



Target Selling Insights Prospecting and Cold Calling

Prospecting and Cold Calling

These skills are related to how effectively you approach new prospects and how well you interact with them once you have passed the initial introduction phase.

Why is this skill important?

Poor prospecting is one of the worst culprits for time wasting. But when you have a clear mental image of what a qualified prospect is, you waste less time making presentations to people who are unqualified to become customers of yours. A qualified prospect is a person and/or company that has an immediate or future need for the products or services you offer. Your job is to make sure that you are spending the majority of your time approaching and involving truly qualified prospects—your sales will show the results!

Most negative attitudes that customers have about prospecting and cold calling spring from a fear of something. In many cases, customers fear that if they make bad decisions, waste company money, or don't achieve results that are expected, they will look bad. In your initial interaction with a prospective customer, you must show that you:

- Understand what key issues the prospect faces.
- Have products or services that have demonstrated value to those issues.
- Will be a reliable and trustworthy partner in helping the prospect achieve his or her objectives.

There are three great ways to find prospects.

1. Learning about prospects through existing customers.
2. Picking up orphan accounts.
3. Reading about people and companies in the news.

The first prospecting method listed above is the best—research indicates that you have one chance in sixteen of doing business with someone who doesn't know you, but you have a one in two chance of doing business with existing customers. If you can get a referral from an existing customer, chances are the prospect will be qualified and eager to hear from you.

There are five main approaches to making contact with a new prospect or completing a cold call:

1. Introduction by a mutual contact.
2. Meeting under common circumstances.
3. Paying a sincere compliment.
4. Using a startling statement.
5. Asking a provocative question.

Setting or gaining an appointment is your primary objective when making a cold call. A definite appointment is composed of four things: a date, a specific time, a place, and NO ESCAPE CLAUSE.

What are skills associated with Prospecting and Cold Calling?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Prospecting and Cold Calling:

- Has an open and friendly manner.
- Believes completely and fully in the quality and value of his or her products or services.
- Can easily access information about current and past prospects.
- Has developed effective prospecting techniques.
- Maintains regular, useful communication with existing and prospective customers.
- Is able to communicate the value of his or her products or services rapidly and effectively.

How do you develop your own skills in Prospecting and Cold Calling?

- Keep in mind that the primary objective of a cold call is to gain or set an appointment. Not to make a full-fledged presentation or win a sale.
- Become sold on the value of your own products or services.
- Believe that your customers or prospects will have their lives improved by having your product or service.
- Use non-manipulative, high-integrity selling tactics.
- Set a goal of adding one new qualified prospect to your list EACH DAY.
- Raise your level of visibility with your customers by sending out birthday cards, season's greetings, notes, gifts, and/or article reprints. Your customers should hear from you 4-6 times per year.
- Develop a standardized system for storing data about your prospects.
- Create a custom checklist of data you need for your business on each prospect, and make sure that you get all the data.

- Store your prospect master list in alphabetical order.
- Create a tickler system for using your working prospect list.
- Implement a solid time management system to keep you on track.
- Make friends with gatekeepers—receptionists, assistants, etc., who control access to your prospects.
- Never interrupt or display impatience with a potential customer.
- Explain your purpose carefully to the prospect and/or the gatekeeper who controls access to him or her.
- Stimulate your customers' thinking processes with appropriate and effective questions.
- Be creative about prospecting—sometimes companies can use your services in unexpected ways!
- Approach potential customers politely and self-confidently. • Be sure to show your prospects the value that your product or service can bring to them, her, or the company.

Prospecting and Cold Calling

Activities

Activity 1: Your Strengths and Weaknesses

1. In what areas of Prospecting and Cold Calling are you strongest?
2. In what areas of Prospecting and Cold Calling are you weakest?
3. What are five key things that you should begin doing today to improve your skills in Prospecting and Cold Calling?

Activity 2: Prospecting, Part I

Make a list of five to ten of your best customers. Develop a plan for getting at least one referral from each of these customers. Remember:

- The customers you approach must be truly satisfied.
- You must ask them politely and properly for their referrals.
- You may have to stimulate their thinking—prompt them to make appropriate suggestions.
- Once you make contact with the company that your customer referred, let your customer know and thank them for their help—regardless of the outcome.

Activity 3: Prospecting, Part II

For the next month, read the business section of your local paper carefully. If you can, subscribe to national news media and read those business sections, too.

Each time you review the business section, write down the names and relevant information of any prospective customers you read about. Remember to be creative—sometimes prospects don't seem obvious, so you'll need to think carefully about how you could add value for a prospect.

See if you can develop a list of at least five prospects each week—and then develop a plan for making contact with them the next week.

Ask a trusted peer or mentor to accompany you on the next couple of cold calls you make. Ask him or her to observe your behavior and conversations—what trends exist? What could you do better? What are you already doing well during cold calls?

Then, ask someone who you think is good at getting appointments if you can observe him or her in the cold call stage. What does he or she do well? How could you apply those skills to your cold calling approach?

Priceless Professional Development LLC

www.motivatorsppd.com