



TELEPHONE PROSPECTING AND SELLING REPORT

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How to Use Social Engineering On Your Calls

Last month we discussed how to make your warm up your prospecting calls. Now, we'll build on this Smart Calling™ process by covering a methodology that helps us collect intelligence from people within the prospect's company so we can customize and tailor our call to the prospect's world.

The term "social engineering" is most widely used to describe unscrupulous behavior, such as misrepresenting oneself and lying to manipulate someone to provide sensitive information. However, we use it positively and ethically to gather intelligence for our Smart Calls™. To us, social engineering simply means talking to people other than your prospect in order to gather information which will help you help your prospect. It can be done

-As a separate call before your first call to your prospect; and,

-Every time you call your prospect.

I find this to be the most underutilized tool available to salespeople – and the one that has the greatest possible payoff. All it requires is that you take the time to do it, develop a sense of curiosity, and cultivate some conversational questioning techniques. Completing all of these steps may indeed grant you a revelation that many of us have had: people are willing to give you amazing amounts of quality information if you *just ask them*.

Kevin Mitnick was one of the most notorious computer hackers in the world; and at the time of his arrest in 1995, the most wanted computer criminal in US history. After his release from prison, he wrote the book entitled *The Art of Deception*, (another that I highly recommend), in which he shares precisely how he pulled off many of his hacking jobs. Mitnick claims that he compromised computers solely by using passwords and codes that he gained by **social engineer-**

ing; in other words, simply talking to people. Now a speaker and security consultant to corporations, Mitnick points out that the weakest link in any security system is the person holding the information. You just need to *ask* for it.

The Social Engineering Process

Of course, we are using social engineering in the positive sense: asking for information from people that will *help* other people and the organization as a whole. The social engineering process for Smart Calling™ is as follows: upon reaching a live voice, you:

1. Identify yourself and the company you represent; as in, **"Hi, I'm Jason Andrews with National Systems."** This immediately shows that you are not hiding anything.

2. Ask for help. **"I hope you can help me out"** or **"I need some assistance"** are requests that can go a long way. Most people have an innate desire to be helpful to others in some way.

3. Use a Justification Statement. This is the key that will unlock the most useful information. Some examples are:

"I want to be sure that I'm talking to the right person there..."

"I'm going to be speaking with your VP of Sales, and want to be sure that I have accurate information..."

"So that I'm better prepared when I talk to your CIO, I have a few questions you probably could answer..."

4. Ask questions. Of course you want to ask about the basic, factual material for which you might not have information yet. This depends both on what you sell, and the level of person

with whom you're speaking. In general, the higher up you go, the better the quality of information.

The theory behind the success of these Justification Statements I suggest is discussed by Dr. Robert Cialdini — widely considered as one of the foremost experts on persuasion and influence — in his classic book (which I believe should be in every serious salesperson's library) entitled *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. Cialdini cites an experiment conducted by Harvard social psychologist Ellen Langer where students let others cut in line in front of them at the copy machine simply because they provided a reason for their request—"because I'm in rush."

Direct mail copywriters also employ this technique, often referring to it as the "Why" or the "Because." For example, if a business is running a promotion, they know their response will increase if they give the reason for it. For example, "We need to make room for next year's new models and are clearing out the warehouse, so we are dropping prices to move the current models."

I recommend that you take the time to create your own Justification Statement — your "because" reason — and use it regularly.

Smart Calling Exercise

1. Prepare your own script for social engineering using the process above. Be sure you have a justification statement you are comfortable with.

2. Brainstorm for the questions you will ask at all levels of an organization, and write them out.

Use Social Engineering and you will make your prospecting calls much smarter!



Sales Observations

Here's something that drives me absolutely nuts: sales or service representatives who do not listen and ask questions that were already answered. For instance, I could not remember if I had booked a car on an international trip I was taking. Sometimes these rentals are paid in advance, and I had no record of the actual booking, but I did remember being on a number of sites checking prices. So, I called the major rental companies I typically use with hopes that I might find a reservation I had already made and paid for. I worded my requests very simply and clearly—I thought so anyway: "I am not sure if I rented a car with your company in Cabo San Lucas on the dates of _____, and I would appreciate your help in checking for me to see if I actually do have a reservation."

Here is how TWO, yes TWO of the reps responded: "Do you have a confirmation number?"

With the first one I was so shocked at the inanity of the question that I politely replied that I did not have a number, since I did not know if I had a reservation. When I heard it the second time just minutes later, I admit I was not so nice: "Well if I had a confirmation number, I would know I had a reservation, and I wouldn't be talking to you, would I?" (I'm not so sure she thought I was as clever as I

thought I was with that response.) My point is this: even if parts of your calls are repetitive, be sure to LISTEN to what your prospects and customers say. Simple concept, isn't it?

As far as I could tell from my research, I had not rented a car yet, and waited until the last minute to do so. However, that last minute was the same time that Hurricane Rick decided it would begin meandering around the Baja, scheduled to hit precisely in the middle of the week I would be there. I scrapped the trip to Cabo.

I was bummed I really enjoy that place, not only as a great place to relax, but from a sales-observation perspective. You gotta love the salesmanship at its most basic level. Beach vendors selling watches, jewelry, tattoos, hats, and various other things you would likely never wear or use again.

I've been there many times and I always observe and study the vendors. Asking is essential in their job description. No ask, no get. Sure, every once and a while a prospective customer approaches a vendor with a purchase in mind, but, for the most part, sales are made when the vendors shove a tray of necklaces in someones face and ask if they would like to buy.

I might be overanalytical here, but the downside to that is the close is used as an opening statement, which naturally generates a lot more resistance than interest (just like it does on the phone).

On my last visit, a few did use creative, interest-grabbing openings.

"Amigo, you look like a golfer. Are you?"

Me: "Sure, I golf. Why?"

"Do you wear one of these copper bracelets that are so popular?"

So now the guy had me looking at his briefcase of copper bracelets.

My point: engage your prospecti in a conversation, get them talking about their needs and interests, and THEN you are in a much more favorable position to

make your recommendation and ask for commitment.

Isn't it such a breath of fresh air when you hear someone pleasant, willing, and eager to help you when you call an organization to inquire about, or buy something? I called two glass companies to inquire about having a chip repaired on my windshield. Here's what happened:

Company 1: After 8 rings, a guy—who sounded like I roused him out of bed, recovering from a three-day drinking binge—answered with "Yeah." Taken aback, I asked if this was indeed a glass company, and if he did chip repairs. "Yep," he grunted. It was a short call.

Company 2: The guy answered with a jovial tone, asked me about the chip, asked me when I wanted it done, told me it would take only 20 minutes, and offered to come to my house at 900 a.m. the next day to fix it. Guess who got the business?

It seems to me that in today's high-tech environment where electronics supposedly makes our lives easier, there is less of the human touch in sales and service. Set yourself apart by doing the little, high-touch things and you will enjoy your sales results.

Go have your best month ever!



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This Article Is “For You”

By Jim Meisenheimer

How many times a day do you say the words, “for you?” You might be passing up sales opportunities, considering the power these words have. A restaurant experimented with these words. They asked the service staff to incorporate these words throughout the dining experience as often as possible.

Imagine your cocktails, the menu, a wine list, fresh ground pepper, dinner rolls, the desert tray, and even coffee being served and accompanied with the words, if said sincerely.

During a sales training seminar I asked a group of salespeople to develop a list of statements using the words “for you,” as they might be incorporated into a sales call. Most thought it would be easy to do. I guess that’s because most of us genuinely believe we’re already doing it. Surprise, surprise. It became a very difficult exercise, taking more time than anyone realized.

If you think it’s easy, try writing four or five comments using the words “for you” in a substantive way. My guess is that you’ll have to think about it. But, if all it takes is a little thought to sound a lot better—it’ll be worth the effort.

Oh, by the way, the waiters and waitresses who were involved in the experiment reported their tips increased over 20% after they started using the words “for you.” It’s just a thought—I did it “for you.”

(Check out Jim’s new sales training resource, www.SalesTrailblazerClub.com)

Listen Up!

Do you really hear what prospects and customers say, or do you just wait for them to finish talking so you can have your turn? Most people don’t listen with the intent to understand. Instead they filter everything through their own needs. For example, do you say things like, “Oh, I went through the same thing. Let me tell you about it . . .” If so, see things through your customers’ eyes.

Most Sales Reps Will Not Do This

By Geoff Alexander

One of the complaints I most often hear from inside sales reps that take my telesales courses is that they don’t get enough leads. Whether you get your leads from lists, whitepaper downloads, your own lead qualification reps, or any other source, you’re probably missing a significant amount of business in your territory if you’re not subscribing (and reading!) at least one trade publication that addresses experts in your solution area.

This is really an old-fashioned idea, and one that still works. Best of all, I’ll bet your competitors aren’t doing it. So today’s column is about beating your competition. And I’ll give you a real-world example of what I’m talking about, because it worked for me, and the publication still exists. If you sell into the market I sold into, you can use it too. And if you don’t, you can take my story and plug it into your solution set and prospect base, too, and go out and subscribe to a magazine that fits your needs similarly.

Geoff’s Success Story

Back when I was an inside rep, I sold software and application development tools like debuggers, in-circuit emulators, and regression testers. Our standard trade publications were the *EE Times*, *Dr. Dobb’s Journal*, and a few others. But the one I loved was *Crosstalk*, the *Journal of Defense Engineering*. That publication, published at Hill Air Force Base, addressed issues and situations involving how the Department of Defense built and maintained software (still does). Every issue was packed with information on who was building what. I subscribed free (you still can), and every month I’d take a couple of hours out of my Saturday, skim it (still do, I’m hooked), and highlight names and projects. Monday I’d call those highlighted folks and made sure they knew about my solutions and what we did.

And man, did I sell a lot of stuff to the DOD! Most of those folks were experts, and rarely showed up on lists. The only way I could find them was by reading about them. And **they** always enjoyed talking to me because I’d read about them.

So here’s where I’m going with this. Whatever you sell, there are trade publications where experts in your industry talk about solutions. I want you to subscribe to a paper copy, so you can get away from your computer on the weekend, sit in an easy chair with a highlighter, and skim material that will be important to you. Seriously carve out a couple of weekend hours to do it.

But what about the online versions, you might ask. I *don’t* recommend doing this online, because everything else in the world gets in the way, email, YouTube, and random thoughts turned to web searches.

The Result

And when you do allocate time to digest the material, what will happen is this: you’ll get names of high level people, and you’ll find out what’s bugging them that your solution can help fix. Unbelievably, your voicemails will get returned, admins will put you through, and you’ll have real productive conversations because you’ll know an awful lot about the business your prospects are in, from the inside out.

I train and coach hundreds of telesales reps each year, and I know most of them aren’t doing this (they should be, after my classes, though).

So if you’re having a slow time getting to prospects in these tough economic times, ensure that you’re reading and working those trade mags. As Gomez Addams used to say, “Ahh, the old ways are best.” So add mining those trade publications to your Best Practices Playbook to find those important and lucrative prospects you’d otherwise never find.

(Since 1990, Geoff Alexander has specialized in training sales professionals to sell b2b high technology solutions via the telephone. His client list includes companies such as Cisco Systems, HP Software, IBM Rational, and Wind River Systems. Geoff holds a Master’s degree in Education, with a concentration in Instructional Technology. Visit his Inside Sales Tips blog at www.alextrain.com/inside-salestelesales-tips-blog.)



How to Listen Your Way to More Sales

Listening can be tough. It can be even tougher in the absence of face-to-face contact. Listening, however, remains the key to establishing a "relationship" with your clients. As the customer begins to perceive you understand his world, relationships grow and sustain themselves. Here are some tips and ideas on how to improve your listening skills:

How Not to Listen

1. "I know this stuff." Sometimes pre-call planning can work against you. Yes, you read that correctly. Occasionally reps overprepare. Specifically, they feel they know so much about the client or the prospect that it builds a false sense of security.

Consequently, when a client begins to provide information there is a tendency to say to yourself "I know that already." It is not so much that we entirely dismiss the comments by the customer but rather we listen at 50%. We miss perspective. And when we miss the client's perspective we cannot fully comprehend their world.

2. "I can hardly wait to tell you that I know this stuff." Similarly, there is a tendency when we overprepare to anxiously show the client how much we know. We want to impress her with our preparation. In this scenario we are waiting for the moment to tell the client what we know rather than listen to what she has to say.

3. "Let me tell you even more." Sales reps are taught to listen for buying cues. Unfortunately, some reps simply wait for the cue so that they can use the opportunity to make their pitch. This is selective listening. There is a tendency to hear what we want to hear and then switch into the pitch mode. From that point on we stop listening.

What to Do

1. Take notes. Nothing new or exciting about this tip. However, it still remains the most powerful way to listen, particularly when you are not face-to-face with the client. Taking notes forces you to concentrate on what the client has to say. It eliminates distractions around you because your head is focused on the

paper. As you take notes, you have less of an opportunity to prepare rebuttals and pitches as described above. Incidentally tell the prospect or client you are taking notes. They won't mind. In fact, most will be impressed if not pleased:

"Ms. Fontaine, I'll be taking some notes so I can assess your situation and not miss anything." Telling them that you are taking notes also preps the client that he or she might have to slow down or repeat themselves. For example: **"Mr. Maher, I didn't quite get that last bit of information concerning your use of trocars in surgery. I'm afraid my short hand needs a little work. Could you go over that again?"**

2. Ask Questions. Again, no surprises here. Asking questions, of course, is the means of getting the client to speak. And that provides us the opportunity to listen. There are several "generic" questions that can assist in getting the client to open up. For instance;

"Bob, I'm not quite sure what you meant by that last remark..."

"Could you elaborate..."

"Explain how that works..."

"Can you go over that again ..."

3. Provide a "playback." No amount of note taking and questioning will guarantee that you have listened or that you have listened and understood. The only way you can do this is by providing a playback or summary of what you have heard to your client:

Sales Rep: "So, Danny, let's see if I have got this straight: You want to expand your market share by penetrating the hospitals into the northeast but you have yet to find the personnel to implement the plan. The strategy is further hampered by the fact that you are virtually an unknown player in this area. Is this correct?"

Note: It is vital that you simply don't repeat word for word what the client has said. That's "parroting." You must summarize and interpret.

One of three interesting things can

happen when you provide feedback. First, the client can confirm what you have played back: "That's it, Ben. You've hit it right on the head."

Second, the client can correct or modify your playback: "That's not quite right, Ben. We do have two sales reps in the northeast already. Their focus has been only been on the hospitals in Boston."

Third, the client can add more information: "Well, Ben, that summarizes it. I should also mention that we have the exclusive rights to the Graseby Pump from England. Typically, the pump can help reduce post operative costs by 30-40%. Surgeons and hospitals are constantly looking for ways to reduce these costs. We have proven results and testimonials from Europe and here in the mid-West."

Sales Rep: "So you see the pump as a unique means of penetrating the market despite the fact that your company is not well known. Am I getting the picture?"

"Precisely."

Note the use of the last question. Don't be afraid to ask for confirmation. Phrases like **"How does that sound?"** or **"Do I have it right?"** or **"Am I on the right track?"** or **"Is that correct on my part?"** help check your listening.

In summary, while listening, you get to know the customer and their world. But another curious thing occurs. As you demonstrate your listening skills, the client gets to know you and your world. And the customer concludes you are reliable, trustworthy, and professional. That's what relationships are made of.

Good luck.

(Jim Domanski is President of TeleConcepts Consulting, a telesalesconsulting and training firm. Contact him at Jim@TeleConceptsConsulting.com, 613-591-1998)

Read This if Your Price is Higher Than the Competition

If your price is higher than your competitors, you should pay close attention to this brief story that I found while searching my archives.

Years ago there was a young sales rep who sold woven labels. He grew discouraged during his first several weeks on the job, not selling a single label. He complained to his boss that the price was too high, therefore he couldn't compete in the marketplace. The sage boss replied,

"Here's what I'll do. I'm not saying you're right, but I'll cut the price in half for one week. Now rush out, sell all you can, and ruin me."

The rep scrambled out to make calls and capitalize on this new pricing structure. But even at half price his efforts weren't much better. Upon hearing the results, the boss smiled and said,

"Son, I'm not surprised. Because you probably won't sell anything until you truly believe in what you're selling."

This helped the rep learn the real value of the product, and he then began selling successfully at the full price.

Have you ever complained of getting beat up by prospects because your price is higher? If so, are YOU truly sold on the value you're delivering? If not, rethink your position. Your customers buy based on what value they get as a result of using your product or service.

Your mission is to determine what your potential buyers regard as value, and to explain how you can give it to them.

Acknowledge Their Frustration

When you have a customer who is irate or has a problem, or a prospect serving up an intense objection, help them vent by saying, **"You sound frustrated. Please tell me more."** Jim Howe with Amersham says that this diffuses tension and gets them to open up.

Telesales College Attendee Tips

Here are quick tips and success stories passed along by some of the participants at our Telesales College training seminars.

Handling the "Just Send Literature" Brush Off

Screeners are simply trying to do their job (protecting the decision maker's time) by asking you questions. When they attempt a brush off with, "Just send any information you have," Paul Ulerick with HBO & Company suggests, **"Well, I'm really trying to help him clean up his junk mail. You see, I have volumes of material I could send, but it wouldn't do him any good unless I know about the specific issues he's dealing with. And that's why I'd like to speak with him."**

You also can appeal to the screener's emotions when you get that brush off: **"I imagine that you probably go through his mail. The last thing you need is more clutter to sort through, right? I want to ensure that if I do send something, it's appropriate. That's why I need to ask a few questions about how he's now handling . . ."**

You Don't Earn Commission on Sending Out Literature

By the way, if you're in habit of giving in to the "Just send info," stall, from either screeners or buyers, chances are that you queue up plenty of follow-up activity with lots of resulting disappointment. Augi Moran with Laughlin Associates said, "The commission on selling literature is . . . nothing!" If you send out literature, samples, or demos, be certain they're going to do something with it. Ask them,

"What specifically will you look for?"

"What criteria will you use when evaluating it?"

"If you like what you see, what's the next step?"

Ask BIG!

If you ask large, you'll consistently get larger results. The math works on this. It's more likely that someone would shift down after you make a big recommendation than raise up after a small one.

John Orlando, with Wingard & Company, a machine shop, targeted an engine manufacturer as a desired client. He aimed high with his objective, setting a goal of providing the company with all of their engine components. On the call after doing the appropriate interest-creating and questioning, he recommended to the client that Wingard be the supplier for all of the company's engine components and asked for the business. The prospect balked. John then backed up, and scaled down his request by asking just for their parts business. He got it.

Now, think what would have happened if John had started out with the request for the smaller parts-only portion of the business. It's likely he would have come up empty handed.

Get out of your own comfort zone regarding big requests. Think big, ask large. You'll get proportionate results.

Recontact Low-Price Buyers

Jud Chappell with Beckett Publications suggests you track the sales you lost solely because of higher prices. Follow up with these people a few months later. They might have already experienced what you suspected and expected—they learned first-hand why the price was lower. Perhaps now they would be open to discussing your quality-oriented offer. The sting of poor quality lingers long after the temporary joy of low price wears off.

A Voice Mail Idea

Billie Ingram with Proxy Communications adds a unique twist to her voice mail messages: **"Thanks for listening to my message. I appreciate your voice mail time."**

How to Bring Integrity Back to Selling

By Ari Galper

You probably never tell potential clients your real goal in calling them, but you don't need to. They're already aware, because we're all sensitive when the phone rings and it turns out to be someone we don't know. In the old traditional training, we learned the latest techniques for making a sale. We talk to "prospects" rather than with people. And we "guide" conversations along rather than letting them unfold naturally.

The way we do this sometimes might even be called a bit manipulative. After all, we're relating to another person while holding an ulterior motive of making a sale.

Where does honesty and integrity fit into this scenario? Well, most of us honestly believe in our product or service. But beyond that, we carry a somewhat artificial persona when we're cold calling. We talk with people for the primary purpose of making a sale, and we're not really interested in them or their world.

Doesn't this make you feel uneasy at times? It does to me.

So let's discuss some ways we've been trained in the traditional sales mindset that feel artificial and dehumanizing, and ways we can overcome them.

1. We intrude upon another person uninvited, with the goal of making a sale.

It's against our nature as human beings to create uncomfortable situations. We have a natural instinct for courtesy and connection. It's usually hard for us as regular people to call uninvited, because on some level it feels discourteous.

We can change that by changing our goal. What if our goal is not to make the sale, but to find out if we can help someone? This shift makes us more relaxed. And it keeps us in harmony with personal integrity.

2. We project ourselves as personable and friendly, while also holding an ulterior motive for securing a sale

There's an inner conflict with integrity when we find ourselves using our connections with others for self-gain. So we can bring ourselves back into honesty and truthfulness by shedding ulterior motives entirely.

We do this by focusing on whether we can provide something that will benefit another person. We find out if they have a problem we may be able to solve. And if it turns out we can't help with our product or service, we graciously accept the outcome.

By being honest and not playing a role, we find ourselves really liking what we do. And when our "ulterior motives" are simply non-existent, people are more open to trusting us.

3. When we meet someone new, we immediately talk about ourselves and what we have to offer.

It's actually not normal for us to start an interaction by launching into a self-focused monologue. As regular people, this just goes against our grain. Common courtesy dictates that initial conversations be dialogues, not monologues.

In normal conversations we would feel self-absorbed if we primarily talked about ourselves and what we have to offer. Yet in the traditional cold calling situation, it's an accepted "norm." We've been trained to read a script, follow a strategy, or give a sales pitch. This really isn't the way we'd like to relate to people, but it's the way we've been taught.

We can break out of this artificial game of sorts by just being ourselves. Integrity and truthfulness means being authentic. We begin cold calling conversations with a

natural focus on the other person. We find out their needs, and respond with genuine interest.

4. We "rev up" in an artificial way, hoping to carry the potential client along with us into a sales process.

When we "pump ourselves up" with enthusiasm, it feels somewhat fake. It's not our normal way of being, and it throws us out of integrity.

And we also appear artificial to potential clients. They become wary of possibly being maneuvered into a sales situation.

If we can navigate a cold calling conversation without such games, people will sense we're trustworthy. They react warmly and unhesitatingly to a conversation that feels natural to them, and especially if it revolves around their issues rather than our agenda.

So how do we approach cold calling in the most truthful way? We stop being "salespeople" and become human. We engage in an honest dialogue rather than a monologue. We look for ways to help others, and we're comfortable knowing that our product or service may not be an honest "fit" for them right now. And we stop playing roles, especially the "high enthusiasm" game.

This is what I mean by bringing integrity back into selling. It's unbelievable just how rewarding both personally and professionally this can be.

(Ari Galper, founder of Unlock The Game™, makes cold calling painless and simple. Learn his free cold calling secrets even the sales gurus don't know. To receive your 10 free audio mini-lessons visit <http://www.UnlockTheGame.com/Art>)

Understanding the Buying Stages

A reader emailed me with a question, looking for information on “assuming the sale.” I’ll share the answer with you as well.

Old school, tactical methods of selling say that you should “assume the sale” as soon as the prospect shows any degree of interest. I disagree. That’s annoying, salesy, cheesy, and wrong in most cases. And you’ve probably had it happen to you. For example, you’re in a car dealership, or worse, sitting through a timeshare sales presentation, not even close to the point of buying, and the sales rep is filling out something that appears to be a contract! They disguise it as, “just taking down some information.”

I remember talking to a sales rep at a high-end electronics store who used the old Assumptive Close on me: “Where will we be delivering this?”, to which I replied, “I never said I even wanted it.”

In both of these cases, the prospect—me included—had not yet crossed the emotional buying bridge, and felt uneasy being subjected to the tactics.

The “Buying Bridge” Theory

When people buy, they ultimately pass over a bridge that takes them from indecision, to the decision to purchase. Try to assume the sale before they even get close to the bridge, and you’re dead in the water under the bridge. In other cases, they’ve already crossed it, when they call you to order, for example. Our job as salespeople is to recognize where they are, help them cross the bridge, and ultimately get the final commitment.

Where they are in relation to the bridge determines how you should handle the call. Here are some signals and courses of action.

When They’re Close to the Bridge

They not only talk about a need they have, but mention doing something about it: “We have been considering making a change.”

Your Action: Get them thinking more about the reasons they’re interested in doing something. This will fire up the problem or need driving them. **“What are some of the reasons causing you to consider changing?”**

When They’re On the Bridge

They speak in future terms of what they will get as a result of what you’re offering.

“I believe it’s something that all of the employees would benefit from.”

Your Action: Ask more questions to strengthen their beliefs, **“In what different ways do you think they would benefit?”**

This way they make the journey on their own. A much stronger sale.

When They’ve Crossed the Bridge:

Listen for indicators of mental possession, meaning they’ve already begun enjoying—in their mind—the results of what you can deliver:

“I think we’d bring all of our reps in town for the training.”

Your Action: Solidify the details. It’s here where you can assume the sale, because THEY have.

“That sounds like a good idea. Do you have a location in mind?”

Here are some other ideas to help them further visualize owning and using the results of what you sell.

For example,

“... and when you use the new machine you’ll notice...?”

“... and who do you think you’d designate as the main user?”

“... where do you think you’d put it?”

Sure you can assume the sale—if they have.

What to Do When They Continue Putting You Off

When I look at the contact notes of sales reps who “have lots of things in the pipeline” but not many closing, I often see things like, “Not ready quite yet. Call back in three weeks to check again.”

Some prospects can string out the sales process indefinitely. And those that really have no intention of buying are robbing you of valuable time that could be spent more productively elsewhere.

Therefore, don’t allow people to lead you on who are unwilling to make a decision. You can get an idea of specifically how much importance they place on working with you by asking,

“Ms. Jones, we’ve spoken several times now, and I thought we were in agreement that my offer would provide you with significant benefits. Tell me how much of a priority is it for you to have a new security program?”

If they answer, “Not a large one,” then you can smoke out a real objection which has been hidden up to this point.

Or, perhaps you’ll determine that it’s just not worth it to spend any more time with this prospect, which is also good, since you’ll save time. If you’re ultimately going to get the “no” anyway, better you get it today. Move them forward, or move them out.

Or, best yet, they may surprise you with a positive answer you are hoping for.

Review Your Message

Listen to the messages you leave on others’ voice mail if given the option. You might find that it took you 100 words to make a point that could have been communicated with 50. Edit it down and re-record it.

Create Your Own Hypothetical Questions

Politicians are often asked contrived questions in order to get their opinions about something supposedly based upon facts. You can ask hypotheticals to get prospects and customers to consider what they would do in certain situations: **“Jane, how would you handle it if your supplier was not able to deliver because they were backordered on something you needed overnight?”**

Create your own hypotheticals designed to get them to react to very real problems they might encounter ...ones you can solve.

Present Opposite Choices

When using the “alternate-choice” technique to get information, consider using opposites to narrow down the information you need. This can help get a feel for what the prospect is really looking for. For example,

“Are you looking for a remote resort location, or a downtown facility right in the middle of a business district?”

Be Like the Toddler Learning to Walk

If a toddler avoided attempting to pull himself up on furniture and taking those first few wobbly steps because he wanted to avoid falling down, it's likely he'd never learn how to walk. He'd be safe though, laying sprawled out on the floor watching as life zipped past. Of course that doesn't happen. They stumble. They do belly flops. But they eventually walk. Then they run. But then they grow up, and many do start playing it too safe. Be like that kid just learning to walk. Take a few teetering steps and risk falling. You'll get back up stronger, more determined, and smarter than before.

Ask These Questions When You Feel Down

Ever feel down after a call?

Put things in perspective. Ask yourself,

“What humor can I see in this situation?”

“Does this experience really affect who I am?”

“What can I learn from it?”

Be Careful of How You Discuss the Competition

Sometimes a prospect might ask you about a competitor just to see how you will respond. They might even be judging your character. When discussing the competition, don't be afraid to pay them a compliment. The listener will appreciate you for it, plus he'll view you as possessing the same characteristics you're commending the competition for. For example, Prospect “So, what do you think about Geezer Services?” Sales Rep **“Well, I know they also have a good maintenance department.”**

Link the Commitment/Action to the Benefit

If you're closing for an appointment, or any action for that matter, tie the action you want them to take along with the benefit to them for doing so. For example,

“Pat, I'm confident I'll be able to show you a way to cut your taxes significantly. It seems that it would be an excellent idea for you to bring your last two years' tax returns down to my office.”

“Dale, the next step at this point should be for you to send me copies of your bid specifications. I'll be able to get back to you within the day with a price that will at least be 10% less than you're paying now.”

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