

Title:

7 Cold Calling Secrets Even The Sales Gurus Don't Know

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Summary:

Cold calling the old way is a painful struggle. Change Your Mental Objective Before You Make the Call. If you're like most people who make cold calls, you're hoping to make a sale -- or at least an appointment -- before you even pick up the phone. The problem is, the people you call somehow always pick up on your mindset immediately.

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Article Body:

<p>Cold calling the old way is a painful struggle.</p>

<p>But you can make it a productive and positive experience by changing your mindset and cold calling the new way.</p>

<p>To show you what I mean, here are 7 cold calling ideas that even the sales gurus don't know.</p>

<p>1. Change Your Mental Objective Before You Make the Call</p>

<p>If you're like most people who make cold calls, you're hoping to make a sale -- or at least an appointment -- before you even pick up the phone.</p>

<p>The problem is, the people you call somehow always pick up on your mindset immediately.</p>

<p>They sense that you're focused on your goals and interests, rather than on finding out what they might need or want.</p>

<p>This short-circuits the whole process of communication and trust-building.</p>

<p>Here's the benefit of changing your mental objective before you make the

call: it takes away the frenzy of working yourself up mentally to pick up the phone.</p>

<p>All the feelings of rejection and fear come from us getting wrapped up in our expectations and hoping for an outcome when it's premature to even be thinking about an outcome.</p>

<p>So try this. Practice shifting your mental focus to thinking, "When I make this call, I'm going to build a conversation so that a level of trust can emerge allowing us to exchange information back and forth so we can both determine if there's a fit or not."</p>

<p>2. Understand the Mindset of the Person You're Calling</p>

<p>Let's say you're at your office and you're working away.</p>

<p>Your phone rings and someone says, "Hello, my name's Mark. I'm with Financial Solutions International. We offer a broad array of financial solutions. Do you have a few minutes?"</p>

<p>What would go through your mind?</p>

<p>Probably something like this: "Uh-oh, another salesperson. I'm about to be sold something. How fast can I get this person off the phone?"</p>

<p>In other words, it's basically over at "Hello," and you end up rejected.</p>

<p>The moment you use the old cold calling approach -- the traditional pitch about who you are and what you have to offer, which all the sales gurus have been teaching for years -- you trigger the negative "salesperson" stereotype in the mind of the person you've called, and that means immediate rejection.</p>

<p>I call it "The Wall."</p>

<p>The problem is with how you're selling, not what you're selling.</p>

<p>This is an area that's been ignored in the world of selling.</p>

<p>We've all been trained to try to push prospects into a "yes" response on the first call. But that creates sales pressure.</p>

<p>But, if you learn to really understand and put yourself in the mindset of the person you call, you'll find it easier to avoid triggering The Wall.</p>

<p>It's that fear of rejection that makes cold calling so frightening.</p>

<p>Instead, start thinking about language that will engage people and not language that will</p>

<p>trigger rejection.</p>

<p>3. Identify a Core Problem That You Can Solve</p>

<p>We've all learned that when we begin a conversation with a prospect, we should talk about ourselves, our product, and our solution. Then we sort of hope that the person connects with what we've just told them. Right?</p>

<p>But when you offer your pitch or your solution without first involving your prospect by talking about a core problem that they might be having, you're talking about yourself, not them.</p>

<p>And that's a problem.</p>

<p>Prospects connect when they feel that you understand their issues before you start to talk about your solutions.</p>

<p>When people feel understood, they don't put up The Wall. They remain open to talking with you.</p>

<p>Here's an example based on my own experience. I offer Unlock The Game™ as a new approach in selling. When I call a vice president of sales, I would never start out with, "Hi, my name is Ari, I'm with Unlock The Game, and I offer the newest technique in selling, and I wonder if you have a few minutes to talk now."</p>

<p>Instead, I wouldn't even pick up the phone without first identifying one or more problems that I know VPs often have with their sales teams. Problems that Unlock The Game™ can solve.</p>

<p>For example, one common problem is when sales teams and salespeople spend time chasing prospects who have no intention of buying.</p>

<p>So I would start by asking, "Are you grappling with issues around your sales team chasing prospects who lead them on without any intention of buying?"</p>

<p>So, come up with two or three specific core problems that your product or service solves. (Avoid generic problem phrases like "cut costs" or "increase

revenue." They're too vague.)</p>

<p>4. Start With a Dialogue, Not a Presentation</p>

<p>Let's return to the goal of a cold call, which is to create a two-way dialogue engaging prospects in a conversation.</p>

<p>We're not trying to set the person up for a yes or no. That's the old way of cold calling.</p>

<p>This new cold calling approach is designed to engage people in a natural conversation. The kind you might have with a friend. This lets you both of you decide whether it's worth your time to pursue the conversation further.</p>

<p>The key here is never to assume beforehand that your prospect should buy what you have to offer, even if they're a 100 percent fit with the profile of the "perfect customer."</p>

<p>If you go into the call with that assumption, prospects will pick up on it and The Wall will go up, no matter how sincere you are.</p>

<p>Avoid assuming anything about making a sale before you make a call.</p>

<p>For one thing, you have no idea whether prospects can buy what you have because you know nothing about their priorities, their decisionmaking process, their budget, etc.</p>

<p>If you assume that you're going to sell them something on that first call, you're setting yourself up for failure. That's the core problem with traditional old-style cold calling.</p>

<p>Stay focused on opening a dialogue and determining if it makes sense to continue the conversation.</p>

<p>5. Start With Your Core Problem Question</p>

<p>Once you know what problems you solve, you also know exactly what to say when you make a call. It's simple. You begin with, "Hi, my name is Ari. Maybe you can help me out for a moment."</p>

<p>How would you respond if someone said that to you?</p>

<p>Probably, "Sure, how can I help you?" or "Sure, what do you need?" That's how

most people would respond to a relaxed opening phrase like that. It's a natural reaction.</p>

<p>The thing is, when you ask for help, you're also telling the truth because you don't have any idea whether you can help them or not.</p>

<p>That's why this new approach is based on honesty and truthfulness. That's why you're in a very good place to begin with.</p>

<p>When they reply, "Sure, how can I help you?," you don't respond by launching into a pitch about what you have to offer. Instead, you go right into talking about the core problem to find out whether it's a problem for the prospect.</p>

<p>So you say, "I'm just giving you a call to see if you folks are grappling (and the key word here is 'grappling') with any issues around your sales team chasing prospects who turn out to never have any intention of buying?"</p>

<p>No pitch, no introduction, nothing about me. I just step directly into their world.</p>

<p>The purpose of my question is to open the conversation and develop enough trust so they'll feel comfortable having a conversation.</p>

<p>The old way of cold calling advises asking lots of questions to learn about the prospect's business and to "connect." The problem is that people see right through that. They know that you have an ulterior motive, and then you're right back up against The Wall.</p>

<p>These ideas may be hard for you to apply to your own situation at first because trying to leverage calls based on what we know about our solution is so engrained in our thinking.</p>

<p>If you stay with it, though, you can learn to step out of your own solution and convert it into a problem that you can articulate using your prospects' language.</p>

<p>And that's the secret of building trust on calls. It's the missing link in the whole process of cold calling.</p>

<p>6. Recognize and Diffuse Hidden Pressures</p>

<p>Hidden sales pressures that makes The Wall go up can take a lot of forms.</p>

<p>For example, "enthusiasm" can send the message that you're assuming that what

you have is the right fit for the prospect. That can send pressure over the phone to your prospect.</p>

<p>You must be able to engage people in a natural conversation. Think of it as calling a friend. Let your voice be natural, calm, relaxed...easy-going. If you show enthusiasm on your initial call, you'll probably trigger the hidden sales pressure that triggers your prospect to reject you.</p>

<p>Another element of hidden pressure is trying to control the call and move it to a "next step".</p>

<p>The moment you begin trying to direct your prospect into your "sales process", there is a very high likelihood that you can "turn off" your prospect's willingness to share with you the details of their situation.</p>

<p>It's important to allow the conversation to evolve naturally and to have milestones or checkpoints throughout your call so you can assess if there is a fit between you and the person you are speaking with.</p>

<p>7. Determine a Fit</p>

<p>Now, suppose that you're on a call and it's going well, with good dialogue going back and forth. You're reaching a natural conclusion...and what happens?</p>

<p>In the old way of cold calling, we panic. We feel we're going to lose the opportunity, so we try to close the sale or at least to book an appointment. But this puts pressure on the prospect, and you run the risk of The Wall going up again.</p>

<p>Here's a step that most people miss when they cold call. As soon as they realize that prospects have a need for their solution, they start thinking, "Great, that means they're interested."</p>

<p>What they don't ask is, "Is this need a top priority for you or your organization to solve, or is it something that's on the back burner for a while?"</p>

<p>In other words, even if you both determine that there is a problem you can solve, you have to ask whether solving it is a priority. Sometimes there's no budget, or it isn't the right time. It's important that you find this out, because months later you'll regret not knowing this earlier.</p>

<p>Putting the Pieces Together</p>

<p>Have you ever wondered where the "numbers game" concept came from?</p>

<p>It came from someone making a call, getting rejected, and the boss saying, "Call someone else."</p>

<p>But with the new way of cold calling, it's not about how many people you call. It's about what you say and how you come across.</p>

<p>Do you remember the definition of insanity—continuing to do the same thing but expecting different results?</p>

<p>If you go on using the same old cold calling methods, you'll go on experiencing the ever-increasing pain of selling.</p>

<p>But if you adopt a new approach and learn how to remove pressure from your initial cold calls, you'll experience so much success and satisfaction that it'll really change the way you do business, bring you sales success beyond your imagination—and eliminate "rejection" from your vocabulary for good.</p>