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Top Telesales Techniques that Work!

(How to make a fortune selling by phone)

By Jenny Cartwright

Australia's Sales Calls Guru

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The strategies and tips in this E-Book are based on sixteen years of experience of telemarketing award winner, Jenny Cartwright, making telesales and training telesales staff for many major companies.

They have been proven and tested on many businesses but not every strategy and tip will work for every business. It is up to you to pick those strategies that are appropriate for your business. The author accepts no responsibility for the results from your applications of the strategies described in this publication unless you are being coached by her personally.

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About the Author

Jenny Cartwright, Australia’s award winning telemarketer and trainer, tested and proved the ideas in this book with sixteen years of research work and telephone selling experience before sharing them with you.



Following a successful career in face-to-face selling as Sales and Marketing Manager of Telford Hotels and then International Sales Manager for Centralian Hotels, Jenny changed direction to telephone selling.

From 1991 to 1997, Jenny successfully promoted Tom Hopkins and Anthony Robbins on four of their visits to Australia through direct mail and telemarketing campaigns. She also promoted Zig Ziglar, Sales Congress 91,92,93,94,95,96 and 97, James Rohn, Denis Waitley, Harvey Mackay, Michael Gerber and Jay Abraham!

Since 1995, Jenny has conducted in-house customised sales, telesales and customer service training for companies and individuals around Australia. Some of the companies she has helped are Australian Casualty and Life, Macquarie Corporate Telecommunications, People Telecom, Tourism Tasmania, Prudential Corporation, Phillips Components, The Real Estate Institute, The Valuer General’s Department, APS Chemicals, MSA, National Investment Institute, Hexal Pharmaceuticals, ID Warehouse, Delaney Kelly Golding, Acorn Australia, APS Chemicals, R.M. Smith & Son, Phytomedecine, Chandler Macleod, Australian Associated Press and ING Life.



Website: [http:// www.telesalestraining.com.au](http://www.telesalestraining.com.au)

Email: info@telesalestraining.com.au

Tel: 612 9427 3479

Introduction

How much business are you missing out on because you, or your sales people, either avoid cold-calling new prospects or contacting past and existing customers regularly by telephone?

Often, it is the thing that you least like to that could win you more business and get you the top results you are looking for.

Telephone selling and telemarketing skills are essential for salespeople to possess if they are to increase their prospects, sales, leads and appointments. Calling prospects on the phone is quick, cost effective and can boost your market share immediately.

As far as I am concerned, there is only one way to achieve the best results: call the prospect first to qualify them and interest them in what you have. Then, get permission to email, fax or mail them particular information.

After that, you can arrange to call them again at a specific time for further discussions. Ensure that you call back at the specified time to discuss your proposal and close the sale.

Many of my trainees, before meeting with me, short circuit the technique of calling first - they make telemarketing a two-step process. They have the habit of mailing their information and **then** following it up. The results are not great because the important first step of calling the prospect in advance was overlooked to speed up the process.

No, my friends, if you want the best results, there are no short cuts: **CALL MAIL FOLLOW UP**

... and incorporate the strategies and tips in this book.

I've tested and proved everything I've written here.

Now, you can simply choose the ideas that are relevant to your product or service. **Good luck!**

Pre-call Planning

You will get more respect from your prospects if you take time to find out about them before you call them. You may do this by asking the receptionist first. You could also get their brochure or look up their website. By doing this, you turn a cold call into a warm call because you can refer to what you know about them.

1] Know what you would like to achieve from each call before you make it. For example, the call might be to make a sale or get some information about the company. It could be to check if the customer is satisfied with your product or service so you can ask for a referral or it could be to find out when they are thinking of upgrading.

If you know what you want from each call, you are much more likely to achieve it.

**Stop for a moment before picking up the
phone to dial and think about your objective.**

2] Have a secondary objective for each telephone sales call. Pick something that you have a reasonably good chance to succeed with, such as having them agree to accept your literature and put it in a file where they can access it in the future, or getting them to say a time when it would be worthwhile to call again.

That way, you will enjoy success on every call and feel good about yourself, too.

3] **Never** waste a call. If the person is unavailable, ascertain what time they will be available for you to call back. To make sure that the call is not wasted, use it to update all their address, telephone, mobile, fax and email details while talking to the receptionist.

4] Leave an “interest grabbing” message on their voicemail to let them know you will call again. It reminds them of your name one more time, even though you did not speak with them (think of it as free advertising).

Getting Through the Gatekeeper

Sometimes, when you ring the receptionist at a company and ask for the name of a person in a certain position (like the sales manager or the product manager), the receptionist may get suspicious of you, believing you are in telesales and that you will waste that person's time. He/she won't want to transfer your call, so they tell you that the person is unavailable.

I find that it is better to use this first call as an information gathering call. Pre-empt their negative response with, "I wonder, Mary, whether you can help me?" Nobody minds helping others.

Listen for the name of the person and use it. Have your questions ready:

"I am wondering who makes the decisions in your company on sales training?"

"How many salespeople do you have?"

"Do you have your own trainer?"

When you get the information you asked for, then you reply, "Thanks Mary, you have been very helpful. Could you tell me what time would be a good time to speak with Mr. _____ on the phone?"

You can even preface your questions with, "I want to be sure that what I have to offer will suit Mr. ____ so I wonder if I could ask him a couple of questions?"

If you have smooth-talked Mary well enough and the person is there, she will transfer your call through.

If not, call back later or the next day and say, with a smile and authority in your voice (stand up to get the power in your voice), "Good morning Mary, I would like to speak to Mr. ____ please". There is less likelihood that Mary will

not transfer you through if you say it with authority and without putting a question mark at the end of your sentence.

You may then thank Mary for transferring the call.

Building Rapport Quickly

The beauty of getting all the information up-front is that you can build rapport immediately with the decision-maker that you want to talk to. You are not going to waste his/her time as you have already done your homework and found out that he/she is a good prospect.

Your approach could be, "Good morning _____, I understand that you have ten salespeople working for you and you do not employ a trainer, would that be correct?" "Well, the reason for my call is _____" OR you can use it as a referral, "Good morning Mr. _____ I was talking to Mary in your office and she told me that you have ten salespeople and no full-time trainer at the moment. If that is correct, Mary thought it would be a good idea if I spoke to you direct about employing an outside trainer."

When this does not work!

If you get a really suspicious "gate-keeper", who will never put you through - here's what you can do. Salespeople are not trained to be good "gate-keepers"; they are usually friendly and helpful, so you ask the "gate-keeper" to put you through to "Sales".

The person who answers the call will just tell you that you have been transferred to the wrong department and they will be delighted to put you through to the person you want to talk to. If this technique fails, try the "Accounts Department" they are not trained to be "gate-keepers" either!

When they ask what it's about?

I don't know about you, but I get a bit irritated when people ask me "What do you want to speak to him about?" You feel like there is no point in telling them because they are not the ones who are going to buy from you.

However, they are the ones that decide whether or not to transfer your call. This is where it is important to have an "interest-grabbing" statement ready which is packed with value. You would not say "I want to sell him my Time Management System!" You need to say what the benefit of your service is to the decision maker, e.g. say that you want to share an idea with the decision maker that will save him ten hours a week.

The more relevant and customized the opening value statement is, the more likely that you will get through to the person you want.

For example, an "interest-grabbing" statement to a "gate-keeper" could be; "We specialize in helping sales managers spend less time on paperwork so that they can have more time out of the office making sales. If this is an issue for Mr. _____ at the moment, we may have the answer. I would like to ask him some questions to establish that."

Handling Voicemail

"How can I sell anything?" I hear you cry. "It's just a waste of time. Nobody is ever there!"

Here is where I beg to differ. This is your opportunity to create a relationship with a new customer. You **must** leave a message because, if you don't, it has been a waste of a call and your time. You have missed an opportunity to advertise the name of your company and relate what you offer to the customer. The more that they hear the name of your company, the more familiar you become to them and the more likely they are to take your call next time.

The message you leave, however, must grab the person's interest and make him or her want to know more.

How Not to Leave a Voicemail

For example, if you were to say "Good morning, Joe, this is Susan from Singleton Publishing. Please call me back on _____", it would not grab my attention, nor would I make it a priority to call you back if I did not know you and the reason for your call.

In telesales, I do not recommend that you ask them to call you back; it is up to you to try calling them again.

In the next topic, we will cover how to create "interest-grabbing" statements, i.e. how to introduce your product or service on the telephone. I'll help you develop the exact sentence that you should leave on a voicemail message.

It is not just what your product or service is - it is one sentence stating what your company, product or service will provide for the customer.

The Correct Way to Leave a Voicemail Message

In the example above, I would say "Good morning, Joe, this is Susan from Singleton Publishing, our latest series of "How to Sell" books will offer your

sales team an incredible number of ideas on how to increase their sales this year. I would like to discuss with you exactly how well they could work for you. I will call you again tomorrow morning, in the hope that I can reach you then. If, in the meantime, you would prefer to call me, my number is _____."

Following this voicemail message, if Joe is interested, he might call back. If not, he will be expecting the call next day as promised. He will not be impressed if the salesperson does not do what they said they would do; call back the next morning.

If you state that you are going to call back, make sure that you do, or you will definitely damage the relationship before it starts! For those customers that do not have a very good memory, ringing back also works, because the name of your company is familiar, i.e. they've heard of it somehow before - but they can't remember how!

Here are some examples of "interest-grabbing" statements that I have created for companies to leave on answering machines and voicemail:

"Our comprehensive training programs are guaranteed to get you twenty per cent more sales, leads and appointments."

"I am calling with two new ideas on how you could increase your bottom line this year."

"My job is to save you the massive amount of time and energy you must expend on recruitment."

"We help organizations like yours to forecast their demand and supply inventory more accurately so they become much more competitive and save money."

"We offer the lowest rate on the market for international calls which means we can save you an enormous amount of money and/or reduce your phone bill dramatically."

You would then finish with, "I would like the opportunity to explain (or show you) how you could benefit from this. I will call you again tomorrow morning. If you would like to call me, my number is _____."

More Things to Consider About Voicemail

- 1) It is not only what you say, it is how you say it. Your message has to be said with excitement, energy and passion in your voice.
- 2) Record yourself speaking your rehearsed message and ask yourself "would **you** personally buy from **you** and is there enough excitement there?"
- 3) Do not leave a message more than twice or you will start to annoy the customer. Try other means of communication after the first two calls, like a follow up email such as, "Good morning, Joe, I tried to contact you by phone but unfortunately missed you. I am forwarding you some more information on how we can help you save massive amounts of time and money with your recruitment this year." Remember, persistence works. You could even send him a sales letter as he will feel he knows you by now!
- 4) **Your** attitude will make all the difference. If you think you are being a pest, you will come across as being a pest. If you go into the call with the attitude, "I am here to help you", you will have much more success. Show in your voice that you care.
- 5) When you don't get through to voicemail but speak to the receptionist or the secretary who is telling you the person is unavailable, continue to use the call to its maximum potential by asking them questions about the company to find out more about what they might need. Use the call to update their address details, email, mobile, etc.

The Importance of Your Tone of Voice

It is imperative to mention the importance of the tone of your voice early in the book because, if you use all the skills that follow but have a bad tone, then you will not make as many sales as you could.

We communicate with words, tonality and body language in face-to-face selling. However, on the telephone, we only have tonality and words for the customer to experience. Tonality has seventy-five per cent importance and words are only twenty-five per cent. Therefore, it is not *what* you say, but *how* you say it.

1. Smile

The first thing to check is whether you are smiling when you are on the phone. It makes a huge difference as to how you come across to the person on the other end of the phone. Try it for yourself. Record yourself saying three sentences; first without a smile and then with a smile.

Hear the difference? You sound much more friendly and approachable with an attitude of “I am here to help you, not sell you.” The difference will amaze you!

2. Emphasize certain words

Secondly, it is important to emphasize certain words, particularly adverbs, action verbs and the word “you”. This varies your tone and makes what you have to offer sound exciting. When reading a script, think of it as reading a story to a child in bed.

For example, in this script, I would emphasize the following words to make them come alive:

“I am working with a group of retail professionals and we have put together an 8-page bulletin for retailers like yourself, which is full of ideas to increase your business.”

Emphasis of words is also good to slow you down so that you do not talk too fast or talk at people instead of talking to them.

3. Watch your speed

It is important to talk more slowly on the phone than you do face-to-face. I recommend that you aim for a speed of 160 to 170 words per minute. It is also important to be aware of how fast your customer talks. If the customer talks very fast, then you might need to speed up to match his tone and, if your customer speaks very slowly, you might have to slow down your pace to match his, in order to have rapport with him.

A fast talker will easily put off a slow-speaking person and vice versa.

4. Stand up

When you stand up, you have much more confidence and authority in your voice. It is very significant to do this when you want to get an important decision out of somebody. When you stand up, oxygen flows around your body giving you more energy and enthusiasm – the ultimate keys to success in telephone sales. Nothing sells without energy and enthusiasm being transferred over the phone to the customer.

5. Voice Exercises

You must present as a professional on the phone, so here are some exercises that you can practice to prevent huskiness and a muffled tone in your voice. (Radio announcers do these exercises before they go on air).

Try these exercises: -

- a) Say the letters AEIOU five times to yourself. This opens your vocal chords and makes your voice crisp.
- b) Hum a scale from bottom to top and then top to bottom to get rid of any huskiness.
- c) Stretch your tongue up to your nose ten times and waggle it from side to side.
- d) Do the “lip bubble” – it is like pretending you are a baby in a high chair, and then you make bubbles with your lips.

How to Open a Cold Call

Next, I assume you have got through the "gate-keeper" and you reach the decision maker.

How do you start?

- 1) When cold call prospecting, don't start the call with "I was just calling people in your area". People want to think they are the only person you are calling, not one of many from a list of names. "Just" belittles what you are about to say as well. Start the conversation with "You have been specially selected to have the opportunity to sample the "xyz" product which will provide _____ (major benefit) to your business. To ascertain how this might benefit you personally, may I ask _____?" (ask a couple of questions, but no more than three).
- 2) Another way to start a conversation is to have mention something about them, such as, "I saw your article in the newspaper" or "I noticed you were advertising for _____ in the paper" and "I was looking at your website the other day and noticed _____."
- 3) I found that the best way to start a conversation is to have a referral. Then, they will usually want to listen. You could say "Jim Smith suggested that I give you a call. He said you might be interested in _____ which will _____ (insert the major benefit to the customer)". If you can't get a referral, simply mention that you were talking to the receptionist and the receptionist suggested that he/she was the right person to speak to.
- 4) If you are calling cold without being able to find out anything about the customer, go straight into the conversation with an "interest-grabbing" opening statement (see next topic – Starting a cold call with an "interest-grabbing" statement).

Starting a Cold Call with an Interest-grabbing Statement

In face-to-face selling, you only have thirty seconds to make a good first impression. On the telephone, you have only fifteen seconds. Therefore, you have to do it well from the start.

You need to create an opening statement that grabs their interest. I call it an "interest-grabbing" statement, while others call it a "value proposition" or a "unique selling point".

Mistakes that Telemarketers Make

Often, salespeople start their telesales conversation with unsuitable statements because they have not planned the way that they will express what they have to offer.

I have heard openers such as:

"This is Sally Smith from XYZ Computer Services. I would like to tell you about what our company does."

"I am Simon from XYZ Services. We are an Information Technology firm. The reason I called you today is to tell you about our program."

"This is Susan from XYZ Recruitment. I would like to introduce you to our services."

What is wrong with these examples?

They are about the telemarketers and not about the customer. Do you expect your prospects, who are busy people, to listen, when you have not given them a reason to do so?

Prospects will only want to listen when you present a statement of value for them in your opening such as what the major benefit is that you are able to offer them?

What will they get out of your offer? This must appear in your first sentence after you state your identity.

Another inane statement that people start their telesales conversation with is, "How are you?" to a prospect they have never spoken to before. This statement creates immediate resistance in most people. I ask why would anyone who does not know you be interested in how you are?

It is insincere and immediately places you under suspicion with prospects. They recognize you as a telemarketer who is about to try and sell something, or waste their time. The prospect immediately starts thinking, "I must terminate the call from this person". Simply be professional and, after you introduce yourself, go straight into an "interest-grabbing" statement which is the major benefit that you can offer them.

There is another example that I continuously hear about; when telemarketers introduce themselves and, without having given any information about what they want to talk about, they ask "Do you have a few minutes to talk now?"

Anyone who is busy has the perfect opportunity to say "No" and often do!

You should never open a conversation with a closed question that can only get a "yes" or "no" answer. By the way, apologizing for taking up people's time diminishes your own importance. I recommend you do not apologize for that.

Ideas for Creating Good Interest-grabbing Openers.

- 1) Pick five benefits that you have for customers and choose the one that would cover almost everyone.

Here are some ideas that most people would like: to save money, save time, look better, feel better, increase their bottom line, improve results, achieve success, escape pain, gain praise, protect their assets, be like others or enhance their image.

- 2) To find benefits that are meaningful to your prospect, ask yourself what he/she wants to avoid or gain.
- 3) Do not talk about your product or service, only the results or benefits that your prospect may gain by talking to you. You have an IDEA, PRODUCT OR SERVICE that will **help** _____ (insert an action verb, e.g. help/show/enable) their COMPANY, e.g. "Production companies like yours" to _____ (add major benefit, e.g. increase sales) by how much _____ (add an adverb, e.g. dramatically).

Examples of Good Interest-grabbing Openers.

When you have introduced yourself, "Good morning, this is _____ from _____ Company", some examples of good "interest-grabbing" openings would be:

"We show salespeople like yourself how to increase your sales on the telephone by thirty per cent."

"We save Human Resource managers, like yourself, time sorting through resumes so that you can get on with the more important work that you have to do."

"We offer investors, like yourself, an opportunity to borrow money at a much lower rate than you may be paying right now."

"We show you how to save money on all your Information Technology product purchases."

By using the above statements, you will not be wasting people's time and you are getting straight to the benefit for the prospect which keeps them wanting to know more.

You then follow with; "In order to know exactly how we can assist you, may I ask _____?"

Creating Good Interest-grabbing Opening Statements

A formula for creating an "interest-grabbing" opening statement would be: *(please complete the wording in brackets yourself).*

We specialize in working with *(type of people or companies)* in helping them to *(something they want to gain or avoid)* so that they can *(conclude with another desired result)*. May I ask you a few questions to see if this might be of some value to you.

The example that I, personally, use is:

"I am a trainer who specializes in working with salespeople to help them win more business by phone. That way, they can use their time more productively and they make more money for themselves and their company. I would like to show you how I do this. When would be a good time for us to get together?"

Another method is to give a choice of problems:

"Richard, while working with other people in your position, it seems that they often experience one or more of the following: *(list 1-5 problems you can solve)*. Do any of those affect you? *(pause and wait for an answer)*. Oh really, tell me more about that and how it affects you."

The example that I use is:

“Richard, while working with other people in a similar position to yours, it would seem that they often experience a lack of skill in building rapport quickly, fail to ask the appropriate questions to discover the customer’s needs and cannot handle objections. This results in call reluctance. Do any of these issues strike a chord with you?”

Interest-grabbing Openings for Inactive Customers

Do not say what I have often heard telemarketers say: “We have not had any business from you for a while.”

You would be better to say “Thank you for ordering _____ from us in the past” or “We had the opportunity some time ago to provide you with _____ and we were wondering if you still have a need for those?” (*pause and wait for an answer*) “That’s okay, we still supply those, but we can also offer you a number of other products which will attract more customers to you.” (Go into questioning).

Interest-grabbing Openings for Active Customers

Whatever the circumstances, your job is to grab the customer's interest with an “interest–grabbing” statement to make them want to listen further.

I don’t know why, but I often hear things like:

“Just calling to see how you are going?” (Yawn, yawn, how boring is that?)

“How are you going? Just checking in with you.”

Remember: always have something of value to offer the customer, such as:

- a) “I saw an article in a magazine on uses for your product in the market place. I wondered if you would like me to fax a copy to you. It could give you some ideas for your future marketing.”

- b) " We have all our toners on special this week so I wondered if you would like to save a few dollars for your company by placing an order now."

Make customers feel better off for having received your call. Then, they will always want to talk to you. Brainstorm some ideas to talk about that are of value to the customer rather than always just asking them to buy from you again.

How to Make an Appointment

The most important thing to remember when making appointments is that you are selling the appointment, not your product or services.

Therefore, you do not want to talk too much. You can expand on what you have to offer when you get to the appointment.

What you need is:

- Your opening statement (something you know about them or a referral) and
- Your “interest–grabbing” sentence.

Request the appointment, ensuring that you give them a choice of times so that the prospect cannot say just “yes” or “no”.

For example, “I’d love to get together with you so we can establish how _____ can work for you. When would be a good time for you next week, Monday or Tuesday?”

Sometimes, you have to qualify the person to find out whether your product or service would even be of use to the prospect. You should ask no more than three questions after the “interest–grabbing” sentence, repeat back what they said to indicate that you were listening and then go for the “close”.

There are times when people, who already have a current supplier of your type of product or service, will accept an appointment if you say; “Mr. Jones, I would like to drop by for six or seven minutes so you know who I am and what we can do for you. I realize that you might not need our services right now but, at least, you will be well informed to make decisions in the future. When would be a good day next week for you, Monday or Tuesday?” People generally do not like having their time consumed so, six or seven minutes is not threatening and you are taking away the fear of being sold as you have acknowledged the fact that they may not need you right now.

The Art of Questioning on a Cold Call

Questioning in the sales process is so powerful when the technique is applied correctly. After you have grabbed the customer's interest with an opening statement, ask questions to find out what the customer really wants. It is almost as if you have to do this in order to earn the right to talk to them about your product or service afterwards.

However, the right type of questions need to be asked and this is where so many telemarketers go wrong.

You need open-ended questions that get you more information - questions that keep the customer talking about themselves. These questions begin with "What, Why, Where, When, Who, Which and How".

So many telemarketers ask questions that will get a "yes" or "no" answer. These are called closed questions. They should be left until the end of the conversation when the customer is ready to buy the product, e.g. "Based on what we have discussed would you like to buy now?"

Mistakes Telemarketers Make!

Some of the mistakes that telemarketers make are that they start off telling you all about what they have to offer you and then end their presentation with a closed question which will, in most cases, get a "no" answer.

For example: the real estate person who rings and says, "Good morning Mr. _____, I am from _____ Real Estate. Are you thinking of selling your home in the near future?" (I ask, what rapport building is going on there?) This question gives me the perfect opportunity to say "no".

The home improvement company who telephones and says, "Good evening Mrs. _____ do you need anything fixed in your home right now?" Again, this gives me the perfect opportunity to say "no".

I recently had a lady telephone me and said; "Good morning Ms. Cartwright, I am from _____ Hotel. We have a Gourmet Dining Club where you can dine for free once a week if you bring a client with you. Would you like to join our Gourmet Dining Club?" Once again, this lady gave me the perfect opportunity to disconnect the call to her.

In the above example, no question was asked as to what the lady had to offer was even relevant to me and my needs. The lady could have asked questions about my situation like; "How often do you dine out? How often do you entertain clients? What type of food do you like when eating out? How often do you entertain in the city?" Then, depending on my answers, the lady could adapt her sales presentation to what suited me.

These sorts of telemarketers are not securing sales, and yet they persist with ineffective techniques.

Guidelines for Effective Questioning

Ask questions about the benefits of your product or service. For example, if you are selling a barbeque that is portable, easy to clean and has three levels of heat, you would ask questions like; "How easy is your barbeque to clean? Is it portable? What happens when you want to cook a steak with *really* hot heat?"

This approach lets you easily sell your benefits in the rest of your presentation.

Ask questions that create pain around their existing situation.

Think of three problems that your customer may have that you are able to provide a solution for. Then, ask questions relating to the problems that you noted.

For example, in the recruitment industry, a question may be:

"How easy is it for you to find the right staff for the job when someone leaves?"

"How much of your time is consumed sorting through resumes?"

Or, in other industries, questions such as:

"What would happen if your existing supplier ran out of stock?"

"How satisfied are you with the amount of business that you are currently getting from your website?"

"What area of your business would be most important to improve on right now?"

"On a scale of one to ten, with ten being the highest, how would you rate the performance of your salesperson?"

Be flexible enough to vary your scripted questions. For example, if the answer to the last question was five, you need to follow up that question with a related question like, "In which area of the sales cycle do you think that person could improve?" Ask an implication question to embellish the problem like, "How else could you use that time more effectively?" (to find out what the prospect really needs to do with their time), or "How much does it cost you in real terms to finance the downtime while looking for the right person, including the cost of retraining them?"

Look for a need that you can fulfil and then sell them the benefits; e.g. "So, Mr. _____, if you were to employ our services, we could save you the time you are currently spending on processing resumes so you would have more time to do the things that you prefer to do. We could also save you from having the cost of the downtime between losing a staff member and finding the right replacement."

Sometimes, when telemarketers are not confident, they ask several questions at once. For example, they say "What makes you think your sales staff aren't motivated? Is it a need to earn more money or do they need more training and how does that affect other departments?"

This can be very confusing for the listener and counter-productive for the telemarketer.

Ask no more than three questions or it may sound like an interrogation.

After you ask a question, stop speaking, even if there is silence on the other end, as the customer may be thinking about what to say. It is a big mistake to try to help them with their answer. You will have to start to get comfortable with silence.

When the customer finishes responding to the question, pause and, if you need them to elaborate on their response, you can say; "Tell me more about that, please."

Finally, when you have asked all relevant questions and the customer has replied, repeat what they said they wanted back to them. Do not repeat what they want after each question, which is what some telemarketers do, as it becomes monotonous.

**REMEMBER, THE ONLY WAY TO HELP
SOMEONE IS TO FIND OUT ABOUT THEM.**

Listening Skills

Once you have established the customer's needs, it is important to acknowledge what you heard the customer say.

You can do this in several ways:

- 1) Summarize what the customer said in their answers, e.g. "So, Mr. Smith, you said you currently have a barbeque which is fifteen years old, you wish it could be moved around and you find it hard to clean. Is that correct?" Summarizing is repeating back what the customer said in their own words. In the same way, when you are given a credit card number, you would repeat the details of the credit card back to the customer to check that you got it right.
- 2) Paraphrasing is like summarizing but it is repeating back to the customer what they said in different words, e.g. "So, Mr. Smith, you said you have a fifteen year old barbeque, it is not portable and it is not easy to clean. Is that correct?"
- 3) Empathizing is another form of listening, e.g. "I can understand you being frustrated having a barbeque that you can neither move around nor clean easily."
- 4) Listen for your customer's language patterns. This is a challenging skill to acquire but, if you can start to be aware of your own communication style and that of others, you will quickly become a great rapport builder.

We communicate in three ways, Auditory, Visual and Kinesthetic, but we generally have a preference for one or a combination of two of the following:

Auditory

These people communicate through their ears. They use language like, "I hear what you are saying", "Tell me more about it", "Explain to me how it works", "It sounds good" and "That rings a bell", ". "

Visual

These people communicate through their eyes. They use language like "I see what you mean", "Can you show me how to do that?" and "It looks like I will be going ahead with that appointment".

Kinesthetic

These people communicate through their feelings. They use language like "I get the feeling this is not the right product for us", "I would have to experience it to come to grips with what it is about", "I need to grasp the concept" and "How do you feel about that?"

When you listen for the type of language that the customer uses, it is important to respond in the same type of language. For example, if you pick someone's language as being auditory, you would not have much success telling him that you "see what he means". You would need to say, "I understand what you are saying". In the same way, you would not have much chance of him wanting to be sent a video about your services. You would offer to send an audio CD.

If you were selling a car to a kinesthetic person, you would not go on about how the car looks or sounds. You would predominantly use kinesthetic words to describe the feel of the car. You could talk about the velour seats creating an ambience of luxury, the smooth acceleration, the one-touch buttons for the stereo and the feel of the car.

First of all, it is important to recognize what your own predominant style of communication is. Listen for your own language. It is easy to sell in your own language, but much more challenging to change your language to suit someone else's style. Practice on your family and friends before you practice on the customers!

A good exercise would be to write down a description of your product or service in Auditory, Kinesthetic and Visual terms so that you have it ready by the phone at all times.

Sometimes, on a quick telemarketing call, there is not enough time to pick up on the customer's language. Then, it is important to make sure you describe your product or service by including all the communication modalities so that you cover the customer's communication preference.

When you do not include the auditory people, they will stop listening and tune out.

When you do not include the kinesthetic people, they will feel frustrated.

When you do not include the visual people, they will show their irritation by putting the phone down on you.

If there is someone in your life that you do not communicate with as well as others, it could be because your preferred communication is not theirs and neither of you are adapting.

Take the story of two girlfriends. One says to the other "I don't think my husband loves me anymore". "That's ridiculous!" says the friend, "I saw him bring you flowers the other day (visual) and I saw him give you a hug (kinesthetic)", so what is the problem?" "Well," says the first girl "he never tells me he loves me." Her preferred communication style was, therefore, auditory.

I have provided a list of Auditory, Kinesthetic and Visual words so that you can start practicing this technique immediately. When you master the technique, it will revolutionize your sales career and your relationships!

Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic
see	hear	feel
look	listen	touch
view	Sound	grasp
appear	make music	get hold of
show	harmonise	slip through
dawn	tune in	catch on
reveal	be all ears	tap into
envision	rings a bell	make contact
illuminate	silence	throw out
imagine	question	suffer
appears to me	afterthought	boils down to
beyond a shadow of doubt	clear as a bell	come to grips with
catch a glimpse of	call on	control yourself
clear cut	describe in detail	cool, calm collected
dim view	earful	firm foundations
eye to eye	express yourself	floating on air
flashed by	give an account of	get your hands on
get a perspective on	give me your ear	get a load of
in person	idle talk	hang in there
in view of	inquire into	heated argument
make a scene	loud and clear	hold on
pretty as a picture	word for word	not following you
up front	voiced an opinion	pull some strings
sight for sore eyes	unheard of	slipped my mind
well defined	tongue tied	too much hassle

Words to Avoid in a Sales Conversation

The attendees at my last two in-house training sessions inspired me to write about this topic, so "thank you" to them. Words are only twenty-five per cent important on the telephone, compared to tonality which has seventy-five per cent importance.

They do, nevertheless, need attention.

1. Avoid Negative Language

How often do I hear "We can't do that", "We don't do that", "We won't be able to", or "You have to book by Friday to get the discount". This is all negative language and turns the customer away immediately.

For example, if the customer is ready to order and the salesperson says, "We can't place the order until we secure a credit card deposit" then the customer will be irritated, at the least.

In this example, it would have been better for the salesperson to say, "As soon as you can provide us with a credit card number for a deposit, we will place the order for you. Or, alternatively, you can direct deposit into our bank account. Which would you prefer?"

Always ensure that you tell the customer what you can do for them, as opposed to what you can't do.

Another example would be:

Salesperson: "We can't tell you what time of day the serviceman will be there. You have to stay at home until he arrives (Yes, I actually heard that!)"

It would be better to say:

Salesperson: "I suggest you give us a call after 9 am on the day and we will be able to tell you what number job you are on the day or alternatively, we can call you on your mobile half an hour before they are going to arrive."

The moral of the story is do not tell people what they have to do, what you cannot or do not do. Make sure that you include what you can do and make it a positive experience for the customer.

2. Never use the word "BUT" to counter an objection

This one little word, "but", is often used when responding to an objection and it can spoil everything else you say. "But" negates everything you say before it, therefore disagreement is all the customer hears.

If a customer raises an objection, acknowledge it and follow with the word "and", as opposed to "but".

An example would be:

Customer: "This software sounds like it would take a long time to install."

Salesperson: "Yes, it does take a long time to install and that challenge is taken care of by our own consultants who set the whole thing up for you as part of the service."

Customer: "It's very expensive."

Salesperson: "I understand that you think that. That's why I would like to include a service contract for three years at no cost in the price for you. How does that sound?"

3. Change "Why" questions to "How" questions

Sometimes, "why" makes prospects feel defensive and it can sound interrogating or demanding. My research results show that you can increase the amount of information you get from your customer if you begin your questions with "how".

When the customer feels uncomfortable with you (which they might do with "why"), they will not buy from you. They will only buy when they feel comfortable with you. "How" is less challenging for them and less interrogating.

For example:

Salesperson: "Why did you buy from Grace Brothers?"

Could be changed to:

Salesperson: "How did you make a decision to purchase from Grace Brothers?"

Salesperson: "Why aren't you interested?"

Could be changed to:

Salesperson: "How specifically could we make this of more interest to you?"

4. Start using the words "for You" in your presentations.

The two words, "for you" personalize the conversation and make the customer feel special. When the customer feels special, they are more likely to buy from you.

Some examples would include:

Salesperson: "The proposal is ready for you and it is on its way by courier."

Salesperson: "I have a great idea for you!"

5. Avoid closing conversations with "Not a problem" or "No worries"

Avoid closing conversations with "Not a problem" and "No worries". These expressions leave customers feeling negative. Say, "That's fine" and "Thank you for your business".

6. Avoid "Sorry to keep you" and "Are you still there?"

When you return to customers after putting them on "hold" and you say, "Sorry to keep you", they probably think, "I'm sorry you are keeping me too". When you come back to them, simply say, "Thank you for waiting". Then they think, "That's okay".

Likewise, when you come back with "Are you still there?" they are likely to think, "I hope so".

"Thank you for waiting" puts the customer in a better frame of mind.

How to Handle Every Objection

Although every company is different in procedure, I have found in eight years of training in-house that success in telephone selling still boils down to three things;

- 1) The type and quality of the questions that are asked in the rapport building stage,
- 2) the power of the script, and
- 3) the ability to handle every objection that arises.

In this chapter, let's look at how objections could be handled better.

When I first listen to what is being said in a telemarketer's calls, I frequently hear, "Oh, okay – bye!" from the telemarketer. Yes, another call is wasted, because they did not know what to say to answer the objection and found it easier to just put the phone down.

I recommend that you make a list of every objection that comes up, both in face-to-face sales, and also in telesales.

Then, find an effective way to overcome each of them and put all the objections and responses in front of you when you are on the phone.

Here are some ways that I recommend to answer objections.

1. **Think of a question beginning with "What, why, where, which, how, and when" to feed back to the objection.**

For example:

Customer: "I can't afford it"

Salesperson: "How much do you think you would be able to spend right now?"

Customer: "I haven't got time"

Salesperson: "When would be a better time for us to talk?"

If you cannot think of a question, preface your reply with, "I am curious, let me ask you a question". That gives you time to think of the question you are going to ask!

2. Show empathy with, " I understand", "I appreciate what you are saying", or "I know how you feel."

For example:

Customer: "We already have a supplier."

Salesperson: "I can understand that you would already have a supplier, what do they do that you particularly like?"

Customer: "I am not interested."

Salesperson: "That's understandable, because I haven't had a chance to explain the real value to you yet. May I ask what would be most important to you in your life right now - time, money or relationships? (give a choice of at least three features or benefits)?"

3. Simply thank them for the objection, because it gives you a clue as to what they do want.

For example:

Customer: "It's too expensive."

Salesperson: "Thank you for raising that concern, let me explain why (then explain the real value)."

4. "How about" and "What about" are useful questions to ask.

For example:

Customer: "I don't like the kitchen design."

Salesperson: "How about we redesign the kitchen to your requirements?"

Customer: "We are happy with our current supplier, thank you."

Salesperson: "That's understandable but what happens in an emergency when your supplier is out of stock. What would you do then?"

5. My favorite is "What if" or "Not to say you would want to make a decision right now but, if you were to, what would be your buying criteria?"

For example:

Salesperson: "What if we could overcome that objection right now, you would still probably be interested in the savings you would make, wouldn't you?"

The funniest answer to an objection I have ever heard came from a telemarketer in a charity event that I was training at the time. The lady called with her introduction in the middle of the afternoon and got the following response from a gentleman:

Gentleman: "Do you mind, I am in the middle of having sex!"

Telemarketer: "Oh, that's okay, I'll call back when your wife gets home."

At least she showed empathy!

Dealing with the Price of Your Product or Service

My computer hard drive crashed some time ago and my back-up support had failed to back up for the last six months (without my ever knowing). I spent a considerable amount of time calling data recovery places to find the best solution. It did not have to be the cheapest quote (though many places thought that was my issue); I just wanted to be confident about the effectiveness of the recovery, the speed with which it could be done and the proximity to my office.

I got all sorts of responses.

One reply was, "Yes, well it's normally \$350."

"Oh," I thought, "so are you going to offer me a cheaper price?" "Normally" would indicate that this was the case as a rule. I wanted to ask him if now was "normally" but resisted!

There are some rules to follow when dealing with the price of your product or service.

RULE NO. 1: Always state your price with confidence.

You must believe in the value of your product or service for the price you are quoting or it will come across in your voice on the phone that you don't. You can hardly expect the customer to buy if you personally do not think the price is right. I have heard of many a sale lost, simply because the salesperson thinks the price is too much to ask for.

The price is fine as long as you have told the customer the value within it before quoting. State the price confidently.

In the example regarding my hard drive, it would not be appropriate to say, "It'll be \$350 for the first three hours and \$250 per hour after that" because to me, the customer, that wouldn't mean anything.

I am not a technical person. How would I know how long it would take to back up my hard drive? It sounded like it could all be too expensive so I said "Okay, bye for now."

RULE NO. 2: Never assume that the customer knows all that is involved in using your service.

Explain the value of what you are doing first, so the customer can understand why you quote a standard fee and an hourly rate on top. Better still, ask the customer a few questions like "What condition is your old hard drive in at the moment?", "How many megs does it have?", "What would you like to restore your material on to?" and then advise the price that will fit my situation.

RULE NO. 3: When a customer rings up for a price, you must never give a price straight away.

When you give a price straight away, you may be assuming that the customer is just shopping around for prices. Your conversion rate on in-bound calls is going to be very low.

Ask for the customer's name and telephone number up-front so that you can follow them up in three day's time. When you don't follow up a price request, it is the same as not following up a written quote.

I have even heard salespeople say, "Well, if they were interested, they would call us back". NO, NO - in sales you must be proactive; call them back and persuade or inspire them to buy from you.

I know, from when I was in the seminar business, I converted twenty-five per cent of the people who requested information or a price just by calling them back. If I didn't call back, my conversion rate from a mail-out was a mere one per cent.

RULE NO. 4: After you ask for the customer's name, ask them some questions (as in Rule No. 2).

You can even say, "So that I can give you the best possible price for your situation, I need to ask you a couple of questions". This is establishing the customer's needs and applying the price to their needs.

For example, if my need were not necessarily to find the cheapest price but to find a company that was reputable and that could do a good job, was close to the office and could do the job quickly, some good questions to win me as a customer would have been, "How quickly do you want the job done?", "Where are you based?", "How did you hear about us?"

Then, before giving a price, you can present your service as offering what the customer wants (you know that from the answers to the questions) and the price won't matter. You could offer to pick up the computer if you were far away from my office, and have it back within 24 hours if you knew how quickly I wanted the work done.

RULE NO. 5: Never assume that people buy on price alone.

If possible, it is better not to sell on price. You need to have someone interested in the value for money that you offer first.

More Ways to Deal with the Money Issue

- a) If you want to make the amount that you quote sound less, miss out the word "dollars". Simply say 470, instead of \$470.00 dollars. Conversely, if you want the amount to have more value, you do say the word "dollars".
- b) Notice how I have written the amounts in the above paragraph. When doing written quotes, to minimise the amount, do not put in the cents, e.g. \$470. To maximise the perceived value, make sure that you write \$470.00.

For example, if three people from one company were attending my seminar, the fourth one would be free. I would write on the invoice "one attendee FOC (Free of Charge) - value \$370.00" to increase the importance of the amount they were getting free.

- c) You can minimise the price, or the difference in cost, between you and a competitor by talking about it in daily terms, e.g. "So Mr. Jones, what we are talking about here is a difference of \$1 a day over a period of one year". \$1 a day for all the extras that we provide over the competitor (then state the extra value you offer).
- d) When customers say your price is "too high", it's a good idea to leave out the word "too" in your response. Your response would be "I can understand you thinking that. When you say "high", what are you comparing that with?"

How to Deal with People that Avoid Making a Decision to Buy

You know the sort:

- those that always say they are going to buy from you 'soon'
- those that ask you to ring again in three months time
- those that were super keen when you first talked to them and now they have decided not to go ahead at all when you ring back ... and
- those that you spent hours doing a proposal for and they do not want to proceed.

I must admit that I have had quite a few of these in the last few months myself, but I am getting the go ahead from these people more often than I used to.

Here are a few strategies that I find successful:

- 1) First of all, ask yourself a few questions like:
"How will I change my approach to create more interest for the prospect to go ahead now?"
- 2) "What information can I give the prospect that would cause them to say that they were better off taking my call than they were before taking it?"
- 3) "What does my prospect want to get and what do they want to avoid?"
- 4) When the prospect does not want to do anything yet, ask them a few questions like:
"What is the real reason you are not going ahead now?"
"Are you saying that because you do not think you are going to get a

return on your investment?"

"What decision making criteria did you use to make this important decision?"

- 5) Become a problem solver. Come up with some thoughts such as:
- "Let's work out how much it is costing you to do nothing about your situation."
- "How much time are you spending on _____ and
- "How much is that costing you right now?"
- 6) Sometimes, people ask you to supply references just to delay their decision to go ahead. Before doing so, make sure you get a solid commitment from them that they will go ahead when they are satisfied with the references they get.
- 7) I recently had a prospect express an interest in doing some in-house training but he only had three people. I said it was better to have an in-house with six to ten people; that way it would be more economical and more interactive. I suggested he get some colleagues in his industry to join forces with him. He liked that idea and said he would give me a call.

Afterwards, I realized how stupid I was. Did I really expect he would ever get around to doing that? After four weeks of hearing nothing, I rang him back. Needless to say, he had done nothing so I offered to find the other people for him. We fixed a date and a time and I got my sale. Think about what extra mile you could go to help your client to do business with you.

- 8) It is hard to sell products just before Christmas unless they are gifts. They will probably say to you, "Call us again in the New Year". Immediately ask them, "What day in the New Year do you expect you would want to take delivery? That is fine, we can deliver the products now and bill you on _____ January. How does that sound?" You could create a holiday special or have a one-week sale in December. You

could also create urgency by saying the price is going up in the New Year.

- 9) If you keep getting put off every time you call, simply ask them, "Why aren't we doing business with each other yet?" You may be surprised at some of the reasons.

Closing the Sale

In the last week of the end of the tax year, both my car and my printer were definitely due for a facelift. I was keen to update and buy new stock.

I did some research and knew what I wanted but no-one actually invited me to buy on either occasion. They let me know what they had available but no-one asked me to make a decision. What is more, they did not pick up on my buying signals. These salespeople definitely needed training! Remember, nothing happens until you ask for the order. Do not let customers slip away without inviting them to buy, and constantly listen for buying signals throughout your conversation both on the telephone and face-to-face.

On a Saturday afternoon, dressed very casually and a female on my own, I went out to buy a new car. I had virtually decided to buy an Astra Classic (my main buying criteria being that I wanted something reliable after the repeated problems with my existing car). I asked the salesman if I could test-drive an Astra Classic to try it out. He went to get the keys and off we went.

The salesman said absolutely nothing, so I started to negatively comment on the interior by saying, "Oh, the seats and the 'interior look' aren't as luxurious as what I have at the moment", and "the windows aren't tinted!"

Again, he said nothing. So, I asked, "Isn't there a more up-market model?"

"Oh, yes," he replied, "but that is \$3,000 more expensive. You can have a look from the outside if you like, it's over there."

The salesman then scuttled off to find an information pack and came out to hand it to me saying, "Have a read of this and if there is anything else you need, give me a call."

I left despondently as I had wanted to go home with a new car ordered. Now, however, I had to go home and read the information. No-one had invited me to buy!

What buying signals did he miss?

- 1) I read once that, when people are just looking around - or price shopping - they can be pleasant and polite. But, they are the ones, usually, who are not seriously interested. Conversely, the people who judge the features of a product or service are often the ones who want to buy. What I did in the above example was judge the interior finish of the car as not being good enough. The salesman could have picked up on that issue to realise that I was actually serious about buying. Also, by listening well and acknowledging what I did not like, he would have had a clue as to what I did like.
- 2) Think of the customers you may have who complain and grizzle about things. They probably would not think of buying elsewhere, but they are demanding. Look at them as needing more nurturing. They are interested in your products or service, but they just want you to probe more about their needs so you can satisfy them better. Ask them some questions.
- 3) The salesman could have handled the objections by asking me some questions about what I was actually looking for in a car. A very good question to have started with would have been, "What is your main criteria for choosing the right car for you?" He would have found out that I was looking for the more up-market look and he would have found out that reliability was important to me. That second bit of information alone could have led him on to sell me the car instantly, as his company was actually offering to extend the three-year warranty on parts and labour for six years for purchases made before June 30. I only discovered that later, after reading the information brochures that the salesman handed to me as he wished me farewell!

- 4) The salesman also passed off the more expensive model, probably having assumed I would not be making a decision on that without my husband being there to approve the expenditure on it, or that I was too casually dressed to be able to afford it. Even if he had thought that, he could have used my interest in a more up-market interior to guide the sale by offering me a way to make the interior of the basic model more luxurious; seat covers, window tinting, etc. Better still, so as not to minimize his own commission, he could have attempted to sell the more expensive model by saying, "Well, the deluxe model does have a number of better features that might suit you well. Let me ask you a couple of questions to establish whether this is the case. Do you like surround sound music when you travel?" or, "Is it important to protect the seats from getting dirty if the children travel with you a lot?"

More buying signals that salespeople may miss (either on the phone or face-to-face)

- 1) Sometimes, prospects start talking as if they are already in possession of your product or service and you might miss this signal. For example, when people say, "We would probably send three of our staff to your training" or "John would be your contact, once we start using you", you have made them talk as if they are using your services already - but you miss the signal because you are not listening properly.
- 2) The prospect mentions that they heard about you from a friend or someone they know.
- 3) They talk about dealing with a competitor, but say that it was a negative experience. That is an opportunity for you to say how you are different.
- 4) When your prospect asks the same question twice like, "How much did you say the covers are to go with it?"

5) When they ask about guarantees, they may well be interested.

Ensure you react to buying signals. Do not leave it to chance that the prospect will suggest an action. Ask further questions to allow the prospect to increase his buying desire or simply ask him for the order.

How to Ask for the Order

- 1) Go easy; start with a trial close, "So Mrs. Brown, based on what we have discussed, how do you think this would suit your needs?" Or, "How do you feel about what we have discussed so far?" Test the ground; "If you were to go ahead with this order, when would you want it to be delivered?"
- 2) Give a choice so the customer cannot just say "yes" or "no". "Having now seen the deluxe and the basic model, which would you prefer?"

When the customer is satisfied and you have overcome any objections, simply **ASK** for the order with a closed question or a choice:

- a) "So Mrs. Brown, would you like me to order that for you now?"
- b) "How would you like to pay for that, check or credit card?"

How to Do the Follow-up Call

You have done your prospecting call and been asked to send out some information. You may be like many salespeople - happy to prospect on the telephone but you are not so keen when it comes to following up.

Here is where you might experience fear of rejection or a bit of call reluctance.

What can you say?

There is really no point in sending information out unless you plan to follow it up, because it is usually in the follow-up that success is achieved and the sale is closed.

It is important to ask the customer how long he/she thinks they need to review the information and then schedule a time to call back to discuss it further, about one day later. That way, the customer knows that you are going to ring back and that they have committed to have read the material by then.

Here are some tips:

It would not be good to start your call with a closed question like, "Did you get the information that I sent you?" Remember, you are back in rapport-building mode and need to ask open-ended questions that cannot get just "yes" and "no" answers. The questions starting with "What", "Why", "How", "Which" "Why", "When" "Who" will give you more information about what the customer wants.

I recommend that you say, "Good morning Mr. _____. I am calling to discuss/review the information on _____. Precisely what was of interest to you? How, specifically, did you feel this could benefit you?" or "What could happen to your organization if you incorporated some of these ideas?" (Put

them into a picture of the future as if they are already using your service or product).

When the customer answers, don't jump in with a "close" immediately or launch into what you can do for them. Be a good listener; pause for a moment in silence and then ask them to tell you more about that, e.g. "That's interesting, please say more about that?" or ask an open-ended question like, "Why is that?" The skill to be silent for a moment after the customer responds is powerful.

If the customer appears to have cooled his enthusiasm on the next call, ask them:

"Last time we spoke, you thought this could really save you some money. What has happened since?" or

"What will happen if you do nothing?" or

"Is it because you don't think you will get a return on your investment?"

Find out the real reason for the customer cooling off.

The reason is often that the customer just can't be bothered to change!

You can ask one of the following questions:

- "When you changed from your first supplier to the one you have now, what made you change?"
- "Under what circumstances would you consider using another company?"

You can "fish" for a problem with "What" and "How" questions;

"What happens when your supplier is out of stock and you need something in a hurry?"

- "How would you handle _____ when _____?"

- "How about changing to us for specific items that you might be paying too much for with your existing supplier?"

Only after asking the right questions, can you start to present how your product or service can match their needs.

How to Ask for Referrals

A telephone call to a happy customer is the ideal way to find referrals and new prospects. This post-sale call should be a natural part of the sales process but, sadly, not a lot of salespeople bother after they make a sale.

What stops you from asking for a referral?

Perhaps you feel embarrassed having to ask or you feel that you might be putting your customer in a difficult spot, because he may not know anyone to recommend to you. Well, as there is a process in every step of the telesales call, there is also a process for asking for the referral.

It is easy. When you know how, you will have more confidence to do it.

The obvious people to give you referrals are your customers who recently bought from you. When you call them one or two weeks after they bought from you to check they are happy with their purchase, they will not only be impressed that you bothered to call, but they will be only too pleased to assist you.

Mistakes People Make

The average salesperson would ask, "Do you know anyone else who might want to buy what you have just bought?"

When someone is asked that direct question, their mind goes blank and they cannot think of a single person. You must aim to be more specific. Here are a few ideas:

The “Asking for Referrals” Script

You must establish that the customer is happy with his purchase, or with your service, and then ask one of the following: -

- 1) Who else do you know that might want to save the same amount of money you saved by buying this product? (Use the benefit here of what your product does for the customer.)
- 2) If you were to substitute a friend or colleague for yourself as the purchaser of this product/service, who would that person be?
- 3) Mr. _____, may I ask you a favor? Could you think of four or five people who sell to you that would be good prospects for my product/service?
- 4) "I am glad you are happy with the _____ Mr. _____. By the way, may I ask if you play any sports at all?" If not, then ask, "What other activities do you do outside of work? Can you think of one person in your (sports) team or in your (activity) group who might be interested in purchasing what you have just purchased?"
- 5) Who else could you help by telling them about our products or services?

As an incentive for the customer to give you referrals, you could say the reason you want their contacts is so that you can send out an introductory package about your product or service with a voucher valued at \$50 for their first purchase. You could offer to send this voucher with your customer's compliments, e.g. "Mr. _____ was so happy with our services, he asked us to send you an introductory gift certificate with his compliments should you wish to avail yourself of the same product."

Next, you ask them for their contacts' phone numbers and if they would like to ring those people to recommend your services or whether it would be okay for you to ring them and mention their name?

Obviously, the first option would be the one to go for, but you have to assess how the conversation is going, to know whether you could push for that.

End the call by thanking them and assuring them you will let them know if any business arises from their referral.

Important Points to Remember:

Always get back to the customer who gave you a referral to let them know how you went with their contact. You can do this by phone or send them a note like this:

Dear _____

Thank you for suggesting to John Smith that he call me regarding his computer training needs (*explain the status of referral*).

I met with John on Tuesday and we will start training next week.

John mentioned how enthusiastic you were about my training. I really appreciate your confidence in my abilities.

Thank you again for thinking of me.

If you expect people to give you referrals, understand that this will not happen unless you give referrals to your own customers - remember the law of reciprocity?

More Referral Tips

Try to give one referral a day to one of your customers.

When you start giving out two referrals for every sale you get, you will be entering the top twenty per cent of salespeople.

When you give out three referrals for every sale you get, you will be in the top ten per cent of salespeople.

Think of every buyer representing 50 referrals for you.

How to Overcome Call Reluctance

You know when this fear hits you; you made fifty calls and everyone rejected you that day. There is another hour to go and you really do not want to pick up that phone again. The next day you come in, but you focus on the lack of results from the day before and you try to find anything else to do but pick up the phone.

You may not even be in a telemarketing role, but you know that you need to make some cold calls to make appointments or fill the sales pipeline with new business.

You find much to do that day, rather than get started.

Why Does this Happen?

It is normally fear of rejection that stops us, but is that rejection of us personally? No, it is not about you! It is about the other person and the mood that they are in.

You could ring them on another day and they might be much more receptive. Anyway, your fear is imaginary. The word stands for "False Evidence Appearing Real (FEAR)." Never take rejection as rejection of you personally, it's a rejection of how you expressed what you have to offer.

It could also be lack of knowledge of your product or service, i.e. you do not have enough information to be able to talk about the product or service with confidence.

Another cause of call reluctance is lack of motivation, because you have not set any goals. If you have no sales targets to aim for, you can never reach them.

What to Do when Call Reluctance Strikes

- 1) To diminish fear, think of something far more frightening than what you are currently doing. That will lessen the fear you have for the current situation.
- 2) Learn more about your products and services to be more confident when talking about them. Remember, knowledge is power.
- 3) Always have goals for how many calls you will make and how many sales or appointments you want to achieve each day. You must be able to measure your success and know your batting average to be motivated. Have them written on a piece of paper and keep them in front of you all day. That will stop you from getting up for another unnecessary cup of coffee and keep you making enough calls to succeed.
- 4) Watch your self-talk, attitudes and beliefs. For example, you might say to yourself, "Oh, there is no point in ringing him, he'll be at lunch". This is not a goal-supporting statement, so try to catch yourself saying it, write it down and change it to a positive statement like, "Last time I rang him, he was at lunch. I am sure he does not go out to lunch every day, so I might catch him if I ring him now."
- 5) Always expect a "yes" because, if you expect a "no", you will certainly get one.
- 6) Focus on your successes, not the bad calls that you had. In my training courses, I ask people to write a list of their positive qualities and then write a paragraph to describe themselves and how they would like to see their success that day. They then read that to themselves at the beginning of the day before they start calling. This may sound "wacko" but believe me, I do this with every coaching client I have and it definitely works. People are always very surprised when it does.

Here is an example of a self affirmation to start the day:

"I, _____ (name), am a goal oriented, caring, confident, successful, self achiever. Today, I look forward to making seven appointments. To do this, on the law of averages, I will need to make seventy calls. I know that when I focus on a figure, I will reach my target. I enjoy my work because I know how much my (product or service) can benefit other people."

Take notice of how much better your day will be when you start the day saying that to yourself.

Alternatively, you could try some of the World's best Hypnosis CDs – a mixture of Paraliminal and Holosync technologies. These technologies can influence Deep Personal Change. They are like a meditation tape that you listen to before going to bed at night or early in the morning. I have always been a bit sceptical about these methods until one Sunday morning I decided to listen to a tape called, "Get Around To It". I was unsure what to expect, but the effect was truly amazing. I could not believe how much I achieved that day – a lot of the things that I had been procrastinating about recently were accomplished that day and the effect continued throughout the next day.

I then looked at additional titles that are available, such as: "Self Belief", "Self Esteem", "Relationships", "Memory Supercharger" and "Ideal Weight". I wondered if the "Self Belief" and "Self Esteem" CDs might be suitable for telemarketers who find it difficult to handle rejection. I decided to trial the product.

The first time that I trialled "Self Belief" on one of my coaching clients, the results were overwhelming. The client listened to "Self Belief" before she made her calls and, after she had completed her calls, she found that had doubled her sales from the previous day!

I now use the tape regularly in my coaching sessions with telemarketers before they start making cold calls. I listen to it myself too, because it works!

For more information about the Paraliminal CDs, click on this link: <http://www.lifetools.com.au/paraliminalacds007.htm>

Keep some things around you that make you feel relaxed; photos that you like, background music, a nice screensaver and even smells that you like, such as flowers and fresh coffee.

Have an uncluttered desk to help your mind to be clear.

Making Some Quick Sales From Your Own Database

You might be a salesperson who wants to go seeking a lot of new clients. Why not pay attention to the clients you already have on your database? It is much easier to keep your old clients than find new ones.

"But what am I going to say to them?" I hear you cry, "They get tired of me ringing."

Of course they get tired of you ringing if all you have to say is "How are you going?" or "I am just calling to update my database". Don't waste their time - give them some value. Make them look forward to your calls. Here are some ideas:

1. Call Your "A" Customers First.

These are the twenty percent of your client base that gave you eighty percent of your business last year. Try to find out as much as you can about them, so that you know how best to serve them this year. DO NOT SAY, "Just calling to make sure everything is okay". Start with "Hello, _____, my goal this year is to help you as much as I can. To be able to do that, may I ask (then proceed with asking them some open-ended questions beginning with "What, why, where, how, which, who" to get more information).

The more that you know about them, the more likely you are to be able to add value for them (and yourself) the next year. Ask them about their business plans for this year, personnel changes, training needs, any major changes they have had, new product lines and, especially challenges they may have.

Have three to five appropriate, open-ended questions ready to ask and have some ideas ready for them.

2. Call Your "B" Customers Second

These are the customers who may only have bought once from you or placed a small order. You need to find out whether they buy more from other people, or if there is anything else you could sell to them.

DO NOT SAY "You bought ____ from us last year and I was wondering if you would like to buy more this year?" Start your conversation with "Good morning _____, we enjoyed doing business with you last year and we thank you for that. I was wondering what your training needs are this year, how we can assist you to _____and how we can help you meet those goals. (Or find something that is appropriate - but make sure that it is an open-ended question, not a question that can only get a yes/no answer).

3. Call Your "C" Customers Third

These are the people that you did quotes for, but never ended up closing business with them. Call them again to show that you care. You already know something about them, so you are half way there.

Remember, persistence works and it may take three or four more calls this year before they realize that they should be working with you. People do not care how much you know, they want to know how much you care.

You will get to these people far more easily than cold prospects but DO NOT SAY, "Just calling to see if I can change your mind about ordering from us instead of your existing supplier".

Review your notes on them and develop a reason for calling that will give value to them. Say something like, "I remember that you said you were concerned about retaining the telemarketers you spend time training. Well, I came across an article in the Tel-Call Magazine the other day which deals really well with that issue and I would like to send it to you if that is okay?"

Then, get into a discussion around that and find out any other areas of dissatisfaction they are currently experiencing.



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Jenny Cartwright

I hope you found the strategies and tips enlightening and helpful.

When you are ready to seek further assistance with your telemarketing/telesales training, consulting, script writing, coaching by telephone or face-to-face, please contact Sales and Telesales Solutions

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