them.

## **Shift Your Focus**

When the primary goal of your call is to make the sale, prospects are aware of your agenda—and that puts them on the defensive. Try approaching your call with a different goal: focus instead on discovering whether you're able to solve a problem for the other person. It will put the prospect more at ease, and make him or her more receptive to what you have to say.

## **Craft a Script . . .**

Your time on the phone is limited; you need to let the prospect know what you have to offer and why he or she might want it, in just a few short sentences. A written script lets you focus on points you want to make. It doesn't need to be word for word, because you'll want to keep the conversation fluid, but it will help you to be prepared for the conversation.

## **. . . but Customize Your Delivery**

Don't become too attached to any particular script or language. Every customer has specialized needs and preferences, so once you have a basic script in place, you can fine tune it to fit individual prospects. Edit your calling script to hit nerves for each new audience.

## **Listen as Much as You Talk**

People almost always feel "pushed" by sales enthusiasm, which tends to include the unspoken assumption that your product or service is a great fit for the other person. But most likely, you've never spoken with this person before, and don't actually know much about him or her. A better strategy is to invite the person to share concerns with you and to guide the conversation, rather than sticking to a pre-determined "pitch." For example, if you hear, "We don't have the budget," you can reply, "That's not a problem," and then invite the prospect to tell you more about the situation.

## **Be Persistent**

In this market, persistence is key. Eighty percent of new sales are made after the fifth contact, yet a number of salespeople give up after two or three. There is, however, a difference between being persistent and being pushy, and it depends largely on your motivation. Are you pushing for a commitment to meet your own goals or quotas, or because you truly believe you have a solution that can help the prospect? If you're pushing for the customer's benefit, rather than your own, you're more likely to see success.

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