

SPECIAL EDITION

Best of Sales Performance Tips:
**Phone Prospecting Strategies
To Get Your Foot In The Door**

MILLER
HEIMAN®
The Sales Performance Company

Phone Prospecting Strategies To Get Your Foot In The Door

Introduction

In this issue, we focus on a necessary exercise required of “hunters” and business development professionals that they dread doing – calling a prospect. With telemarketing on the rise and an increasing number of people screening their incoming calls, phoning a prospect and hoping to get an appointment with him or her require new techniques.

Increase Your Call Back Rate By Leaving Better Voicemail Messages. When leaving voicemails for prospects or clients, you can dramatically increase your callback rate by adjusting your message to your client’s perspective instead of yours.

Warm Up To Cold Calling. Are you anxious about picking up the phone? You’re not alone but you can do something to overcome your fear of cold calling.

Increase Your Callback Rate by Leaving Better Voicemail Messages

“Please leave a message...”

As sales professionals, we leave a lot of voicemails in our pursuit to drive revenue and build client relationships. When leaving voicemails for prospects or clients, you can dramatically increase your call back rate by adjusting your message to your client’s perspective instead of yours.

One of the most common mistakes salespeople make when leaving messages for prospects is talking too much about themselves and their company.

Using a Valid Business Reason (VBR) is an effective way to craft a compelling reason for your client or prospect to call you back. The person you are calling is as busy as you are, so messages longer than 20 seconds will start to decrease your chance of a call back right off the bat. Being concise is key. Selecting what information to include in that brief message is what a VBR will help you accomplish.

Criteria for a good VBR:

1. Impacts what your recipient wants to accomplish
2. Sets the call as a high priority

3. States “what’s in it for me” to the recipient
4. Is clear, concise, and complete

An additional suggestion is to start the message with your name, company name, and phone number. The tendency of the recipient is to start writing down your information before they even know what you want. If you back that up with a solid VBR, and repeat your name and number at the end, you are much more likely to get a call back.

Warm Up to Cold Calling

Cold calling and call reluctance are very real issues for many sales organizations. Here are three tips for overcoming your fear of cold calling.

1. Target properly

Before picking up the phone, it is vital to understand what your ideal customer profile looks like. Many salespeople make the mistake of starting too high or too low within an organization. Also, many salespeople approach companies that just aren’t a “fit” for the products or services they’re trying to sell. Know whom you’re going after and why they are a fit. Has your company had success in a particular industry? Who are truly the key decision makers as it relates to your product or service? Do you understand how purchases are made within the target company? Research. Research. Research.

2. Have a valid business reason

Once you’ve identified whom you are going to call, you better have a clear understanding of what is in it for them. Why should they take time out of their busy schedule to speak with you? What is the real business need you can address? What value do you offer? Know what you are going to say and clearly articulate why this person should spend their time with you.

3. Schedule a time

If you catch your prospects at their desk, don’t assume they have all the time in the world to talk to you right that second. Instead, request to set up a 30-minute conversation at a later date to ensure that when you do finally have a conversation, all attention is focused on you.

Final words: If you’re still anxious about picking up the phone, just think about the process of cold calling one step at a time. At the end of the day, it’s a numbers game. If you target properly, have a valid business reason for making the call, and respect the time of your prospects - you’re much more likely to experience success.

These tips reference the principles learned in Miller Heiman's Strategic Selling® program. You may visit www.millerheiman.com and subscribe to receive Sales Performance Tips each month via email. You may also call 877-678-0391 to speak with an expert.

About Miller Heiman

Miller Heiman has been a thought leader and innovator in the sales arena for almost thirty years, helping clients worldwide win high-value complex deals, grow key accounts and build winning sales organizations.

The company is headquartered in Reno, Nevada and has offices around the world. More information can be obtained by visiting the company's website at: www.millerheiman.com.