

Paul: Sure, I do, I recommend a couple of things. One best practices for telemarketing include the following, the best time to cold call senior management is generally before 8 a.m. their time and after 5 p.m. their time. And the reason for that from a best practices point is you bypass some of the gatekeepers. Most executives don't work 40 hours a week, so they're more apt to potentially be available.

Also, when you're looking to telemarket, another good time to telemarket to prospects is on Saturdays in North America, outside of North America because of unionization even at the executive level this is not necessarily a successful method. But inside North America you can cold call prospects on Saturday morning and you get them on the phone and you just act like you're surprised that they're there. Just say, "Oh Mr. Jones I didn't think that you were going to be there. I just wanted to leave you a message."

What ends up happening is there are no gatekeepers and they're more apt to pick up the phone because they think it might be a spouse or somebody else who knows they're at the office on Saturday calling. So another best practice to be successful in cold calling is cold calling on Saturdays.

Another method to increase your cold calling success, when cold calling on the phone we recommend that you call prospects at 10 minutes to the hour, 9:50, 10:50, 1:50 because what ends up happening is most people who are going to have meetings go back to their desk to get ready for their next meeting. So they're either looking in their appointment book or their scheduler or they're waiting for the phone call, you call at 10 minutes to the hour and they may actually think that you're the person they're about to meet. And you're going to communicate to them that you got stuck in traffic, you're running late or you can't make it.

So what do they do? They just pick up the actual phone and again what do you do? You accelerate your peer-to-peer communications. We actually found this to be very successful. So if you're really looking to cold call and you have a difficult tie to catch prospects, try 10 minutes to the hour and that will increase your success as well.

Art: Okay well of course when we're selling to top management we're always going to run into assistants who play the role of screeners because that's their job. Everybody wants to talk to top-level management. So what is your advice for working with these people?

Paul: Well we're all going to run into gatekeepers. That's part of their job. Their job is to keep us out and my job is to get in. So let's talk about gatekeepers and even voice mail, which to some degree can be a gatekeeper.

So when you're cold calling, you have to assume that you're a peer to peer when you are calling and the confidence that you communicate on the phone to the actual gatekeeper is just as important as communicating it to the actual targeted prospect.

It's important to remember that many gatekeepers take on the image or perception of self based on the business title of their boss. So if you're calling the Vice President's secretary, she's going to think that she's the Vice President. If you're calling the CFOs or President's secretary, many times they will also think themselves they know exactly what the actual executive is interested in. So you have to handle them with kid gloves sometimes to make sure they see you as a peer.

So when handling sales objections on the phone, when the gatekeeper asks you strategically what is this about? Never describe the product or service. Always respond this is a program that we have for CFOs or this is a program we have for CIOs and we help them - and then you describe how your product or service increases income, decreases expenses or reduces risks.

So when a prospect's gatekeeper asks you strategically what this is, never describe your company name, never describe the actual product or service but instead describe the business results. The reason for that is that you want them to understand why you're there.

When a gatekeeper actively tries to put you lower in the organizational chart, now you have a couple of choices, you can either (a) let them put you lower in the organizational chart or (b) you can respond like a peer and here is what I recommend. "Ms. Gatekeeper - I want you to say the following - Ms. Gatekeeper, I appreciate that input but we only work with CFOs. Is Mr. Jones the CFO?" So by responding to them and telling them that you only work with their boss's level and then reconfirming for them by asking them the question is your boss that executive level you're basically confirming that I'm at the right level because I'm a peer.

So when the prospect's gatekeeper says, "Well he's a CFO," say "Well that's why I called." Again, they are looking for direction from you and they're trying to make a judgment call.

Art: This is exactly the same thing that we teach, and that is we're not trying to go above, around or through them, what we're doing is really justifying our reason for existence. And their job really is to determine is your call of any value at all. And we need to, in a sense, sell them on that because there are people out there who will say never give the screener any information because they can't buy from you. Which I totally disagree with, because they are buying into the fact that you have something of value.