



# TELEPHONE PROSPECTING AND SELLING REPORT

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## Lessons From An Everyday Sales Situation

A couple of years ago, needing to clear out some furniture we were replacing, I ran a classified ad for a very nice, traditional formal cherrywood dining set.

I listed a price in the ad. Seemed a fair amount based on what I researched from ads running the past two weeks.

A few calls came early Saturday. Practicing what I preach, I was prepared for the calls. Naturally, most people started with, "Uh, tell me about it."

I always responded with, "I'll be happy to. First, please tell me, what are you looking for?"

This of course told me precisely how I should position the description of the furniture. Because, if I started talking about the items at this point, I'd be describing what I THOUGHT they should be interested in, instead of what they might really want.

Instead...

- If they told me they wanted something for their formal dining room because they entertain, I'd tell them how great this set was for entertaining, and the events it has been present at.

- If they said they were remodeling and wanted something different, I told them we were doing the same thing. It was old for us, but would be new for them.

- If they said they were getting their first home and wanted something nice, but couldn't afford new, I shared how we were in the same situation years ago, finally saved up and got this set, and how it would be perfect for them. Plus, I told them how we were shopping for new, too, right now, and knew how much more new sets run.

- If they said they need a hutch that would fit in the space they had avail-

able, we discussed the dimensions, and I gave them the exact figures of this hutch, helping them visualize how it would fit perfectly in that space.

**Sales Point:** How much do you question before presenting? Are you describing what they want, or what YOU want to talk about?

Each of the first several callers wanted to come see it—although one couple couldn't come until later in the day. I warned them that the first one who came up with the cash would get it. They understood.

The first guy who showed up bought it. Here are a couple of specific sales dynamics that were at work.

### Pointing Out the Flaws

When the guy walked in, I already knew he wanted it. He pretty much told me, as a result of my questioning by phone. As he was walking around the set, I used a credibility-enhancing technique that is effective to move the process forward when someone is leaning in your favor, but still might have a few unspoken doubts.

I pointed out a flaw. Pulling up the cloth table runner, I said, "I need to show you this little scratch here. It's small, but I want to make sure you see it." Then, pulling out one of the leaves I said, "And there's another tiny one here."

"Oh, those are nothing," he said. Precisely.

By voluntarily pointing out a problem, I showed him that there was nothing to hide, and that I was a credible seller. Since I showed HIM the flaw, it was tiny in comparison to what it might have been if he found it himself. Then he might wonder what else I was hiding. It's just human nature. Think of how you might be able to use the same principle.

**Sales Point:** What minor "flaws"

might you be able to mention at strategic points to build your credibility?

### Dealing With a Price Question

He told me that he needed to run to the cash machine, and that his wife would be meeting him back here in just a few minutes, asking if I could hold it for him, since she needed to see it before he could say yes for sure. I did tell him that a few others might show up, but I would hold it for 15 minutes. (By the way, he was pretty much sold at this point, right?)

**Sales Point:** What similar buying signals do you hear?

Upon their return, his wife loved it. He did kick her a few times so he would have a bit of negotiating power. He said, "Will you take \$650?" I had listed it for \$700. Now, with a buyer standing in your dining room, with a pickup truck in the driveway and cash in his pocket, some people might be tempted to cave in and take the \$650. I frowned and moaned, "I'll probably have someone show up in the next half hour with \$700 cash ... so, you can take it right now for \$700."

Of course, we both knew he went to the cash machine and withdrew \$700. Which he handed over to me. It's just natural that most people will ask for a better deal. It's not so natural to stick to your guns to get your asking price.

**Sales Point:** Do you give in to price questions?

This was an everyday sales scenario that we all find ourselves in from time-to-time. Yet there are so many strategies we can apply from our profession, and lots of lessons we can learn, if we pay attention and look for them.



# Sales Observations

**I've been sharing with you** over the past months, both here and in the email newsletter a number of sales experiences from the buyer's side as we finish and furnish our Arizona house. Here are a couple more worth noting.

At a home accessories and furniture store we saw a couple of large designer metal wall pieces. This place looked like a family-run operation. The owner saw our buying signals and asked if we liked them. I tried to not show too much emotion and asked how much better he could do. His reply was brilliant:

**"These are almost double this amount at Robb & Stucky's** (high-end furniture in Scottsdale). **You can have it for only \$295."**

Great answer!

I'm always prepared to pay full price, but I also like to ask for the sport of it, and, well, because it works. So I then said, "How much better can you do if I also get that one over there," pointing to a similar piece on the wall.

I expected a something solid like, "Same thing with that one. Together, you'll double your savings from anywhere else." Suddenly, though, he turned into a different person. He caved in, saying, "Ah, well, OK, I can give you \$75 off if you get both."

Sales lesson, please everyone say it

along with me: **"A dollar you give away is always a dollar of profit."**

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**OK, final furniture story**, I promise. If you are over 35, your growing-up experience with outdoor furniture might have been like mine...the folding lawn chairs ... remember the old metal and braided strap jobs where it seems like one strap always was broken? That's probably why I'm still struggling with buying stuff more expensive than indoor furniture. So we're agonizing over a bunch of pieces at about the fourth store of the day—and this one for the second time in two hours—when finally the sales rep pointed to an entire section we were looking at,

**"Why don't you just go ahead and get them all?"**

Hey, good idea. Ok.

He knew what we wanted, presented a fair price (ouch), knew we were going to buy somewhere soon, knew we were looking at the exact same thing down the street, and he made the decision easy.

Sometimes people need that slight nudge to get them to move off of center. The next time you reach that point on your call, simply ask for the decision. You might be surprised with the answer.

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**To keep my SPAM email down** (I was getting over 1000 per day at one point, primarily because I've been sending out an email newsletter with my address on it every week for over six years and my address is everywhere), I've used SpamArrest.com for the past 18 months, and it has worked beautifully. The system requires that if an email is sent to me, a human has to physically reply to a return email, if they're not already on my approved list.

I do still get unsolicited emails—technically spam—from sales reps, and most are for products and services I have no need for. However, I recently received an email that did catch my attention. It started out with,

**"Art, thought you might be inter-**

**ested in hearing about how another sales trainer like you was able to get new customers and maintain them at a high lifetime value..."**

Then he went on to share a success story, mentioned some of my services and how they were similar, and shared some testimonials. He said he would call.

That message earned my time because it was personalized, not just in name, but in **content**. He did his homework. He also built credibility by using a testimonial with an example of someone like me. Very nice.

Except he never did call.

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**Here's one of the most potentially** devastating phrases and beliefs I hear from salespeople when I am out doing training:

"What I say on the phone works for me now."

Usually I'll hear it after a rep shares a technique or an opening statement that could be much-improved. Keep in mind, "it works" is all relative. What percentage of the time does it work? What would it mean if you could increase your percentage of success?

Complacency and lack of desire to improve is what keeps so many salespeople performing at the low levels, while those always looking for the edge sell circles around them. Which group are you in?

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**I have plans for lots of exciting** new sales-building resources for you before year-end, including an exclusive members-only inner circle group providing access to information everyone doesn't have (more on that next month). So, I'm evaluating a number of products and services which will make that happen. While speaking with a sales rep that I called,

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early in the conversation I asked him the price. He replied with,

**"Let's verify it's the best solution for you first, then we can figure up the best price."**

That worked in diffusing my initial preoccupation with price, and got me thinking more about the real reason I was interested in it, and the real reason your prospect and customers are interested too: The result I would get, enjoy, and profit from.

Are you prepared with similar answers when you get this question?

### What I'm Reading Right Now.

*"Pivot- How One Turn In Attitude Can Lead to Success,"* By Dr. Alan Zimmerman.

Let's face it, in sales our attitude is the number one contributing factor to success, much more so than in any other job, in my opinion. Therefore, we need to continually maintain and grow our attitude-health. This easy-to-read book will have you scrambling for your pen and highlighter so you can record all of the great ideas you'll want to save and use. I read this for the first time right before Christmas and I'm going through it again. In fact, I liked it so much I sent copies to some of my friends, and my kids.

Get it from amazon.com or from Alan's site, [www.DrZimmerman.com](http://www.DrZimmerman.com). (There you can also see Alan interviewed by Harry Smith on the CBS Early Show about the book.)

Go and have your best month ever!



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# Quit "Closing"

By Jim Meisenheimer

In reviewing some of my older notes, I saw a study of salespeople that concluded the majority never asked for the business.

The survey indicated that 62% of sales reps never attempt to close. Based on my experience, I'd say that's even more true today.

Considering that's what we're paid to do, doesn't that seem like a high number?

It sure does, and it's costing sales reps and their companies millions, if not billions, in sales and profits.

I have a theory regarding closing. It begins with the distaste for the word itself. After all, we don't look forward to something that seems unpleasant. When you hear, "dental drill," or "cleaning the toilets," would that motivate you?

Of course not.

However, there comes a time when it's necessary to ask for the sale. What isn't always attractive is the thought of "closing." And the reason is clear: The word "close" doesn't describe the action that is required. Look it up. The word has many meanings. Most are not positive.

### Definitions of "Close"

For example,

To terminate

To dispose of

To grapple

To stop

To end

To block

To suspend

To liquidate

Close in...capture or attack

Close-out...reduce our price

Close-down...terminate

Are you trying to accomplish any of those?

Didn't think so.

No one wants to be "closed." I don't, and I suspect you don't.

So, to change sales performance, let's change the way we refer to this step in the professional sales process.

After identifying specific customer needs, presenting on-target solutions, and answering any concerns, the logical movement is to the next step. How you view it, and what you call it may have a dramatic impact on your results.

Forget the close.

Instead, ask for the order.

Ask for the business.

Ask for the appointment.

Ask for commitment for the next step.

Ask to be the one they'll choose when and if they decide to change.

Ask for a "Let's do it today," decision.

Will YOU do this beginning today?

Good selling!

*(Jim Meisenheimer's sales techniques and selling skills focus on practical ideas that get immediate results. You can discover all his secrets by contacting him at (800) 266-1268 or e-mail: [jim@meisenheimer.com](mailto:jim@meisenheimer.com) Use this link [www.meisenheimer.com](http://www.meisenheimer.com) to sign-up for Jim's FREE Selling Tips Newsletter and to get your copy of his Special Report titled, "The 12 Dumbest Things Salespeople Do.")*



# Exactly What to Do When You Lose A Sale

I have a longer, extremely important sales lesson for you this month. It touches on something we all experience.

What do you do when you lose a sale?

If you are like the majority of sales reps, you simply move on. End of story. And there's nothing wrong with that. But what if I told you there might be a way you could win back one or two of those sales? Would that be of interest to you?

This article looks at how you can possibly win back some of the sales you have lost. At the very least, it will show you how to position yourself for the next sale down the road. We'll look at what you can send and what you can say to give yourself an edge in the win-back department.

## Things Change

Never, ever forget this basic premise: in business, things change.

This is not so much a startling epiphany as it is a forgotten truism. Fact is, businesses morph and change every week, every month, every quarter and every year. We sometimes forget that and consequently, we give up on sales opportunities simply because we lost a particular sale.

Here are just some of the things that can change:

- your contact changes jobs or position
- the company changes focus or direction or philosophy
- the market changes
- people change
- the product or service changes
- the purchaser suddenly changes
- laws, regulations and requirements change
- needs change
- budgets change
- wants change

- competition changes
- fortunes change
- circumstances change

The real point here is that at any given time, your prospect can experience change and if you are not tuned into this possibility, you can and will miss opportunities. And the way to stay tuned in is to have a "win back process."

## The Four-Step Win-Back Process

Okay, here are a few scenarios. Let's say you call a prospect about a budgeting software proposal you sent. Or maybe you are calling to set up an appointment because an expire date was around the corner. Or suppose you want to close a prospect regarding an on-line training program. Maybe you are a financial advisor calling to promote a new mutual fund. Whatever the case, perhaps you call and hear, "We've gone with a competitor."

At this point you could sit on your hands, weep, whine and do nothing. Not a great option. On the more positive side, you could move on to the next prospect on your list and press on. That's a better alternative. Or, depending on the nature and size of the prospect, you could implement a Four-Step Win-Back Process

### Step 1: The Thank You Card

Immediately after hearing that you have lost a sale, take about a minute or so and handwrite a small thank you card.

Think about this for a moment. Who sends a thank you card AFTER they have lost a sale? In this one small gesture, you distinguish yourself as someone gracious and noble. It cannot help but frame you a positive light, if not for this sale then the next one.

Make your message simple, something like: "*Richard, thank you taking the time to speak with me today. Even though we were not chosen for this*

*project, I appreciate getting to know you. Kind regards. . .*"

Handwrite the message. Insert your card. Handwrite the envelope. Send it within two days.

### Step 2: The Value Added Article

Your next step is to e-mail or fax a value added article to your prospect. Always try to switch up your mediums. Use a combination of direct mail, e-mail and fax. It catches the eye of your client.

Depending on the situation, you might do this within a week or it might be within a month. For example, suppose a prospect had an expiration date on their insurance or waste disposal pick up. He has made the decision to stay with the incumbent but the expiration date is not for another couple of months. Send the article about three weeks later, but well before the date.

Your article should have absolutely nothing to do with your company. It should have something to do with the prospect or with his market or with his hobby or interest (if you are aware of this). Having articles on hand for this type of event means you have to scour industry newsletters and magazines, books, the internet...anywhere. Get cracking right now. Start building a library of resource articles. Collect them. Save them. Use them.

Attach a small Post-It note to it. It should read, "*Richard, I thought of you when I read this article. Enjoy. . .*" Wow! Talk about gracious even in 'defeat.' Now that's just plain classy and it's bound to register somewhere in your prospect's mind.

### Step 3: The "Things Change Letter"

In this step, you change your tack a bit. You send a letter on your company letterhead. Your objective in the first two steps was to position yourself as a top notch rep. You want to continue that positioning here but with the added di-

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mension of giving your company some air time.

Here's a sample letter. Use it as a template. Adapt it if necessary.

### Things Change

Dear Richard,

Again, I want to say thank you for considering us with your recent purchase of (budgeting software). I know you have decided to remain with your current vendor and I respect that.

But I also know one more thing:

Things change

Circumstances change. Markets change. People change. Products change. And vendors change.

And I wanted you to know that if things do happen to change that we are here should you need more information, a proposal, an opinion or a quote.

Kind regards,

Jim

I guarantee you that your average prospect does NOT get a letter like that. Notice I have a headline. It is printed in 16 point inch size and bold. It catches the eye. It sets the tone. As well, I have broken just about every grammar rule in the book. I did that on purpose. It's the way people talk. It refreshing and it clear. It sets you apart.

### Step 4: The Things Change Call

You could leave it at that. You could send the letter and see what happens. But if you add one more phone call to the mix you can possibly achieve the win-back. Within a week of anticipated receipt of the Things Change letter, call your prospect. Do NOT wait longer than a week. Timing is critical.

Here is a call guide or script to get you started:

**“Richard? This is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from \_\_\_\_\_. Richard, the purpose of my call is to follow up on the letter I sent you last week.**

**I am not certain if you had the chance to review it in any detail but if you did you know I mentioned**

**how things in business change – how markets change, people change, prices change, and circumstances change**

**I know you have made a decision to continue on with your current supplier but I wanted to touch base one more time just in case things have changed and to see if there might be another opportunity to do business.”**

This script echoes the sentiments of the letter. It comes after you have implemented a couple of nice gestures with the thank you card and the article. Chances are the prospect will feel the compelling need to open up to you, give you information and maybe even give you a sale.

### Time vs. Reward

Is the time and effort worth the reward?

Good question. This entire process doesn't take more than 5-10 minutes of your time. The trick to making this work so efficiently and effective is compiling your Win-Back 'tools.' Go out a buy a big stack of Thank You cards, start collecting and saving value added articles, links, books...whatever; and prepare your Things Change letter. It's not a huge effort no matter how you look at it.

Certainly the Win-Back Process is something that you would NOT do with every lost sale you encountered. Use your common sense. But there are usually a handful of prospects where this approach is worth the implementation. You might not win back the sale but you will create goodwill and equity with the prospect. . . and that just might tip the scales on the next sale.

Things do change. Will you be ready when the time comes?

(Jim Domanski is President of the Telemanagement Consulting Group, a telemarketing consulting and training firm. Contact him at 35 VanStone, Kanata, Ontario, Canada. 613-591-1998)

## Brief Sales Tips From a Fellow Sales Pro

At a national sales meeting I did on prospecting for outside sales reps, Gary Farnam with Information Technology Inc., gave me a list of his takeaways from the session, along with some of the things he always does on his calls. Good stuff!

**After a face-to-face sales** call, while everything is still fresh in your mind, phone your own voice mail to debrief the call and review the important points and next steps.

**Set your Primary Objective** for your calls at the best-imaginable level. Think big!

**Your call objectives should** be in writing. You will be more committed to them.

**Build an index of questions,** and answers that you can call upon when needed.

**Don't ask,** "Is now a good time to talk?" It rarely is unless they see a reason.

**Don't be afraid to listen to,** erase, and rerecord your voice mail message. It's almost always better the second time.

**When you leave a voice mail** message, mirror the voice level and tone that you hear.

**Don't skip asking questions** that you **think** you already know the answers to.

**Take extensive notes when** you're questioning. It forces you to listen, and you'll be glad you did when you prepare for the next call.

**Don't fall in love with your** assumptions and use them to prove how smart you are. Use them to question.

**Points are much more** powerful if the customer says them than if you say them. Develop questions to get them to say what you'd like.



## Handling "I Need to Discuss With My Partner"

By Joe Catal

As we all know, prospects will tell you to send info to get rid of you. Here's something they're saying that's being used the same way. "I have a partner." During a two-month period I kept records of 57 prospects who told me they had a partner. The next day I called the company back and said to whoever picked up the phone,

**"Hi. Jim asked me to send him some information on our company. How do you spell his last name?"**

After getting the name I said,

**"Is Jim the only owner of the company, or does he have a partner?"**

Twenty-two of the 57 people told me there was no partner! What's amazing is that when I called them back to ask for the order, not one of them made a purchase! They all said the partner turned it down. Out of the 35 that did have partners, only nine of them let me speak with the other partner. Out of those nine, five made a purchase. Out of the remaining 26 that did not let me speak with their partner, only one made a purchase. I've come to the conclusion that this is another stall that's as popular as the send info routine.

When they say they have to run it by their partner, say,

**"Jim, is your partner in?"**

If yes, say,

**"Could you see if he has a moment to talk to me? I'd just like to run this by him and answer any of his questions. This way the both of you can make an informed decision about this."**

If he tells you his partner's busy, say,

**"What time later today would be a good time for me to call back and talk with him?"**

If he gives you a time, great. However, don't be surprised if the prospect gets very short with you and says, "You don't need to call him back. Just send me your info and if we're interested we'll call you." There's the red flag. Ask him if he has access to the Internet. Give him your name, number and web

site address. Tell him,

**"Check our web site out because it has everything you need to know about us. If your partner's interested, give me a call back and we can discuss this further."**

Since I've been using this technique, very few people have called back. However, the ones that let me speak with their partner, I've been closing almost 50% of these!

Also, if you do talk with the partner, a lot of times he and the owner will be in the office together. Ask him to put you on a speaker phone. You'll find that many times doing this you'll get the order, or they'll say they do have interest and send info. This is legitimate! Set a day and time to call back. Also, if they're not interested, they'll tell you. It saves a lot of time. Sometimes you'll run into a situation where a committee is involved. I ask if I can call during the meeting to tell them about this. Sometimes they'll say yes, most of the time it's a no. I ask if he'd like to call me during the meeting. Again, some will, most won't. On this you'll have to use your gut feeling. Is the person you are talking to for or against your product? Will they recommend it? What's the benefit they see? I also ask if the committee likes this, what would the next step be?

You have to look at the partner stall with an "I'm going to call your bluff attitude." From now on whenever someone tells you they have a partner, keep in mind almost 50% don't!

Also, depending on what you're selling, you may not want to present to the single partner at all, but set up a convenient time when all parties involved would be in. If they tell you their partner's in a different location, try to set up a conference call or get the number to the other location and call him.

(Joe Catal is at [JoeCatal@hotmail.com](mailto:JoeCatal@hotmail.com). His book "Telesales Tips from the Trenches: Secrets of a Street-Smart Salesman" is available in hard copy, or as an e-book for \$19.95. Or order, call 800-326-7721, or go to [www.BusinessByPhone.com](http://www.BusinessByPhone.com))

## When Should You Call Back After Sending Materials?

How long should you wait before you call after you've sent a letter or brochure? I have to chuckle every time I see some "authority" write or say that the optimal time to call is five days after mailing, or ten days, or 98 days... or whatever. The real answer is a very definite, unequivocal, "It depends." It depends on when you've both decided to speak again. You should determine this time frame before getting off the call. And it shouldn't be **you** telling them when you'll call back, as in the very obtuse phrase, "And I'll plan on touching base with you in about two weeks, OK?"

Instead, **ask** them when you should call back, as in,

**"By what day do you think you will have had a chance to go through the material so we can speak again?"**

**"When will you have your sample evaluation completed so we can discuss it?"**

Notice that you're not just throwing out a date and asking them if it's OK if you dial the phone on that day. You're linking their committed action to a time frame. Once you have that nailed down, then get agreement on the date and time for the next call.

## Get Referrals from Within Their Company

If you have a customer within a company that has multiple locations, or many departments at one location, you probably haven't even scratched the surface of potential business. The hard part is over: getting the company as a customer. Now that you're in the door as part of the family, ferret out other opportunities. Ask your customer, "**Who else within your company also uses/does \_\_\_\_\_, who could also take advantage of something similar to what we're doing together?**" Prompt them a bit: "**How about other departments? Other locations?**"

Even if they come up empty, ask them, "**If I can find other buyers on my own, it wouldn't be a problem if I mention your name as a reference, would it?**"

## A Horrible Opening Statement

Although products and services get more cutting edge and high tech every year, the bad techniques remain the same. Here's a call I received:

*"I'm \_\_\_\_\_ with Cyberpromotions. I want to talk to you about our online advertising and see what it would take to earn your business."*

Major mistakes:

1. He wants to talk about "online advertising." Personally, I'm looking for solid results. That's what I'm interested in (as are most people), not just "advertising."

2. ". . . see what it would take to earn your business." What is a prospect supposed to say here? "Oh, Ok, here's a list. Do this and you have it."

What could he have said or done?

I've said it hundreds of times, and I will never stop:

- First, KNOW something about who you're calling.
- Use that information.
- Make it about them, not you.
- Do NOT state that you want to sell them, you want them to buy, or that you want to get an appointment. Sure those might be your goals, but saying them at the beginning creates resistance.

Here's a better opening.

**"I'm \_\_\_\_\_ with Cyber-promotions. We work with quite a few marketers of training materials like yourself worldwide, and have a system that has helped them sell more of their products on the Web to new customers they probably would not have reached otherwise, and without any printing or postage expenses. Based on what I saw at your site, and depending on what your plans are for acquiring new customers, it might be worth it for us to see if this is something you'd like to discuss."**

Remember the goal of the opening is to get them in a positive frame of mind, and then to move them to the questioning.



## Call on Fridays to Get More Appointments

Plenty of outside sales reps stroll in Monday with just a few appointments for the week. Then they have to scramble to make things happen to make the week a success. A little planning can avoid the stress and ensure more appointments.

Compare the typical Monday work attitudes of most people with that of Friday's. Monday begins a whole new mountain of tasks. Fridays certainly leave lots to do, but, hey, it's almost the week-end and that helps many people feel less stressed.

Therefore, if you call a prospect on Friday and ask for a Wednesday appointment, the week ahead feels more open and it's easier for him to say "yes" than if you ask for the same Wednesday meeting on Monday morning when the week ahead is heavy on his shoulders.

**Strategy:** Take a couple of hours on Friday for your prospecting and appointment-setting times. It's a great way to fill your upcoming week's calendar, take the burden off of Monday morning, and help you increase your sales!

*(SOURCE: "Smart Salespeople Sometimes Wear Plaid, by Barry Graham Munro, Prima Publishing.)*

## Follow Up With a Reason

As we've often talked about here, many salespeople begin follow-up calls with, *"I'm calling to see if you received my proposal/literature/catalog/sample."* And John Graham, with Graham Communications in Quincy, Massachusetts, agrees that most customers and prospects hate that tired line. After all, these salespeople usually don't call to make sure that a shipment or refund arrives on time. Customers know that the salesperson's real objective is to turn the prospect's attention to what was sent, and what he plans to do with it.

So, cut the pretense and admit that you want to direct the customer's attention to what you sent. Such as, **"The reason for the call is to pick up on our last conversation and go through the proposal I sent . . . particularly the section on . . ."**

## Asking About "Needs" Isn't Productive

Don't ask someone if they have any needs right now, since it's a question that begs for a negative answer. After all, if they had a need that was strong enough to do something about, they likely would have taken action already.

Instead, help create and remind them of needs they might have, but perhaps are not thinking about at the time of your call.

**"What programs will you have coming up in the first quarter that will require additional printing?"**

**"What items have you been selling a lot of, and that you might run out of before our next conversation?"**

**"What projects will you be working on within the next month that might require some temporary staff to help you complete?"**

**"What changes have been mentioned for the next six months that will include the addition of more office space?"**

Notice that these questions help them to visualize their situations, instead of forcing them to think about a nebulous "need."

## Practice Your Closing and Commitment Lines

To reiterate Jim Meisenheimer's point on page 3, as part of your call preparation you should state your primary objective, which I define as **"What do I want them to do as a result of this call?"** Based on that objective you should also create and practice the closing phrases you'll potentially use to gain that commitment. For example, your objective might be, **"To get commitment that she will take my proposal to her purchasing agent and obtain a purchase order."** Therefore, the closing questions could be,

• **"Are you ready to request a purchase order?"**

• **"Will you request a purchase order so you can get started?"**

It's always easier to perform an activity after you've prepared for it.



## How to Be More Effective With Screener Questioning

Salespeople waste far too much time by hearing, "Mr. Smith is not available," and then simply saying they'll call back later, only to have the process repeated. Try replying with, **"Oh, is he in?"** The answer dictates your next question. If he is on a trip, you can ask when he is returning. If he is in, you can find out what time he's available. If the screener isn't sure, be more direct: **"Will I have a better chance of reaching him in the morning or afternoon?"**

## Simple Response To a "No"

Here's a simple, effective way to reply to a "no."

**"Does 'no' mean never, or just not now?"**

This often keeps the conversation and the door open with prospects who admit that situations could change.

## Use "You" Instead of "I"

Minimize the use of your "I" statements, such as "I want to tell you about," and "I think that . . ."

They don't care about what *you* want. How it affects them grabs and keeps their interest. Use words like

**"you,"**

**"yours,"**

**"you'll find"**

**"you'll notice"**

**"you'll enjoy"**

**"you'll see"**

**"what you will get is..."**

## Stay in the "Zone"

One of the greatest baseball hitters ever, Ted Williams, said that when he was on a hitting streak (which was often) he could see the rotation of the seams on a baseball traveling over 90 miles per hour. George Brett said the ball looked as big as a beach ball coming in. And you probably have some way to describe that great feeling you have when you're on a roll and sales are falling in for you at every turn. And when you're on a personal hot streak, keep going. Don't stop to dwell on the success too long. When you're in the groove, take advantage of it and keep plugging away. Try to beat your best results ever. Success has an uncanny way of piling up when you are in a "zone."

## Help Them Realize They Have Nothing to Fear

A common saying is that the word "fear" stand for "False Evidence Appearing Real." Fence sitters afraid to take the leap many times don't have a logical reason for their inactivity, yet they fear making a decision. And they probably can't explain why. So help them recognize their irrationality.

**"What's the worst thing that could happen if you did this?"**

**"Let's look at the worst case scenario if you moved forward."**

**"Let's think in the future for a moment and assume that you did get this system. Can you think of any downside?"**

**"What if you just went ahead and did it? Is there any real disadvantage you can think of?"**

**"What would be the drawbacks if you purchased today?"**

Or, try this one,

**"Let's say you did nothing. Then where would you be?"**

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