How to Take the COLD Out of Cold Calling

How to Completely Change the Way You Prospect and Get More Appointments and More Sales

An Interview With Sam Richter, by Art Sobczak

TelesalesSuccess.com Inner Circle Platinum Audio Seminar
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Art: Hi and welcome to the Telesales Success Inner Circle Platinum Audio Seminar. I’m Art Sobczak. We’ve had a number of high profile experts in our series of seminars in the past and probably none as famous as our presenter today. And his topic, How to take the Cold Out of Cold Calling should completely change the way you prospect and then also give you more positive results with the end result being more appointments and/or sales.

Sam Richter is chief executive of SBR Worldwide and senior VP, chief marketing officer at ActiFi. He’s an internationally recognized expert on sales and marketing and leadership. His award winning experience includes building innovative technology, sales and marketing programs for start-up companies in some of the world’s most famous brands. Sam was named the Business Journal’s 40 under 40 list honoring the top Minnesota business leaders under the age of 40. And in 2007 he was a finalist for Inc. Magazine’s entrepreneur of the year and he’s one of the more highly recommended person’s on LinkedIn.

He has been featured in thousands of television and radio programs, national and online publications and he presents keynote and full day training programs to audiences around the globe. His book Take the Cold Out of Cold Calling upon which the audio seminar is based has received rave reviews around the world.

On a personal note, for years I’ve taught that you should never truly place a cold call, meaning you should always know something about the person you are calling so you can customize your opening and questions to the person, the industry and their company, therefore, creating instant credibility and interest. When I first saw Sam’s book I knew right away that this was a person who was the expert in the process. I needed to recommend him and his book to everyone that I ever speak with. Today he’s going to share a number of his tips and information gathering secrets. If you thought that you were pretty good at using the Internet to get information in preparing for your sales calls, well sorry, you’re in for a surprise - a pleasant one. Sam welcome.

Sam: Hey thanks so much Art. That was a very kind introduction. I really appreciate it. Thank you.

Art: Well absolutely true and I’m really excited about this audio seminar. Let’s do this, let’s start with this – please tell us how your book, Take the Cold Out of Cold Calling was developed.

Sam: Well it’s actually kind of a funny story. I spent most of my career in marketing as a copywriter, as a creative director, moved into public relations and eventually e-commerce. But back in the old days, the old days 20 years ago right? When I was in advertising I was kind of one of the folks that knew how to turn on the computer and this was just when the Internet was coming out and so they said, “Well guess what? Congratulations, you’re now the internet guru.” And I did that for a few years. You learn how to, if you will, master the web and determine that hey this thing’s not actually a fad. It actually might catch on this web thing. And about the time Google started to
come out - so this was about what, 10 years ago now - I was really into search engines and I had created a program, excuse me, a presentation for the public relations firm that I worked out. It was called *The Little Engine That Could*. So I went around the country teaching different public relations firms how to use search engines to get information for their strategic plans for their public relations.

And then one thing led to another and I just started using it more and more, specifically how to find information on people, companies and industries and how to use that to prepare for a meeting whether that’s an existing client meeting or a prospect meeting. How you could use information to learn what’s going on in the other person’s world so you could tell good stories.

And Art I’ve never been a sales person before. I’ve never had that really on my job title but what I really like to do is help people and the best way to help people is to figure out do I have something of value that the other person cares about? To do that I have to know what the other person cares about. So the Internet is an incredible tool to at least get that process started and again to help you prepare for those meetings.

**Art:** Well actually, you just summed up what sales is all about, doing it the right way and that, of course, is knowing something about the person whether they’re on the other end of the line or the person across the desk. And as I mentioned, I have personally advocated customizing calls instead of just smiling and dialing and saying the same generic thing to everyone who answered, even if you were able to get through and get to the right person, which is the problem with a lot of people.

So do this, give an example of how using the information you help people find can really make an impact with a sales person who’s doing some prospecting by phone.

**Sam:** Sure, sure. Let me give you an example – my day job, if you will, is working with financial advisors, working with big financial institutions. I’ll use the example of an investment advisor because pretty much everybody in your audience has probably had the stockbroker or the insurance person or the investment/wealth manager take them out to coffee. What typically happens in those kind of interactions, let’s say it was a referral from a friend right? You’re going to go to a Starbucks, you’re going to meet with somebody for coffee. So I’m going to go meet with you Art. You’re the registered investment advisor.

What usually happens from a customer’s perspective is you would come in and you would go through this litany of questions that your sales manager said that you need to go through. Do you have a family? Where do you work? What’s your risk tolerance? And I’m sitting there going I’ve heard this stuff before. Why do I have to go through this? It’s uncomfortable. What’s my risk tolerance? Geez if you would’ve asked me three months ago it was great. Today not so good anymore, right?

And you’re going through these questions and I as a customer am getting frustrated and you as the seller, if you will, are also frustrated because you can see that I’m getting
frustrated but you have to go through this series of questions for you to get your bonus right because you’ve got to input that data into Sales Force. If you don’t put it in you’re not going to get your bonus. So it’s a really uncomfortable type of a situation.

Versus if you come in and maybe the first thing out of your mouth is, “Sam it’s so great to meet you. Hey before I meet with people I like to do a little bit of research. And geez I saw that you wrote this book or I saw that you used to work at this company or geez you used to be on a board of directors. Do you know my cousin Phil?” And you’re able to start connecting on a personal level. And then remember if you’re an investment advisor now all of a sudden you say things like, “Well Sam I see that you own a small business. It looks like it’s a family run business. Do you have complete control or is the business still in your family?” Now you’re starting to ask questions about me. Let’s take that family business situation.

So let’s say we go down that path. Now because you knew that beforehand, because you knew that I own a family run business, now you’ve gone back into your history and you can come up with a really good story. So you could say, “Hey Sam I brought a bunch of stuff here that I can show you, charts and graphs and all those sorts of things about how my firm can help you. But let me tell you where I think I can provide a lot of value. I’ve worked with a lot of family run businesses. Let me tell you my experience working with them and some of the results and let’s see if we can do the same thing for you.

So because you are able to do a little bit of research on the front end, you knew a little bit about me, you’re able to craft your stories, because again sales is just about telling great and relevant stories. You’re able to craft your stories towards something that you are pretty sure that I’m going to really care about. All of a sudden ‘A’ your credibility goes through the roof because very few times do I ever meet with a sales person, certainly a financial advisor that’s ever done their homework on me. So all of a sudden you completely differentiate yourself from 99 percent of the people I’ve ever met with.

See now you’re able to engage with me. “Wow this isn’t just another insurance guy. This is an insurance guy that has worked with other people in my exact situation and he’s helped them achieve their dreams. I want to work with this guy.” So it’s all about, again, engaging and learning about what’s going on in the other person’s world so you can craft relevant stories to what you know they’re going to care about.

Art: So that’s obviously a great example, that’s a personal example for someone who’s selling to an individual and of course it applies to anyone selling to anyone else in business because the same thing applies at a personal level as well as we’ve got the opportunity to find out other things about their business and their industry, which we’re going to utilize.

Sam: Yeah let’s say I was selling to a thermoplastics manufacturer right? I’ve got a new widget and I think their widget, my widget can help them produce better products. So a pure business-to-business environment. Instead of going in and talking about the features of my product let’s say I do a little bit of industry research and I find out well are the four
core issues that are going on in that guy’s industry, not in my industry but in the other person’s industry. And I’m able to go in and say, “Hey I’ve done a little homework on your industry. These are three or four core issues that I see going on. Are you experiencing them?”

All of a sudden, again, you’re credibility goes through the roof. Wow this guy took the time to do a little bit of homework and in fact yes, two of those issues are something my company is facing. Great. Let me show you how my company, my widget has helped companies like yours solve that exact same issue. So again you can talk about it. You can connect on a personal level. You can connect on an industry level. You can connect on a company level. “Hey, here’s what I’ve learned about your company. Boy your company’s gone through a couple of mergers and acquisitions in the past few years. Here’s my experience working with companies just like yours.” It’s all about figuring out what’s going on in the other person’s world and then how do you use information to prepare yourself and prepare really good and relevant stories.

Art: And so few sales people actually do that. As the side benefit to this program, well first we’re going to be talking about cold calling and prospecting and that’s going to help us find the right people to talk to, get through to those people by proving to gatekeepers that we deserve to be there and it’s going to show the decision-maker that, of course, what we have is all about them. That alone is worth following your ideas, which were going to get to in a minute. But also it’s going to help us develop relationships and keep customers buying, which is where the real profits are. Just briefly, how do your methods help sales people do that?

Sam: Well again, if you think about your own experiences as a buyer you probably only hear from sellers, if you will, when they have something to sell you. So every time the phone rings and you see, “Oh, it’s Bob from Acme,” it’s like, “Oh what’s he trying to sell me this time?” How cool would it be if out of the blue you just get a letter from somebody that you’re doing business with saying, “Hey you know, saw this article the other day. Was thinking of you.” Or you received an e-mail from one of your vendors and in that e-mail it was, “Hey congratulations on that new piece of business. I just thought I’d touch base.” It’s so rare that sales people connect with their customers on a regular basis, outside of when I’m trying to sell you or service the product.

So what I think information can do - and research really allows you to - again, find out what’s going on in the other person’s world. Then share information with that other person. Occasionally one of the things I counsel people on doing is take a half hour every Wednesday morning. Take a half hour every Wednesday morning and then randomly pick two of your clients. Do some of the techniques that I’ll share with you in a few minutes. Use some of those techniques to find information about what’s going on in the other person’s world and send them a note.

So again, Art, if I was doing business with you I might send you a note that says, “Hey Art, found this article. Looks like it could be a great lead, a business for you. Hey Art saw this piece of information on your competitor. They’re coming out with a new
product. Based on what you told me last week I think you’re going to be able to compete better in these three areas.” Communicating with your customer, with your client in ways above and beyond what they hired you to do helps you build meaningful business partnerships rather than vendor/client relationships. What happens when you’re a true business partner? When you’re a true business partner, when the time for that contract comes up for renewal the issue’s less about price and more about value.

“Yeah I know the other guy’s 10 percent cheaper, but geez, there’s Sam over here. Boy, every time he’s always sending me new business leads. We’re his most important client. He really genuinely cares about us. Yeah the other guy’s 10 percent cheaper but we’ll never get the service that Sam gives us!” So you can use information to build deeper, more meaningful relationships with clients.

Art: And what it does too, and you touched on this, is that if you sell something that some people perceive to be a commodity or if you’re selling the exact same product as somebody else or a similar product in your customer’s mind, now you’re looked at as the guy who is really bringing value to the relationship and they’re not going to be as apt to try to beat you down on price because they see they’re getting something above and beyond the product itself. And people who’ve been through my seminars know that I suggest you never place the, what I call the probation officer call, which is, “Hey just checking in. Want to see how it’s going.” Because then they’re going to look at you as, “Oh he’s just trying to sell me something.” And we always talk about exactly what you’re talking about here and that is having something of value every time you call and you are going to start sharing with us how we can get that information.

So let’s get into some how-to’s.

Sam: Sure.

Art: The first place most people look for more information is obviously Google. The problem is you usually get lots of stuff that’s not relevant and you’ve got to take time to sort through it. So what are some ways to become a power Google searcher?

Sam: Well before I dive into that exact answer let me give you 30-seconds on how Google actually works.

Art: Okay.

Sam: Google’s just a big vacuum cleaner. So if you think of the Internet, it’s basically a bunch of pages with words on them right? What Google does is Google goes around and every time it sees a website with words on the page it flips on the vacuum cleaner, it sucks up those words, throws those words into a big database. So if you go into Google and type in the word say ‘automobile,’ all you’re telling Google is, “Hey give me every website in the world that you’ve ever vacuumed up that has that word ‘automobile’ on it. Google says, “Here you go. Here’s every website we have and we’ve got some fancy mathematical algorithms in the background that determine which site is number one. But
basically you asked for every website in the world that we’ve ever vacuumed up with that word and here you go.” And that’s how you get the hundred million search results.

So the key to better Google searching is pretty simple. If you put good stuff into Google, you’re going to get good stuff out of Google. So how do you put good stuff into Google? There’s a whole concept that I discuss in my book that kind of lays out the technical ways to do this. It’s called bullion, which is really a mathematical equation. Good Google searching is really a mathematical equation. And I could sit here and spend the next 15-minutes and tell you how to do it, but Google has a cheat sheet. Google has a cliff notes version. Next time you do a Google search Art when you see the little search button right next to it there’s a little link called ‘advanced search’. If you click on the advanced search link what it does is it pulls up a page that asks you questions like what words are you interested in? Is there a specific phrase? And what they mean by a phrase is name of a person, name of a company. Are there words that you’re not interested in?

By taking just a few seconds and filling out the form you’re starting to put better information into Google. The other really neat thing about the Google advanced search is as you type in those words and phrases you can actually see, real time, Google build the mathematical equation for you. So by using the advanced search I tell people use the advanced search in Google for about a week. See how it works. Watch as the mathematic equation is built as you type things in and all of a sudden you’ll have this stuff memorized. You’ll know when to put in a minus, when to use quotation marks. That’s the bullion stuff that I was talking about.

You can use the advanced search, but watch Google do it automatically and then you’ll start to see how Google works and you’ll start to - even in the main Google search form - you’ll start thinking that way and typing that way. Bottom line is you’ll start to get the results you want in those first 10 to 20 listings.

Art: Now again really what we’re trying to do here is limit the number of responses that we’re getting. So obviously what we get is going to be targeted and I just pulled this up as you were talking, yeah I can see how I’m not going to use the regular Google search anymore.

Sam: Yeah. I mean what’s cool about the Google advanced search is it forces you to think of what I call the context of your question. Most of us just go to regular Google and type in one or two or three words and click the search button or as I might call it, the pray button, because that’s kind of what you’re doing. You’re kind of just praying that something shows up. In regular Google you’re typing in content. In Google advance you’re thinking of the context of your question. Well what words are most important? What phrases are most important? Are there any words that are not important? So by thinking about the context, you’re doing better search.

Art: Okay. Good. What are some Google ah-ha’s for us?
Sam: Well a couple of the ones that I like to use for sales people is limit my search to specific sites. So, for example, if you’re selling to Fortune 500 Company, their website is probably made up of thousands if not tens of thousands of pages, many of them hidden off of the home page. What I mean by that is I might go to say 3M.com and on 3M.com they probably have tens of thousands of pages. They may even have what are called micro sites for their customers or for their vendors that are never even linked to off of their home page. You can actually use Google to say, “Hey Google instead of searching the entire Internet, I want you to limit your search to a specific website.”

Here’s how you do it – you type in the name of the company you’re searching for. If it’s 3M you just type in 3M. If it’s Widget Corporation you type in “Widget Corporation” and make sure you use quotation marks around those two words. When you use quotation marks you’re telling Google that those two words must be right next to each other every time. You’re treating it as a single phrase. So I’ll type in 3M. Here’s the trick – site, colon and then you type in the type of information you’re looking for. So for example, let’s say I’m looking for information on their vendors. 3M vendors site: MMM.com or 3M.com or whatever their web address happens to be. The trick is the site, colon and then you put in the web address. So instead of searching the entire Internet you’re telling Google only search this specific website. And anybody out there listening, you can try this right now. Just go into Google type in vendors and 3M into Google and you’re going to get tons of search results. Or you can do vendors site, colon 3M.com and you’re only going to find web search results with the word vendor in it from 3M’s website. So that can be a really cool way to use Google to limit your search to a specific place, a specific website.

Art: Now are we using quotes?

Sam: If the name of a company is more than one word you want to put that within quotation marks, exactly.

Art: But the vendors would not be in the quotes or would it?

Sam: No, vendors would not be in quotes. You only put something in quotes when you want to treat multiple words as a single phrase. That’s a really good question. Let’s say I was looking for annual revenue. I would put “annual revenue” in quotation marks. So let’s say I want to find out the annual revenue for, oh I don’t know, General Mills right? I would go annual revenue, put “annual revenue” in quotation marks, site, colon, General Mills dot com. If it’s a company name that you’re searching for, a name of a person, a job title, so again I could use this, I could go vice president of operation. Put that entire phrase, “vice president of operations,” within quotation marks, site, colon, General Mills dot com. So instead of searching the entire Internet for the phrase “vice president of operation,” I’m telling Google only search the General Mills website for the job title “vice president of operation.”
Art: So going to a company website, of course, we can get all kinds of valuable information. You already mentioned the vendors. We could find out who they’re buying from. You can find contacts of course.

Sam: Yeah it’s really good. Another favorite Google search of mine is what’s called a file type search. So Art, have you ever downloaded something off the Internet say a PDF file or even an Excel spreadsheet?

Art: Of course.

Sam: There’s lots of those documents floating out there on the web. A lot of times people just put them out there. So Art, if I wanted to send you a large Power Point Presentation, let’s say I try to e-mail it to you. Your e-mail doesn’t accept large attachments. I might post that Power Point to the Internet and send you a link where you can download it. Now the problem is, I think because you’re the only person that I sent that link to I think that that’s secure but it’s really not. Once I post something on the Internet Google can find it. And Google will not only vacuum up the title of the document, Google will actually vacuum up every single word within that document. So you can imagine all of the PDF files and Power Point documents and Word documents, those could all be sales proposals, sales presentation that are floating out there on the internet.

Excel spreadsheets – could be membership lists, could even be budgets – I’ve found those before. So they’re all floating out there on the Internet. And frankly if any of your clients are doing business with the government or an academic institution, because most of that information is public knowledge, those institutions themselves are posting that content online.

Here’s how you find it via Google. You type in what you’re looking for. So again let’s say I’m looking for information on the thermoplastics industry. I might type in ‘thermoplastics industry.’ Again because that’s two words I’ll put that within in quotation marks ‘thermoplastics industry.’ Now here’s the trick – I’ll type in file type, colon, and then I type in the kind of file that I’m looking for. So if I’m looking for Excel spreadsheets I might type in File type: XLS. If I’m looking for Power Point documents – File type: PPT. And you can do this to find research reports. You can do this to find where your prospect or your client might show up on a membership list. All sorts of really neat ways you can use that file type, colon search. Find documents that are posted online that you can download and use to gather information and prepare for that sales meeting.

Art: Now is there a period before the file type like dot PDF, dot PPT?

Sam: Nope. Nope. It’s just like file type: XLS, file type: PDF. If you want to have fun with it just go into Google and type in a Fortune 500 company. So type in Microsoft, file type: XLS. General Mills, file type: XLS. Coca Cola, file type: PPT. The reason I suggest Fortune 500 companies is the larger the company the more stuff, the more files
you’re going to find online. Then you can use the other techniques I talk about in my book to actually drill down and get better information.

So for example I could go in and I could type in Coca Cola and/or Coca Cola plus “sales presentation”. Put “sales presentation” in quotation marks. Coca Cola plus “sales presentation,” file type: PPT. See if there are any Power Point documents floating out there on the internet that are sales presentations for the Coca Cola Company or a sales presentation to the Coca Cola Company. So that’s how you use it.

Now I’m going to briefly touch on a topic here. There’s also this little thing called business ethics, because what I just shared with you, you can find stuff that the person that put the document online doesn’t necessarily want you to find. And so the offline analogy would be Art if I told you you could find Coca Cola’s presentations by shuffling through their garbage cans, you would probably say, “Well that just doesn’t sound right.” So is what I just shared with you related to the file type? Is that kind of like the online version of dumpster diving or going through garbage cans? My moral compass is if what I find was meant for the public to see, then in my opinion it’s okay to use.

So for example, let’s say I do that. Coca Cola, “sales presentation,” file type: PPT and I find something that was presented at the National Beverage Association conference. In my mind it was presented at a conference. It was posted online for others to download. That’s fair use. Go ahead and use it. Often times I’ve used this technique, the file type technique or I’ve found somebody’s company budget or I’ve found somebody’s membership list. You look at that and you say, “Nah that probably wasn’t meant for public use.” There have been instances where I’ve actually contacted the person and said, “Hey here’s what I found online about your company. You might want to take it down.” So that’s an important thing to remember because everything I’m sharing with you can get a little spooky. You can find stuff that you might not; you probably shouldn’t be looking at as an example. So just kind of keep that in the back of your mind as you’re doing some of these types of searches.

**Art:** I agree. We definitely need to be above board. I have a great friend who is a business ethics speaker. He says that if you really have to question yourself whether or not you should be doing it, you probably shouldn’t be doing it.

**Sam:** That’s correct. Yep.

**Art:** How about this? You have ways to also find e-mail addresses in Google?

**Sam:** Sure. One of the ways you can do that is through Google. If you can’t remember something in Google I call it Google amnesia. Gosh knows I forget lots of stuff. You can use what’s called a wild card or an asterisk (*) and let Google fill in the blanks. So for example, let’s say I forgot somebody’s name. But I knew their last name. I forgot their first name. “Something” Anderson at General Mills. I can type in “asterisk (*) Anderson” and “General Mills”. I want to put “General Mills” in quotation marks and I want to put the “asterisk (*) and the Anderson” - make sure there’s a space between the
asterisk (*) and the Anderson - put that in quotation marks. When you put an asterisk (*) in Google what you’re telling Google is you know that there’s a word there that you’re missing and to let Google fill in the blanks. That’s a way to find names of people.

Now how do you find e-mail addresses? Use the same technique. Use the asterisk (*). Most people’s e-mail address is the same back end as their website address. So my e-mail address is Sam@SBRWorldwide.com. My website address is www.SBRWorldwide.com. So if you know somebody’s website address you can go up into Google and you can type in an asterisk (*) and the @ sign and then the web address.

So, for example, if you wanted to find my e-mail address you could go into Google type in *@SBRWorldwide.com. Google’s going to look at that asterisk (*) and fill in the blanks with a word that it has vacuumed up in its vacuum cleaner.

Now what you’re looking for - if you do that you’re not hacking into someone’s e-mail directory - what you’re looking for are websites where the phrase, the phrase something @ exists. So does that make sense Art? So for example, have you ever put your e-mail address on a webpage? Have you ever written a byline article and at the bottom of the article it says, “For information contact me at.”

Art: Tens of thousands of them.

Sam: Yeah. So your e-mail address is out there on the Internet. That’s what this technique will do, is it will find web pages where an e-mail address exist. So something @ and type in the name of the website address. So asterisks (*), use an asterisk (*), then the @ sign, then the name of the website address. What you’re going to find is you’ll find e-mail addresses.

Now I might not find - let’s say I’m looking for Phil Smith at a specific company - I might not find Bill Smith’s e-mail address but what I’ll probably find is six to 10 other people and their e-mail addresses. Then I can look at their e-mail addresses and kind of get the name and convention. What I mean by that is oh okay at this company they use first initial last name. Or they might use first name, underscore, last name. Once I can figure out the name or the naming convention then I can figure out what the e-mail address of the person that I’m trying to reach is. So that’s a really neat way and an effective way to get e-mail addresses.

And then you’ve got it to use it carefully. You don’t want to go harvest the Internet for e-mail addresses and spam people because that’s going to get you in a lot of trouble. But if you did meet somebody and you need to e-mail them and you don’t have a business card that’s a good way to find it.

Art: Exactly. Let’s go back to one more point that I realize this – you may want to do that file type search on your own company just to make sure you don’t have things out there that you don’t want other people to see.
Sam: Oh absolutely. And thanks for bringing that up. I always recommend that to people when I give my presentations and I’ve received a number of e-mails from folks who have done that, kind of a “thank you, thank you, thank you” e-mail. “You’re not going to believe what we had out there online. We were able to find it and we were able to pull it down.”

Art: Going back to e-mail, of course everyone would say to themselves that they probably get too much e-mail now but of course I’ll bet most of it doesn’t help them make money. So explain how Google can send to you e-mails everyday that can help set yourself apart from the competition?

Sam: Well one of the things that you’re going to find in my book is about a hundred pages on how to use Google and other search engines effectively. The reality is who has time to sit there and Google all of our prospects and all of our clients? If you did that you’re going to have to add another four hours on Tuesday. So I recommend a service that Google offers - and there are actually a number of services out there that do the same thing - and it’s called Google Alert. So if you want to find it, just go into Google, type in Google Alert and the number of services will show up. I actually use GoogleAlert.com.

What Google Alert does is it allows you to go in and then type in the name of companies, people, frankly whatever you want to search for. Whatever you do a normal search in Google for, you can type in that information in Google Alert.

So here’s how it works – you can set a Google Alert up, they’re free and you can do up to three searches per Google Alert. So what I’ve done is I go in and I set up Google Alerts for all of my prospects, all of my clients and other things that I want. I set it up by myself. I go in, I type in what I’m looking for – it might be a person’s name, company name, press releases, whatever it might be and I use the bullion stuff that I talked about earlier. So if I’m looking for the name of a company in Google Alert I’ll use the quotation marks if the company names more than one person. What that does then is once you set up your Google Alert, every time the Google vacuum cleaner finds new stuff, you’ll receive an e-mail. And let’s say it finds 50 new things. It doesn’t send you 50 e-mails. It sends you one e-mail. “Hey Sam here’s the 50 new things we found today on Widget Corporation.” That could be a huge timesaver.

Now I can’t tell you the number of times where I found a press release announcing a promotion, a new product launch. I’ll even set them up on my clients’ competitors. So I can know what’s going on, and again I want to provide value to my clients. What’s going on in my client’s world as it relates to their competitors? Let’s say I could find a press release about a competitor coming out with a new product. I will then forward that via e-mail to my client saying, “Hey saw this today. I thought you’d be interested.” And it’s all about providing value to what the other person’s cares about.

Frankly I can set up Google Alerts and provide that value and all it takes is a few seconds and a couple of mouse clicks on my end, very easy to do.
Art: So you’re providing value to them with that type of news alert. You’re using it for your own prospect, that’s what I always recommend to people as well so that you can always stay apprised to what’s going on with them as well as your existing customers. Every time something new is going on you can be aware, whether it be an expansion or some issues going on. Yeah, absolutely. This I find to be truly invaluable.

Sam: Yeah for prospects, for example. Let’s say you’ve got a prospect. You’ve been calling on this person for a long time and it’s kind of, “Well we’d love to use you but got to wait for some money to come in. We’re tight on cash right now.” How many sales people have heard that one before? Right? Set up a Google Alert on that prospect. Let’s say a month later you get an e-mail from Google that says, “Hey this prospect you were calling on they just landed a four million dollar piece of business.” Boy that would be a good time to call again. If you haven’t set up that Google Alert you might not even remember to call that prospect. So it’s a great way to find out what’s going on in the other person’s world, send you an e-mail, you look at it and you say, “Wow I’ve got a solution for this guy’s problem.” Or, “Hey I just wanted to drop a note of congratulations here.” It’s a good way to stay in front of people.

Art: By the way, you might also want to do this with your own company, any high profile clients you have and also your own name, which I do because I found a number of results that have either published my material, which was good or they stole my material maybe mentioning my name without proper credit. So you can see where it would be helpful.

Sam: Absolutely. Absolutely you should be doing that.

Art: Okay Google’s useful of course but there is this other mysterious resource that you call the “Invisible Web”. What is that? And how can we in sales use it?

Sam: Well the Invisible Web was actually a term that was coined by the author’s of a book called The Invisible Web and it’s this whole concept that there’s lots of websites that are out there that, for whatever reason, the Google vacuum cleaner or any search engine can’t get to. The easiest way to describe the Invisible Web would be, Art, have you ever had to go to a website where you’ve had to register to download information or to access information?

Art: Oh sure.

Sam: We’ve all done that. So Google can find the home page, but Google in and of itself can’t register. So if there’s like 100,000 articles, kind of underneath the registration area, unless the webmaster’s opened up a back door for Google, those are kind of hidden. They’re hidden to the Internet. And mainly a lot of webmasters don’t want to open up a back door because they want to force you to register. So then they know who’s looking at their material. So that’s an example of the invisible.
There’s a lots of other reasons why the invisible web is invisible. That’s just one of them. It’s estimated that the invisible web makes up about 80 percent of the publicly accessible information that’s out there online. So if you think about the millions and hundreds of millions of search results we can get through Google and now frankly that you know some of the techniques, you’re not going to get that many, but all the Google search results that are out there actually makes up a very small percentage of what’s truly available. The rest is in what’s called the Invisible Web.

**Art:** Okay. So how do we find it and what kind of information can we get?

**Sam:** Sure. Well there’s, again, billions of web pages out there on the invisible web. So how do you find it? Well the easiest way, and this is going to sound a little self-serving, it’s not meant to be, but the easiest way from a business perspective is frankly just go to my website, www.TakeTheCold.com, and it’s www.TakeTheCold.com, in the upper right hand corner you’ll see a button. It’s called The Warm Call Center. If you click on The Warm Call Center you enter into my website, if you will, where I’ve gone and I find the best invisible website as it relates to research and companies, researching people, researching industries and I’ve kind of aggregated them in one place.

Now there are other places where you can find the Invisible Web. Frankly if you went into Google and typed in “Invisible Web”, put it in quotation marks, you’ll find other people, other people’s websites where they’ve kind of put their favorite invisible websites. Public libraries will have websites where they list, “Here’s our favorite list of websites that are out there. Those are all examples of ways you can find the Invisible Web. But again it’s these websites that for whatever reason you’re not easily going to find via Google, but they’re out there.

**Art:** So you go to these sites then. Do you have to register to get into them to get the information you’re looking for?

**Sam:** Yeah some of them you do. So let me give you an example of a couple. You’ve probably heard of Dunn and Bradstreet right?

**Art:** Of course.

**Sam:** Incredible database or information on companies, even privately held companies. Now the information’s not always perfectly accurate but it’s pretty darn good. At least it helps you back into a range. And the unfortunate thing about Dunn and Bradstreet is it can be kind of expensive.

Now I would recommend if you’re a company that needs to download lots of lists, just go buy a subscription, it’s pretty good. There are three ways to get access to Dunn and Bradstreet. One of them is through an invisible website called Manta.com. It’s invisible because you have to register to access all of the information in Manta. And by the way Manta’s even started to show up in Google. So you can type in names of a company you
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Sam Richter with Art Sobczak

might see in Manta listing. But if you want to get the full power of Manta, it’s M-A-N-T-A dot com, Manta.com. You have to register.

Now once you register, you can literally type in the name of any company in the United States, public or private and it will pull up basic Dunn and Bradstreet information. What does the company sell? What’s the contact information? Who’s the key decision-maker? When was the company formed? What’s their annual revenue, number of employees, what industry are they in and you can even click on a category listing to show all of the other companies within that specific industry or all of those other companies within that specific industry within a specific geographic area.

So Manta is a perfect example of an Invisible Website. You’re not easily going to find it via Google. You have to register to access it, registration’s free. Once you register you can access pretty much good company information on every company, every public and private company.

Art: I need to plug a couple of my clients here and I see in your book that you mention another one and that is Business Journals where you can get local business information.

Sam: Sure. I love the Business Journal. Business Journals, as most people know, they write in-depth articles, sometimes about large companies, but mainly about mid-size and smaller companies. And these are companies that are not going to show up in USA Today or The Wall Street Journal. But they usually have a pretty good in-depth profile in the Business Journal. Or, if they’ve come out with a new product or they’re expanding or they’re contracting, the local Business Journal has probably written an article about it.

You can go to BusinessJournals.com/Search, and again you can just go to my website, TakeTheCold.com, and I link to all the places. But BusinessJournals.com/Search, it basically pulls up a search form. Kind of looks like Google. Type in the name of the company and again you’re going to want to remember the bullion stuff I talked about earlier. So if the name of the company is more than one word, you know, “Widget Corporation,” put it within quotation marks and you’ll search across all of the business journals in the United States. I think there’s about 48 or 45, or whatever it is, but Business Journals are in the key markets throughout the United States. You can go to BusinessJournals.com/Search and find out if any articles have been written about the company you’re interested in in these business journals.

Now how cool is it if you’re going to be going on a prospect call and you can site some information from a local Business Journal? ‘A’ you’re credibility goes through the roof and the buyer is really impressed that you’ve done your homework. And most important, you’re able to look at that article and craft a relevant story, “Hey here’s what I read in the Business Journal. Let me tell you an experience I’ve had doing a similar thing.” The Business Journal is one of my favorite sties to get information on companies.

Art: One thing we’ve gotten involved in in the past few months here is blogging. And when I started doing research on blogging I did not realize that there are millions, I
believe over 10 million blogs. I don’t know who’s reading or writing these things, but nevertheless that means anybody with a computer can, of course, get published out there, which may be writing something good or bad about you. So how can we kind of monitor blogs here?

**Sam:** Sure. There are some great search engines for blogs. My personal favorite is the *Google Blog Search*. How do you find it? Easy. Just go to [Google.com](http://www.google.com). Up on top there you’re going to see a little button that’s called ‘More’. It’s a little pull down menu. Click on the ‘More’ pull down menu, select ‘blog.’ All of a sudden you’re going to access the *Google Blog Search*. So it works just like Google. All the techniques I talked about earlier will work, except instead of searching the entire Internet, now you’re just searching blogs. And blogs are these online web diaries. So people are writing about companies. They’re writing about their companies. They’re writing about industries. It’s amazing the amount of stuff you can find out there as it relates to people writing in their blog.

Look at ‘use *Google Blog Search*’. Let’s say that I’m interested in information on a particular company. I might just type in the name of the company - again use quotation marks if it’s a multi word name - and find out if there are any employees out there that are writing about their company. And it’s amazing what employees will put on their own blog, “Hey guess what new products I’m working on?” You can find that stuff on blogs.

You can type in industry information. What’s going on in the chemical manufacturing community? Just go onto [Google Blog](http://www.google.com), type in “chemical manufacturing” because it’s two words, use those quotation marks again and find out are there any blogs out there that are writing about what’s going on in a particular industry.

Now earlier, Art, we had talked about the *Google Advanced Search*. Same thing in the *Google Blog Search*. There’s a *Google Blog Advanced Search*. Click on that and you can even search for one my favorite areas of a *Google Blog Advanced Search*, which is you can search for words within a specific blog title, meaning that the only reason the blog exists is to have information about that particular word or group of words.

So, for example, if I’m looking for industry information I’ll go into the *Advanced Google Blog Search*, type in the name of the industry, might be plastics, could be automotive, you pick your industry in that field, in the Google advanced blog search where it says, “Words within the blog title.” Type in that word. Now the only results you’re going to get are specific blogs related to that specific topic. Blogging, people are putting out incredible amount of information. This is the way to access it.

**Art:** And just one specific in particular here, I can see that if you’re selling a product that may be widely used or maybe not so widely used you find people discussing this in a blog as far as maybe some problems they’ve had with that particular product or a competitor’s product and now you’ve got some information you can use as perhaps a way to open up a call talking about a pain or a problem that somebody’s experiencing now that might be at the forefront of somebody’s mind.
Sam: Well absolutely. And you just hit on something really important. There’s really two aspects, two parts to what you just said. One: you should do Google blog searching on your own company. Are your customers saying anything bad out there about you? And then, again, use it just like you just described. What are the customers saying? Do you have a product that solves that pain? How cool would it be? Imagine that you’re at a sales presentation or a first time sales meeting and you say to somebody, “Hey before I meet with people I want do a little research so I can make sure that my presentation is very relevant to what you might care about. I happened to do a little blog searching and geez I don’t mean to bring this up and hopefully you already know it, but something happened last week with your product because there were a lot of people out there complaining about it. I took the liberty of printing some of those comments.”

Maybe the person didn’t even know. So ‘A’ just automatically provided a huge value. Now you want to ramp that value up a notch? You say, “Hey you know here’s what your customers are saying. The reason I’m sharing this with you is this is what my company does. My company solves these exact problems. Let me share with you how we do this.” Now all of a sudden…what is the thing we teach in sales, Art, right? Find the other person’s pain and then come up with the solution to that pain. Bring a piece of pain that the other, that your buyer, your prospect didn’t even know they had. Show them a piece of pain and then show them how you solve it. Guess who’s going to get the job?

Art: Absolutely. Great information here Sam. What are some other ways to get information on industries or companies in particular, maybe through the Invisible Web?

Sam: Sure. I’m a huge fan of having other people do all the work for me. And so I could go on Google, let’s say I’m going to go sell into the automotive industry. I don’t know anything about the automotive industry. So I could go into Google, Art’s what’s going to happen if I go into Google and type in cars or automotive?

Art: Maybe 10 bazillion.

Sam: Yeah or even if I type in “automotive industry” or “car industry” I’m going to get hundreds of millions of search results. Even if I used the techniques that I shared with you earlier, I’m still going to get a ton of search results. Most of them being websites that want to sell me a car. That’s not what I’m interested in. I want industry information. So I can spend all day on Google trying to find it or I can think to myself, “Is there anybody else who’s already gathered that information for me?” A couple of ways you can create industry information.

I’m a huge fan of associations. Why do associations exist? Associations exist to provide information to their members. So in this example if I could find the Automotive Association, it’s highly likely that the automotive association has got a trade journal, an industry journal. They’ve got a newsletter. They’ve got their recent studies. So where can I find the Automotive Industry Association?
Well there’s a great Invisible Website if you will. It’s called the Association of Associations. If you go to my website again, TakeTheCold.com, click on the Warm Call Center, click on the Industry link. I’ll point you to the Association of Associations. They’ve got deep in their website - you can’t really access it off their home page - but deep in their website they’ve got a search engine. So I can type in the name of an industry, in this example ‘automotive’. It will pull up a listing of all the associations serving the automotive industry. I can click on any one of those. I’ll get full contact information including their website. I go to the association’s website. That’s where I can register for information. So again I’m a big fan of having other people do all the work for me. Why not have the Automobile Association send me an e-newsletter once a month that says, “Hey here’s what’s going on in our industry today.” So an association’s a great way to get industry information.

Another favorite of mine is what are called Wiki’s. You’re probably familiar with Wikipedia? Wikipedia is an encyclopedia built by users. Well there are industry Wiki’s. Wiki is kind of the term for, I guess, user build content. So who knows more about the industry than people writing about the industry? So can I go find an industry Wiki?

Again go to my site, TakeTheCold.com, go to the Warm Call Center, get into the industry and you’ll find one of my favorite sites in there is it’s called the Alacra Wiki. And at Alacra Wiki they’ve got this huge listing of industries, click on the industry you want. It’ll pull up information. Here’s what’s going on in the industry today. And oh by the way, here are the best websites for this industry as determined by experts in this industry.

So I could try to find that stuff on Google. It’ll take all day. Let somebody else do the work for me. Go to an industry Wiki where an expert in the industry has already told me these are the best websites you want to go to. Those are just a couple of examples of invisible websites where you can get industry information.

Art: Wow. And of course there are more in your book. One experience that I always share with seminar training attendees is how I had a guy at one of my programs who was selling telephone equipment. He would check the internal job board listings at companies so he knew when a company was hiring and expanding and then he’d call the telecom manager since he knew they might be adding new equipment. Now there are a number of other ways to use job openings and find them. So if you would explain some of those and where you can get that information.

Sam: Sure. Well again you know there’s a lot of these online job postings. So it could be Monster.com or CareerBuilder.com, local newspapers and frankly who has time to search all of those?

Art: Right.

Sam: So again I’m a big fan of having other people do all the work for me. There’s a great website called Indeed.com. Indeed.com is what’s called a meta search engine.
What that is it’s really a search engine of search engines. So you can go to Indeed.com and you can type in the name of a company, you can choose even a job title or a geographic area but just start with a broad search – name of a company. And what Indeed’s going to do is it’s going to search all of the job listing boards and it’ll give you a list of results. So here’s everything that Monster.com has. Here’s everything that CareerBuilder.com has. Here’s everything that’s in the local newspaper. It puts it all in one place.

And what are you going to find in those listings? But just like you mentioned companies expanding were looking to hire somebody. Wow they’re looking to hire somebody with deep experience in the medical device industry. That company’s never been in the medical device industry. Wow they’re looking to hire someone fluent in Chinese. What could that mean?

And here’s the other really neat thing about Indeed.com. Again you’re going to hear a theme here I’m sure. I’m a huge fan of having other people do all the work for me. Indeed.com, just like Google Alert, Indeed.com will allow you to sign up for an e-mail alert. So just go there, I’ve done this for all of my clients and prospects. You go to Indeed.com, you set up an e-mail alert and you’ll get an e-mail. Any time Widget Corporation’s looking to hire somebody send me an e-mail. And I can even get specific to a job title because I would say I don’t want an e-mail every time Target, let’s say Target or Wal-Mart, every time Wal-Mart’s looking to hire someone I don’t want to get an e-mail because that’s all I’ll get. I don’t care if they’re looking to hire a cashier.

What I do care is if Wal-Mart’s looking to hire, say, a director of marketing or a director of purchasing. So I can even get that specific with Indeed. Give me the name of a company, give me a job title, any time those two phrases show up in the same Indeed search, send me an e-mail. It’s a huge time saver and a great way to do a competitive intelligence. Frankly you should also set them up for your own clients because here’s a way you can provide value.

So let’s say Art, I set one up on you and I find out you’re looking to hire a marketing manager. What if I happen to know a great marketing manager I can make a referral to? So again, it’s a great way to do research and a great way to provide additional value to existing clients.

Art: Great idea too. The next one can be extremely powerful and can really be a way to connect and that’s knowing something about someone on a personal level, we kind of touched on this. But you also need to be careful here since using the wrong information in the wrong situation can make you appear to be maybe a creepy stalker. So talk about finding and using personal information.

Sam: You’re right. You have to be careful about this. You don’t want to be meeting with someone. They excuse them self and they’re calling Homeland Security because they think you’re some kind of Communist spy or whatever it might be. So you have to use personal information carefully.
Well first off let’s talk about where you can find good information on people. One of my favorite sites is a website called ZoomInfo.com. Go to ZoomInfo, what ZoomInfo does is it basically scours the Internet for information on people and then it pulls together almost an online resume, if you will. So I can, and it doesn’t work for everybody but I found ZoomInfo to be pretty good on pretty much everybody VP level and above, even at small companies. So I can go to ZoomInfo. I type in the name of a person, pull up that person, I can click and I can get their profile.

Usually I’m going to find a biography. I’ll find where did this person work. Sometimes I’ll find what boards they serve on, those sorts of things.

In a similar thing you might be familiar with is a website called LinkedIn. Where ZoomInfo is kind of, it’s almost like Google in the sense if it’s a big vacuum cleaner and it’s trying to find stuff on people. LinkedIn is where people input their own information. So hopefully it’s accurate.

LinkedIn, again it’s free, but you’ve got to join and then you can type in the names of people. I can do another hour conversation with you just how to use LinkedIn. But specifically how to research a person: Just type in the name of a person, you click on it, you pull up their profile. And you can learn again, what’s their work history? What are their hobbies? What are their interest? Those kinds of things.

Now getting back to your earlier point – how do you use it effectively? Again you don’t want to scare people. One of the things that I’ve effectively done is just be up front with people. I’ve said this a couple times and I’ll repeat it again. When I’m meeting with a prospect I say that, “Hey, you know, I want to make sure that we have a good experience here today so I’ve taken the liberty of doing a little researching. Here’s what I found. Hey I see that you went to the University of Minnesota approximately the same years that I went. I didn’t know you then, but what was your field of study?” And then you can find a way to connect.

Or it might be, “Say I see that you used to work at Acme Corporation. Well they used to be a client of mine or they currently are a client of mine.” Or, “Do you know so and so there?” where you can create these relationships. I think the key here is to be up front and honest. And you say it, and you do that by saying things like, “I want to make sure that you have a great experience today and to make sure that happens, I’ve taken the liberty of doing a little researching. Here’s what I found. Hey I see that you went to the University of Minnesota approximately the same years that I went. I didn’t know you then, but what was your field of study?” And then you can find a way to connect.

So let’s say Art that I knew what school you went to and I knew where you used to work but it wouldn’t be appropriate for me to say, “I’ve done a little homework on you.” That would be kind of weird in a specific situation. But if I knew the answer to that I can ask questions, “Oh where did you go to school Art?” Well I already know the answer to that
and I know what you’re going to say and so then I can prepare my next question. So instead of winging it I can actually almost map out the list of questions that I want to ask you based on what I think you’re answers are going to be. I might not always be right but I can get pretty darn good. So instead of winging it I actually have a plan or a process for my sales meeting of the types of questions I’m going to ask because I’ve already anticipated what your answer is.

**Art:** Exactly. And let me just reiterate what you had said before about prefacing what you know about them with what’s in it for them. I find that sometimes if people are a little resistant, people being sales reps, saying, “Gosh won’t they get mad that I did this research?” No, not if you tell them, “I want to make sure that what I have would be a good fit for your situation. So I’ve taken the liberty to ask some questions, do some research, get some information on you.” But again it’s always, “I’m doing this because I want to help you.”

**Sam:** Yeah. I’m not some kind of a spy.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sam:** When you do that, when you do that the coolest thing is all of a sudden you have differentiated yourself from 99 percent of all other sales people out there because one of the things - at the end of the day all things being equal - if I’ve got competitors and their product is pretty much equal quality, pretty much equal price, at the end of the day people buy from people that they like.

**Art:** Exactly.

**Sam:** And you like people who genuinely show interest. There’s nothing wrong with that. There’s nothing wrong with saying, “Again Art I’m so excited to meet you. Every time I meet with somebody I want to do a little homework so I can make sure that I’m relevant to something you care about. Geez Art I see that you used to do this. Boy that’s really cool. Can you tell me more?” What is the one thing that people like to talk about?

**Art:** Well, themselves.

**Sam:** Themselves, right. So if you can ask great questions, get the other person talking about them self then you can easily weave in your stories, your relevant stories of how you’ve helped people. And there’s nothing better than leaving a sales presentation where the customer has done 80 percent of the talking. Every sales book out there is going to tell you that right?

**Art:** Right.

**Sam:** Ask really good questions. Get the customer to do 80 percent of the talking. But it never works. Why? Because most of the time as a sales person you’re winging it. You don’t have any information to ask really good questions. So use the techniques that
I talk about to prepare, and that’s the keyword here, to prepare a list of really good relevant questions that you can ask to get the other person talking about what’s going on in their world.

And, oh by the way, the other side benefit of all this is when you do that, when you get the other person talking about relevant stories, “Hey here’s what I found. Here’s what I found. Here’s an issue that I see others in your industry are facing. Are you facing that issue?” Your prospect all of a sudden they’ll start melting. What I mean by that is instead of putting up this wall of I’m not going to share information, by saying things like, “Here’s what I see is going on in your industry. Are you guys experiencing that?” All of a sudden you’ll start engaging in a conversation that’s much deeper and more meaningful than when you were winging it.” And when you do that you get the other person talking about what’s going on in their world. Frankly it becomes really easy and fun to talk about your solution to their issue.

Art: It makes perfect sense. Sam this information has been truly amazing and time has flown here. And we have barely scratched the surface. Depending upon how someone is listening to this program they may already have your book, we may have provided it to them or it’s on the way. So do tell our members and listeners how they can contact you, get the book or contact you for your speaking and training, go to your Warm Call site, get the other resources and especially how they can get updates to the book and everything that we’ve talked about here.

Sam: Sure. Well thank you. The best way to do it is just go to my website www.TakeTheCold.com, T-A-K-E-T-H-E-C-O-L-D dot com, TakeTheCold.com or you can just go into Google, type in my name using the techniques I shared with you and it’ll show up. On my website you can buy my book. There’s a link for the seminars. So you can see where we are and what type of seminars that we give. And of course make sure you click on that Warm Call Center. When you click on the Warm Call Center link you can register, you don’t have to but you can register for my newsletter. I send out a monthly newsletter with new tips. “So hey Google came out with a new thing. You probably didn’t know, try it. Or here’s a new invisible website that I found.”

I don’t sell the list. I don’t spam. It’s just truly, as you can tell I suppose - I talk a little fast here - I get passionate about this stuff and it really excites me and I know, I know that it works just based on the e-mails and letters and phone calls I get. So that’s what…if you register for my newsletter I’ll keep you up-to-date on all the new cool things that are out there and I’m telling you, I guarantee you if you practice some this stuff all of a sudden you start to see results in your sales process that were unheard of before you were doing your homework.

Art: Well you’re going to be a part of every single group that I ever talk to because again I’ve always said you need to get information but you’ve put all together. So if people - and let me go back - you said they don’t have to sign up for your newsletter. Yes they do! I’m just going to tell them that.
Sam: Okay.

Art: All right Sam, once again thanks for one of the most information rich audio seminars we’ve ever done. I personally feel like I’ve just opened up a vault of secrets. So on behalf of my members and my Telesales Success Inner Circle and myself again, thank you.

Sam: Thank you very much. It’s been an honor to be on your show and I really hope to be able to help all of your listeners, and all of your clients.

Art: All right. Once again for the Telesales Success Platinum Inner Circle I’m Art Sobczak.