

10 Things to Know Before a Call

Many people's aversion to cold calling is due to a previous experience where they summoned up the courage to actually pick up the phone and it all went horribly wrong! However, much of the cold calling battle is done before a number is dialled. Here's a helpful list on cold call preparation:

1 - KNOW YOUR 'IDEAL' CUSTOMER

Have a look at the customers you work best with. They may not be your 'biggest' but they are probably your most profitable in terms of ROI. Think about what their original needs were and how they have developed as a customer.



2 - KNOW YOUR 'IDEAL' PROSPECT

If you have secured customers by reactive means (e.g. word or mouth or referral) it may not be obvious what a prospect 'looks' like. People or firms that look like your customer are likely to be prospects. They are likely to have similar issues that you can help with. Also, consider who it is you need to speak to. The actual person you liaise with at a current customer may not necessarily be the decision maker at a prospect organisation.

3 - KNOW YOURSELF

What's so good about you that makes you worth listening to? How different are you from the competition? What specific examples of work can you give that will impress your prospect? Why do your existing customers like you?

4 - KNOW YOUR COMPETITION AND MARKET ENVIRONMENT

Be aware of all the other offerings that your customer may be confronted with – be comfortable with their strengths and weaknesses. Get up to date with all the latest jargon and buzzwords. Ensure you are aware of all issues that effect the business environment you and your prospects share?

5 - KNOW YOUR CALL AIM

One of the biggest mistakes a telemarketer will do is get the call aim mixed up. Many firms have, quite rightly, invested in good marketing collateral – e.g. brochures, leaflets, PDF documents. These are just tools that help provide information and credibility. The purpose of the call is to engage with some one directly – make sure it doesn't become a 'sending a brochure' call.

6 - KNOW YOUR PATTERN

You've got about 10 seconds to make an impression. Make sure you have created a succinct, professional and compelling opening statement. This will give you the best chance possible of developing a conversation where all of your expertise and charm can then do their magic!

7 - KNOW YOUR BARRIERS

Think about the 'why not's' that some one may throw at you (aka Objections!). Some objections are 'true', some are 'false'. True ones are the hardest but also the best as they are part of a genuine dialogue. False ones are the easiest to handle but the worst as they have no thought behind them.

8 - KNOW YOUR BARRIER STRATEGY

(aka Objection Handling!) Be prepared with sensible responses. Dealing with these barriers should be approached in a business like manner. Make sure you have you have the right tools in your tool box so the appropriate tool is used to overcome the barrier.

9 - KNOW YOUR SYSTEM

You've made a call – what's next? Is there a call back required? Will you need to have call notes? Do you have to send any info? Are there new names that need to be collated? It doesn't matter if it's on tablets of wax or the latest Customer Resource Management system – as long as it works for you.

“*This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night
the day,
Thou canst not then be false to
any man.*

Hamlet

10 – KNOW THAT YOU ARE RIGHT

You are right to make a call. You are right to develop your business. You are right to seek more customers. Be assertive (not aggressive) and people will happily give you the time of day – make a call with an ounce of an apology and they will be repulsed!