



TELEPHONE PROSPECTING AND SELLING REPORT

May 2006

Volume 22 Number 5

How To Place A Successful Follow-Up Call

Want the secret to a good follow-up call? Have a good previous call.

I'm not trying to be a wiseguy. That's the way it is.

If you end a call weakly with, "Well, I'll send you out some information and we can talk again," then on the call-back you're left to say something lame like, "Hi, I'm just calling back. Did you get the material? Any questions?"

Clearly, horrible.

Instead, if there is to be a follow-up, end by summarizing,

-What they are interested in,

-What they will do between now and the next call,

-What you will do between now and the next call,

-The agenda for the next call, and

-The time for the next call.

For example,

"Ok, Mike, to summarize, you're interested in our one-day prospecting for your reps to help them get in front in more qualified buyers, and you're going to recommend that to your selection committee when you meet Friday. What I'll do is email you a PDF of a few pages from the handout for that program so you can make copies for everyone at the meeting. Assuming everything goes like you expect, on our next call we'll set the date and begin the planning. Everything sound right? Great, so we'll talk again on Monday...is this usually a good time for you? Good. So please write me down in your book for 1:00 your time, and I'll call you."

And notice that at the end of the call, a specific time for the next call had been agreed upon, and clearly stated,

as opposed to, "I will give you a call next Monday." This sends a message that you mean business, and also saves you time, since now they know they have set a firm appointment.

The Follow-Up Opening

I always stress the importance of a great call opening, especially for prospecting calls. Opening are also critical for your follow-ups, so you don't make the mistake of simply being reactive and not bringing any value. First I'll show you a good example of a follow-up opening, and then I'll go through the components of a great follow-up opening so you can create your own every time.

Here's an opening shared by Brad Glantz with TrueCommerce. Brad attended one of my Telesales College seminars.

"Hello Ron, this is Brad Grantz at TrueCommerce. The reason for my call today is to continue our conversation from last week when we discussed how our turnkey solution for Navision might be able to simplify EDI for your clients, and reduce project implementation times. I'd like to go through the information that I sent you - if you have that handy - and also explore how we might be able to uncover new EDI leads for you."

The Follow-Up Call Components

Here are the components of a great follow-up opening.

1. Identify Yourself and Company.

"Hello Ron, this is Brad Grantz at TrueCommerce."

2. State the Overall Purpose Of The Call.

"The reason for my call today is to

continue our conversation from last week..."

Remember, they might not be doing pre-calling planning like you did (which you DID, right?), so we need to bring their mind back to the previous conversation. You can also say, "...calling to pick up where we left off last week...", or "...calling to resume our discussion..."

3. Remind Them of Their Interest.

"...when we discussed how our turnkey solution for Navision might be able to simplify EDI for your clients, and reduce project implementation times." Here, from your notes you plug in what they are most interested in. This is your value statement for the opening. (See how it's important to have a good previous call with a reason to call back?)

4. Proactively State What You Will Do First.

"I'd like to go through the information that I sent you - if you have that handy..."

Notice it's not, "Did you get the material?" You could also say, "I'd like to go through the results of the conversations with your committee," or whatever else they said they were going to do.

5. Bring Up a New Benefit.

"...and also explore how we might be able to uncover new EDI leads for you." Have something new. This adds value to the call, plus also gives a reason to stay on the call on the slight chance they didn't do what they promised they would.

Follow this process, and your follow-up calls will be more successful.



Sales Observations

Have you seen the Volkswagen TV commercials where the driver and passenger are talking, then, BAM, there's a jarring collision? Startling to be sure. The intent of the commercials is to show how safe Volkswagens are. In a USA Today article, an "industry expert" said he thought the ads would backfire, since they made people uneasy and scared them. Precisely. That's what we want to do in sales. And Volkswagen has said their sales have picked up as a direct result. Action Item: How can you make people uneasy or scare them regarding an issue that you can help with? That should be in your opening, as well as the foundation for questions.

Speaking of the ultimate in scaring someone into taking action, an ad running locally says, "Wearing your seatbelt costs you nothing. Not wearing it can cost you everything." Great point, for a great cause.

I get more literature, both hardcopy and online, than I could possibly read cover-to-cover all of the time. That's why I always carry newsletters, magazines, and print-outs of email newsletters and online articles with me when traveling, and in the car. In those idle moments (stuck in traffic, on the rental car bus, or waiting anywhere) I can scan a publication for those items I want to devote more time to later, or read and dispose of shorter items. Remember, you can always make more money, but you'll never make more time.

How often do you get frustrated when calling a company only to get lost in their maze of instructions from the automated attendant? It used to be as easy as hitting "0" or "#". Now, that might just get you back to the original greeting, while you scream at the digitized voice. Here's a site that might be of some value to you on several levels: www.GetHuman.com The site says, "Our goal is to improve the quality of customer service and phone support in the US. This free website is run by volunteers and is powered by over one million consumers who demand high qual-

ity phone support from the companies that they use. We will soon publish a list of the best and worst mass-market consumer companies in the US based on how long it takes to get to a human on the phone and on the quality of support received."

The most popular part of their site is the GetHuman database of secret phone numbers and codes to get to a human when calling a company for customer service. You of course can use this for your own consumer purposes, but you might also be calling on some of these companies.

Pet Peeve: I doubt if I am the only one who notices this: When someone asks, "May I ask you a question?" isn't THAT a question? Why not just ask the question and not waste the time?

What I'm Reading Right Now: I love Jim Rohn's quote, "Miss a meal if you must, but never miss a book." So true. Every successful person I know is a knowledge junkie, including me. I often get questions about what books I recommend (other than my own), so I've decided to share them with you regularly. Here are a few I have going right now.

"Endless Referrals- Network Your Everyday Contacts Into Sales," by Bob Burg. Who wouldn't rather call a referral than make a prospecting call? This book goes into great detail on how to do it. Bob just revised this classic.

"Value Forward Selling- How to Become a Peer In the Boardroom, Instead of a Vendor Waiting in the Hallway," by Paul DiModica. What I really like about this book is that it gives step-by-step what-to-do's and what-to-say phrases in order to get to, and sell top management. The style, philosophy, and content is very similar to what you read and hear in my material. There are a few areas where we disagree, but hey, no one has that one, "That's the only way to do it" method.

I often get questions from sales managers about how to effectively hire, motivate, compensate, and manage salespeople. That's not my area of expertise, so I always refer the questions elsewhere to get the best answers. I have found a book that I will now always recommend for sales

managers, both new and experienced: *"Managing for Sales Results: A Fast-Action Guide to Finding, Coaching & Leading Salespeople,"* by Ron Marks. I could go on and on about how much this will help you as a sales manager, but just take my word for it. Get it.

Just heard the commercial for Nationwide car insurance, and they say that they give all the rate comparisons, even when they are not the cheapest. They then make the point, "If we're this helpful when you're just shopping, just think how helpful we'll be when you need service." Great subtle way of establishing credibility and honesty by pointing out a possible negative.

Go have your best month ever!



Art

Art Sobczak is President of Business By Phone, and editor/

publisher of TPSR, and author of several books and audio training programs. He develops and delivers results-getting telesales training and workshops. To discuss what he might be able to do for you, call him at 800-326-7721, or (402)895-9399. E-mail him at ArtS@BusinessByPhone.com.

TELEPHONE PROSPECTING AND SELLING REPORT

TELEPHONE PROSPECTING AND SELLING REPORT (ISSN 0882-1461) is published 12 times per year by Business By Phone Inc. Send subscription orders, correspondence, and change of address to **TELEPHONE PROSPECTING AND SELLING REPORT**, 13254 Stevens St., Omaha, NE, 68137. Publisher/Editor: Art Sobczak; Contributing Columnists: Joe Catal, Jim Domanski, Jim Meisenheimer. Subscriptions: 1 Year (12 issues) \$99; 2 Years (24 issues) \$169.00. Inquire about multiple copy discounts. U.S. funds only. ©Copyright 2006, Business By Phone Inc. All rights reserved. Photocopying of this publication without permission is breaking the law. Please inquire for permission. (402)895-9399. FAX: (402)896-3353. Reprinting of articles in your publication is permitted as long as we're credited with address and phone number and a copy is sent to us.

The 12 Best Questions To Ask Customers

By Jim Meisenheimer

Last month I shared the first six of my Twelve Best Questions to Ask Customers. This month I'm finishing up with the next six.

7. "What do you like most about your current supplier/product?"

Put your ego aside for this one. Naturally, you want to hear that he doesn't like anything about his current supplier and that's why he's agreed to speak with you. In the real world, he probably likes something about his present supplier. These are his hot buttons. It doesn't make a difference whether your products can deliver on these or not, you must know what they are before you begin your sales presentation.

8. "If you could change anything about your current supplier/product, what would you change?"

This question is an exception to the ten-word maximum I suggest for the length of questions. I like it this way. It's a powerful question, and if you are patient, you will be rewarded with a good response. Remember, fifty percent of the time his first response will be: "I can't think of anything." Ask the question again, and wait patiently for his answer. No customer is ever 100% satisfied. What you're searching for is that dissatisfaction, no matter how small it may be. Once identified, you have a starting point on which to build your presentation. People are always looking to improve their current situation. Don't make any assumptions. This is an opportunity question.

9. "What are your criteria for making a decision?"

I'm absolutely amazed at how infrequently this question is asked, especially since it's one of the most

powerful questions in the line-up. You'll discover if your customer even has criteria. If he does, he'll tell you what they are. Once he describes the criteria, you can ask him to prioritize them for you. When he answers this question, he is telling you what he is going to specifically base his decision on. Ask 100 people and you'll hear 100 different answers. How could you begin to make an intelligent sales presentation without knowing what his decision is going to be based on? Try this one on for size and you'll get an immediate payback. If he responds to this question by saying price or budget, use this follow-up question to set aside the pricing issue. "In addition to price, what other criteria do you have?" It really works!

10. "Describe your decision-making process."

The criteria and process are related yet different. You need to know what criteria will be evaluated before the decision is made. You also need to know the process involved in making the decision. What steps will the customer actually go through to reach a final decision? Basically you'll learn whether it's going to be a toss of the coin or a more complicated process. Either way, you'll be better positioned to tailor your presentation to accommodate the customer's criteria and the process he'll use to make a decision. The larger the "deal" the more important this question becomes.

11 "How will you measure success when using our products?"

This is one of my favorite questions. It's so revealing it's scary. You will hear things that you couldn't have imagined in your wildest dreams. That's the beauty of the question. There's no way you can accurately anticipate a response to

this question. Ask the question, relax, and listen carefully to the answers you get. This question unearths the personal and critical measurements the individual has for your product. Wouldn't you like to hear the answer to this one before you start to sell your products? You bet!

12. "What are your expectations when working with a new supplier?"

This one is very straightforward. Expectations are a powerful and dominant influence. If you want to build a long-term customer relationship, ask the expectations question. If you think you already know, think again. How COULD you possibly know if you haven't asked? That's the point. It's a great question. Try it and you'll be delighted with the results.

There are so many reasons for asking really good questions and only one reason for not asking them. We don't ask good questions if we're in a rush to make the sale. This isn't about making the sale, it's about building a relationship. It's about helping potential customers make more informed buying decisions. It's about professional salespeople doing their homework before selling their products. It's about getting to know your customers in order to tailor your products to their specific needs.

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 Use this link 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."



Handling Gatekeeper Objections

What follows is a list of typical objections you will likely encounter when dealing with gatekeepers. I have provided some responses but I should mention that the responses are no guarantee that the gatekeeper will respond like Pavlov's dogs. The responses are designed to get the gatekeeper to dialogue with you and to help you gather additional clues on how to deal with their objections.

Common Objections

"Mr. Thompson is in a meeting." You've heard that one before ... or a variation of it. Make no mistake about it: it is a kneejerk objection. Most of the time, gatekeepers are rewarded by sales reps who murmur something like "I'll call back later." The response strategy to these types of objections is persistence:

"I understand. When will he be out of the meeting? When would he be available to take my call? What time does he usually arrive in the morning?"

You have to demonstrate to the gatekeeper that you will not simply go away; that in order to get rid of you, she must answer some questions. Be polite. Watch your tone. Don't quit.

"Can I take a message?" This is a standard objection and a good one, too. Try to avoid leaving a message. The best solution is to be persistent as we've demonstrated above. Here's how you might reply:

"No. Not at this time. The material I would like to review is a little too complex to leave in a message. Maybe you could help me? (pause for reply) When would be a good time to get a hold of Mr. Thompson for about 2-3 minutes?"

Your tone and delivery is critical. Say "no" slowly as though contemplating the suggestion. It shows a measure of respect. Asking for help in a sincere tone and pausing for a reply is often effective. Gatekeepers are human and will often respond to those who are genuine in their request for help.

"Send me something in the mail. I will see that he gets it." This

is one of the most classic gatekeeper objections. Your initial gut reaction response to this objection might be "Yeah, and pigs can fly!" But don't go with your gut on this one. Trust me. Try this:

"Janet, I would be only too glad to send some literature to Ms. McLean. And that's one of the reasons why I would like to speak with her. You see, we have a wide range of products and rather than waste her time ... and yours ... with a pile of material that would never get read, what I would like to do is take a moment or two of Ms. McLean's time and identify those areas that would best meet her needs. How does that sound?"

Couple of points that I have made in the past but are worth mentioning. First, use their name if you have it. It gets the gatekeeper to listen to your calm logic and builds a measure of rapport, however small. Second, watch your tone. It must be non-confrontational. In fact, it must be sincere. Third, don't be afraid to call the bluff by saying the material would 'never get read.' A dose of frankness doesn't hurt.

"I handle all that stuff." ("It's my responsibility" or variations on the theme.) This statement may or may not be true so you have to handle it carefully.

"That's good. Janet, just so I understand: are you saying that you handle the review and evaluation of products and vendors, and then pass the information on to Ms. McLean for final approval?"

This question is good. It identifies the role that Janet plays with Ms. McLean and allows you to explore further. If Janet says "yes," you begin probing to determine if she has the expertise to answer your questions. If she does, chances are she is a strong influencer in the purchase decision. You will likely have to work through her (which we will look at next month).

If she says no (she makes the decisions) you might want to verify this a bit further. *"So you ultimately approve the purchase? Ms. McLean is not in-*

olved at all in the decision?"

Again your tone must be sincere and not challenging. The key words in your response are "...not involved at all..." It is what I call a "moment of truth question" because the gatekeeper must deal with a direct question. It is extremely effective because most gatekeepers will recognize that saying "yes" when it is not really true is a blatant stretch. Most will back down and say something like: **"Well, I make the decisions and Ms. McLean will rubber stamp it."**

Okay, fine, and again this may or may not be true. If your product is an everyday commodity such as office supplies you can go ahead and sell through Janet. However, if your product is a bit more strategic, complex or higher priced, you can bet that Ms. McLean does not rubber stamp it. The way you reply to a statement such as this is to position the value of the product or service. For example:

"Janet, my product typically ranges from \$3300 to \$6000.00 per unit. What we have found is that most executives are actively involved in the decision because of the higher value. Is this something I should be speaking to Ms. McLean about?"

The statement is a challenge but it is subtle and it gives Janet a way to bow out gracefully. Typically, you will hear them back away with statement like "Oh, yes, well, in that case Ms. McLean would be more involved."

At some point it may be necessary to deal with the gatekeeper even if he or she is not the ultimate decision maker. That's okay because you can sell through an influencer too.

Good selling.

(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)

An Opening Statement Reviewed

When a customer gets my *"How to Create Telephone Sales Call Openings That Create Interest, Not Resistance"* one-hour seminar on audio CD www.BusinessByPhone.com/teleseminar.htm, part of the offer is that I will review their opening statement.

Here is one I received from Tony Vitaliano. First a little background he included.

I work the pre foreclosure niche in real estate investing. In California when a homeowner falls behind three months on their mortgage they are considered 90 days in arrears. Once they become 90 days late a notice of default is filed with the county recorder and that notice must then be advertised in the local newspaper.

These folks have 90 days after the default is filed to resolve the matter or face losing their home to the bank that owns it. They also risk losing any equity they may have in the home and their dignity in the process. They are typically in denial about their circumstances, get loads of calls and direct mail about selling their troubled home, and are usually not too receptive to talking about their situation. I am usually calling them within 10 days after their notice is initially in the paper to offer my assistance.

Tony went on to explain in very persuasive detail how he is different from the many vultures out there who apparently prey on this market and try to take advantage of people and in effect, "steal" their homes while not really helping them.

The Opening Statement

Here's the opening he submitted.

"Hi, this is Tony Vitaliano with Fresh Start Property Solutions. I noticed the recent news about your foreclosure situation and wanted to see if you'd be open to a different perspective on resolving the matter. I specialize in working with homeowners facing

foreclosure in Solano county. I help stop the foreclosure, save their home, keep all their equity, and save their credit rating and dignity in the process. Unlike most, our service requires no money out of your pocket and our ability to perform exactly as we say we will is guaranteed in writing. If I've caught you at a good time, I'd like to ask a few questions about how you're handling this matter to see if it would be worth our while to talk further."

Art's Analysis And Recommendation

I like your opening, and it probably will work. My suggestion is to change it slightly:

"Hi, this is Tony Vitaliano with Fresh Start Property Solutions. I noticed the recent news about your foreclosure situation and you're probably getting contacted by lots of people who are more interested in themselves and stealing your house than they are in helping you. We're different and here's why: I specialize in working with homeowners facing foreclosure in Solano county. I help stop the foreclosure, save their home, keep all their equity, and save their credit rating and dignity in the process. Unlike most, our service requires no money out of your pocket and our ability to perform exactly as we say we will is guaranteed in writing. If I've caught you at a good time, I'd like to ask a few questions about how you're handling this matter to see if it would be worth our while to talk further."

The main difference here is I added, "and you're probably getting contacted by lots of people who are more interested in themselves and stealing your house than they are in helping you. We're different and here's why:" I feel you want to empathize with them early, and also set yourself apart from everyone else so they will listen.

Because of the length, the real key here is in the delivery so it sounds smooth. I'd practice this so you sound natural and conversational, like you're talking to a friend.



Before You Hang Up...

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.

Find Out If They're Even Worth Pursuing

You might have firsthand experience with situations where you had the best product/service at the best price, but the prospect still didn't buy from you. Frustrating, isn't it? Before putting in lots of work on bids and proposals, ask a simple, direct question:

"If we can provide you with the best solution, at the best price, will we work together?"

This helps air out any internal political issues that could prevent you from winning the business.

Be Productive When Computers Go Down

Do your computers ever lock up, or worse, go down completely? If your calling relies totally on the data provided by a temperamental computer system, you know you can sometimes be left staring at your screen like a zombie, cursing modern technology. However, you can still be productive during these times, IF you're prepared. Create a "Downtime File." Place in it lists of prospects you can cold call, or names and numbers of customers you can place value-added goodwill calls to. Since you'll have everything you'll need to make these contacts, you can salvage some positive production from the downtime.

Ask Them to Make a Hypothetical Choice

Help your buyers imagine themselves already enjoying your product or service: **"If you did decide to use our service, would you see yourself using the full program, or just the accounting package to help with the accounts receivable?"**



Tips for Staying Motivated

By Joe Catal

Have Friends in Other Departments

In the real world of selling, it's a good idea to get along with people who work in different departments than yours. These people can make life miserable for you if you're constantly arguing with them. If you have a problem, go talk to them personally and ask them how you can make their job easier. The more you know how other departments work, the easier you can make their job.

Sell Smarter

The new breed of top salespeople don't sell hard—they sell smart. Most companies with a sales force are divided in two. The top producers hang out with top producers, and the low producers hang out with low producers. Why is that? Because low producers whine about how bad everything is. The economy, leads, territory, etc. Top producers don't want to be around those types of negative people. They find ways to overcome those obstacles. If you're a low producer, I suggest you start becoming friends with top producers. Their successful attitudes will rub off, and in no time you'll be at the top with them. People who sell more than you know more than you. Pick their brain and find out what it is.

Be Able to Let Go

Keep in mind, no single sale will make or break your selling career. Don't hang onto every prospect with the hopes they'll buy from you someday. Get them to make a decision. And if you must throw them away and move on, that's fine because it saves you time.

Expect Excellence

Tell yourself today, that anything in your selling career that's less than excellent is unacceptable. You will only function at one level: Superior.

Breaking Out of a Slump

If you ever find yourself in a sales

slump, often it's because you've gotten away from the basics. Go back to your script and stick to it for a week. Many times we forget some of the basics. Another good idea is to ask to train a new person. This forces you to go back to the absolute basics. Many companies know that by having a superstar train a new person, the superstar will have a fantastic week. I personally think superstars should train someone at least twice a year.

Listen to Audios

To get your day started, instead of listening to music, listen to motivational CD's or tapes. It will get you primed and ready for the day. If you exercise in the morning, that's a good time to listen. You can also listen on your way to work.

Don't Sleep Away Your Success

I've never known any successful person who achieved success by sleeping late in the mornings. Train yourself to get up early, and get yourself ready for the day. Give yourself an hour of personal time in the morning, and you can achieve great things. Success is not for lazy people.

What is Your Mission?

Write yourself a mission statement. Have a creed you follow for your customers and your company.

Don't Sell, Solve Problems

Think of your job as a problem solver. Top producers are good at solving customer's problems. Think out of the box and offer ideas and solutions from different angles. If you start doing that, the other person will automatically start the same process.

(Joe Catal is at 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)

Attach Time Frames to Make Wishes Realities

I see far too many opportunities lost because time frames are not attached to "wishes," or intentions. For example, recall situations where someone said, "We'll need to talk about that ...". It's a safe bet that this intention is never followed through. If you're serious about it, get others to commit to time frames when you hear these wishes or intentions.

For example,

Prospect: "We'll need to talk about it."

Caller: "Yes we will. Let's do it now." Or, "Let's schedule a call to do that."

Prospect: "Something we'll need to do sometime is have those accessories installed."

Caller: "I agree. How about next week."

Prospect: "We'll have to get around to that at some point."

Caller: "Yes, we will. I suggest putting it on the agenda for the next meeting."

It's simple; attach time frames, events happen. State wishes and desires and they float away.

Ask What If?

Why not "What if?" with yourself?

What if you did a few things differently?

What if you decided you were going to beat all sales records next month?

Ask Your Customers Too

You can do this on the phone with your prospects and customers, too.

For example,

"Mr. Prospect, let's set the money issue aside here for a moment and get crazy. What if you did have this plan in place. What are all the positive effects you would notice?"



Does Your Intro Evoke Interest, or a Yawn?

By Marcia Yudkin

Does your telephone introduction cause people to say or think, "So what?", or does it pique their curiosity and desire? You can and should introduce yourself and company in a way that prompts people to want to speak with you. It's not difficult, and I'll show you how.

At one of my seminars, after several participants introduced themselves with their job titles, such as, "I'm an environmental consultant," or "I'm a teacher," a man said,

"I'm _____. I help people acquire wealth and pass it on to their children intact."

The room fell silent as people comprehended what he did (in a way they never would have) had he said, "I'm an investment counselor."

When Patricia Fripp meets people on airplanes or at parties, she never tells them the line of work she's in first. Instead, she replies, **"I make meetings and conventions more exciting."** Usually that provokes another question to which she replies, **"You know how meetings and conventions are supposed to be dynamic and exciting, and they're usually dull and boring . . . well, I have some practical ideas I present in an entertaining way with the result that people stay awake, have a good time and get the company's message."** Only then does she add, "I'm a professional speaker."

Emphasize the Result

One of the best ways to make an impact when you introduce yourself is to emphasize the real benefit or result you provide to your clients or customers. Here are a few more examples:

Desktop publisher: **"I help people present themselves attractively on paper by designing resumes, brochures and newsletters."**

Chiropractor: **"I help free people from chronic pain."**

Audio publisher: **"I produce tapes that entertain and inform people while they're driving, exercising or cooking dinner."**

Hardware store owner: **"I provide people with the equipment that**

keeps their homes and offices in good repair."

Telephone services broker: **"I help people get the best telephone service at the lowest possible cost."**

Another strategy that bypasses the yawn reflex is using a creative job title—one people haven't heard before. Bill Black of Atlanta, Georgia provokes lots more interest when he calls himself a "combat accountant" than when he uses his more formal title "forensic accountant." People who hear a creative self-designation can hardly restrain themselves from asking, "What's that?" Black never calls himself just an accountant, because then people jump to the false conclusion that he does taxes.

You can notch this strategy up one level by devising a unique moniker or professional nickname for yourself. That is, instead of calling yourself "a _____," you call yourself **"The _____."**

Suzanne Faulkner of Brookline, Massachusetts calls herself "The Samurai Waitress." After the inevitable, "What's that?" she'll explain, **"I use the principles of Aikido, a Japanese martial art, to blend with my customers to give and get the best from them. They get the best service, I get the best tip."** Her ambition is to get public recognition for the contributions of the service industry, and her self-introduction helps get people thinking about waiting on tables as a skill worthy of respect.

Try one of the above strategies if you can practically feel your prospects' eyes glazing over when you introduce yourself or if you want to spark the kind of interest that leads to business.

(A marketing and communication expert published in six languages (titles include Six Steps to Free Publicity, Marketing Online, Persuading on Paper), Marcia Yudkin helps business owners get the word out about their offerings creatively and cost-effectively. Contact her at Creative Ways, P.O. Box 1310, Boston, MA 02117. 617-266-1613. E-mail: marcia@yudkin.com. Visit her website, <http://www.yudkin.com/marketing.htm>.)

Getting Leads With Your Own Personal Website

Sure your company has a website, but why not get one for yourself? You can get one from a number of Internet service providers (by typing those terms into a search engine) who will host a web site for as little as \$2-\$5 per month. Some of these undoubtedly are more reliable than others. Check out GoDaddy.com where you can also register your domain name. And if you don't already have your name registered, do that now. (i.e., ArtSobczak.com)

So what will you do with your own website? How about writing and posting an informative article as a lead-generator for what you sell? People use the web to get information much more so than they do to go shopping. But you can use a "pull strategy" to get someone interested in you, and the results of what you sell so they contact you, and ultimately, buy from you. For example, if you are an executive recruiter, you might write **"The Top 13 Mistakes to Avoid When Hiring a Chief Financial Officer."** Or, **"Ten Interview Questions That Can Help Avoid Executive Hiring Mistakes."**

Post this page to your website, and give yourself a plug at the end mentioning who you are and what you do, and how you and your company can be of value to them. Invite them to contact you via e-mail or phone. Submit this page to search engines and the hundreds of email newsletters out there so that someone looking for this type of information might access your site and you.

This might not be for everyone, but instead of immediately discounting this idea, ask how you might be able to use it.

And, granted, a personal website is bordering on running your own little entrepreneurial enterprise within the confines of your organization (if you're working for a larger company). But, isn't it true that the best salespeople feel and act like they are running their own company anyway?



Question Their Buying Signals

On a taped client call I listened to, I heard this from a prospect, "I've used you before when I was with another company. I was pretty satisfied." The rep then went on to present. What he missed was an opportunity to help the prospect sell himself. The rep should have responded, "**Oh, glad to hear that. How did you use us at your former company? What specifically did you like about us?**" The answers would have revealed precisely what he needed to say to help the prospect buy. So, when you hear a positive statement of agreement, consider getting the speaker to expand on it. By repeating it, and explaining the good feeling in more detail, the buying feeling will become stronger.

Stand For Sales

The next time you've got a bear of a prospect or customer on the phone, stand up and speak. Researchers at the University of California found that we can process information 5% to 20% faster when we're standing than sitting.

Don't Lose Interest After the Sale

With relentless pressure to produce, place more calls, beat quota, etc., it's a tendency for sales reps to get a sale, then forget about the customer and press on to the next conquest. If this describes you, you're missing some very valuable opportunities. Consider that although you got what you wanted (the sale), and your interest in that contact waned, THEIR interest is highest right after the purchase, and then into the implementation phase. You have an opportunity now to reinforce their decision, build goodwill, perhaps get referrals, and maybe even upsell or cross-sell. Make a point to call new customers. But please make it **more than a "Just checking in call."** Bring something of value. Tell them, "**Calling to make sure everything is going OK, and I have some additional information that can help you during your implementation.**" Make this information non-salesy, but clearly, do be on the lookout for more opportunities.

Communication Errors

Communicating with my college-age kids and their friends keeps me in practice regarding speaking do's and don'ts, and I'm particularly aware when I hear the same mistakes with salespeople ... mistakes that hinder clear communication and also lowers listeners' perceptions of the speaker. Here are common mistakes.

Ending sentences with "... and things like that," and, "... and stuff." As in, "We sell widgets and stuff." What stuff? Eliminate these words and strengthen the sentence (and the perception of the speaker). "**We sell widgets.**"

By the way, work to eliminate "thing" altogether. Listen to yourself on tape. Notice if and how you might use it. Develop more descriptive terms to help listeners visualize your description. Instead of, "It's a thing that helps you to ...," say, "**It's a pencil-sized tool that helps you to ...**"

Using "goes" and "says" instead of "said" when describing one individual's words in the past tense. For example, "I asked her a question about what she uses now and she goes, 'We use ...'." Or, "So she says to me ..."

Take Notes On Their Greeting

When you reach voice mail, pay particular attention to the decision maker's personality on their greeting. This gives you some insight into the type of person they are and how you might approach them. Also, listen carefully to how they pronounce their name. This small point could help you avoid an embarrassing mistake.

Be Ready When You Are On Hold

When a customer or prospect puts your call on hold, don't lean over to the person next to you and get in a conversation. You could lose your train of thought and focus for this call. Plus, if the customer comes back on line and hears you in midsentence with someone else it detracts from the intimacy of the call.

New Subscriber Invitation

(Please clip or photocopy, and mail or fax)

506

Receiving a pass-along copy of TELEPHONE PROSPECTING AND SELLING REPORT? Have your own copy arrive at your desk. Please check the offer you prefer. You receive our 100% satisfaction guarantee.

2 Years (24 issues) \$169

1 Year (12 issues) \$99
(US funds only)

Non-US orders add \$24 per year.

Check Enclosed

Visa/MC/AMEX/Discover

Exp. _____ Sig. _____

www.BusinessByPhone.com

Email _____

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

**For Fastest Service, Fax This toll free to: 888-328-7578.
Or, Call, 800-326-7721, or (402)895-9399.
E-mail to ArtS@BusinessByPhone.com.**