

# 4 Mistakes to Avoid When Following Up on Leads

A prospect sends you a message about a possible project. What's your follow-up strategy? We asked four pros to share some of the lead follow-up mistakes they've made, and what they learned, so you can avoid these pitfalls and boost your chances of landing the job.

MISTAKE 1

## Waiting Too Long to Respond

Unfortunately, even a small delay can hurt your chances of advancing a lead to the next stage. In fact, InsideSales research shows that 30% to 50% of sales go to the supplier who responds first. Interior designer Naomi Starr admits, "In the past, I haven't always been able to contact leads immediately, but it's very rare for me to convert a lead or enquiry if I haven't contacted them on the same day or the day after."

MISTAKE 2

## Following Up Only Once

Did you know that it takes an average of five attempts to win a project? Yet 44% of salespeople give up after the first follow-up ([Invespro](#)).

SOLUTION

## Set a follow-up schedule

Following up with leads has to be consistent, which is why many people use software to keep track of their message history and which stage each prospect is in. "I love that I have created templates inside of Houzz Pro to address every client as they're reaching out," designer John McClain says. "I also love that Houzz Pro reminds me to follow up. It's almost like a personal assistant."

SOLUTION

## Set a response deadline

By responding right away, even if it's brief, you'll be setting a higher bar for the competition. Taghi Shaw of Waze Development offers this advice, "What I usually do is, as soon as I get the lead, I will call that person immediately because I know they're engaged. They're in front of their smartphone or their computer." This is one of the simplest things you can do, so make it a rule to strike while the iron is hot.

## Avoiding Phone Conversations

Email is certainly convenient, but don't underestimate the value of real conversations. "I've often used a message or email if I've been short on time in the past, but I find a phone call the most effective point of contact when converting leads," Naomi says. "A conversation is a powerful tool to find out more about the services the client may require and details about the potential project."

### SOLUTION

## Communicate through a variety of channels

When it comes to getting a prospect's attention, nothing beats a phone call. It's a great way to answer questions in real time while giving prospects a taste of your personality and work style. Email absolutely has a place in your lead follow-up strategy, but if you don't hear back after a few attempts, it's probably time to pick up the phone.

## Being Too Salesy

There's a difference between educating prospects on what you do and sounding like a sales brochure. Instead of trying to "sell", focus on building a relationship with your prospect and figuring out whether or not you can help them. A genuine, professional conversation will go a lot further than a marketing pitch.

### SOLUTION

## Prepare and listen

To initiate a two-way conversation and gather the information you need, prepare a list of open-ended questions. Not only does this signal that you know your stuff, it gives your prospect the opportunity to give thoughtful responses. "The best piece of advice I've been given is to just ask and listen," Sophie Utley of Ellen Utley Interiors says. "If you can help with their problem, let them know and they'll naturally ask you to come out to perform your talents."

The screenshot shows the 'All Active Leads' section of the Houzz Pro app. At the top, there are three filters: 'Search', 'All Project Types', and 'All Lead Sources'. Below these are several lead entries, each with a checkbox, the lead's name, a small profile icon, and the name again. The leads listed are:

- Lisa Johnson - Living Room (LJ)
- Cindy Wang - Bathroom (CW)
- Jay Chou - Bathroom (JC)
- Tanya Chua - Kitchen (TC)
- Mark Smith - Patio (MS)
- Patrick Badilla - Guest Room (PB)
- Sandra Law - Kitchen (SL)

At the bottom right of the lead list, there are two small icons: a plus sign and a downward arrow.

## Lead Follow-Up the Houzz Pro Way

- Organise and manage leads all in one place – no matter where they come from.
- Use quick-response email templates to make contact before your competitors.
- Move your leads from one stage to the next so you always know your next move.
- Allow prospects to schedule calls based on your available time slots.
- Project plate too full? Snooze your leads to contact them at a later date.