

The Modern Day Cold Call

Create sales conversations that lead to long-term relationships

If I could show you a way to easily annoy almost every prospect you meet, would you be interested? Well, here it is. Simply start your sales questions with, “If I can show you a way...” Countless sales calls since 1973 have begun with this phrase. (Which means we are now on our third and fourth generation of buyers who are sick of hearing it.) For example, if I asked you:



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“If I can show you a way for your facility to make \$50,000 more this year, would you be ready to move forward with us today?”

If you can do that for a customer ... great! But because you used a clichéd phrase to start your questioning, the educated buyer’s defenses go up. Plus, you made them feel like a 9-year old. While this type of question was originally created to generate curiosity and gain commitment, it has run its course. Remember, before posing sales questions you first need to build respect and trust – then create curiosity with a question.

The 2014 approach

Be prepared before making your call by thinking clearly about the objective. A good objective is what you want the buyer to do at the end of the call in order to move you a step closer to gaining the sale. That objective is not about what you are going to say. Instead, it’s about what you want them to do as a result of your call. For

example: The objective of my call is to get the prospect to agree to allow me 30 minutes for a demonstration with all key decision-makers within the next 14 days.

Build respect and trust before pounding the cold prospect with a ton of features and benefits. This is cardinal mistake No. 1 in the sales world. Think about it. What do most prospects think a salesperson is going to do? Waste their time, right? Sales reps must take that fear away before ever pitching the value of their solution.

Prepare and rehearse a simple opening like the one below:

“Thank you for your time. I know how valuable it is.”

Engage with a hard-hitting headline and hook question.

“I wanted to let you know about a product we offer that has helped facilities of your size increase revenue by as much as \$50,000 a year. Would you be interested in hearing more about how we did it?”

If you get a positive response, follow with, *“If you like what you hear, great, we can talk more. If not, no problem. Thanks anyway for the time.”*



The two reasons this approach works is:

1. It is non-threatening. In negotiations, this posture is called *slight indifference*. Slight indifference demonstrates to the prospect that you may be worth talking to. It also tells the prospect you aren't about to try to jam something down their throats.
2. The Big Benefit (increase revenue by \$50,000) is tough to walk away from. When delivered with confidence, it will usually lead to a response such as, "How the heck can you do that?"

Be CLEAR

If a prospect allows you to continue, do not begin firing off a bunch of features and benefits. Ask a few short questions to better understand their current situation. CLEAR questions are easy ones to remember, and even easier to deliver.



- C-** What are you currently using to solve _____? (Enter problem that similar customers face.)
- L-** Have you looked at some of the latest technologies that are _____ (add benefit)?
- E-** What do you find effective about your current solution?
- A-** What would you alter if you could about the way you are doing things now?
- R-** Who, as well as yourself is responsible for researching products in your facility?

The above questions will not take a long time to deliver. In fact, they will quickly tell you exactly what to focus on in your presentation. This means that each word you use will be designed to help them find solutions to the current problems as well as make them happy in ways they didn't think possible.

So this month, take time in your office to develop at least three hooks to use on cold prospects and current customers. And by not sounding like you've been transported from 1973, you will create the type of sales conversations that lead to long-term relationships...and orders! ■