



# SMART CALLING REPORT

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## The Greatest Closing Question Ever

By Peter R. Adam

A few years ago I was selling medical software to manage cases in vascular labs. I was working on a closing a \$2-\$3 million deal - the largest deal the company had ever seen – and I was heavy in discussions with the client. The bosses back home had made it clear this deal needed to close and soon.

I'd set up a lunch meeting with the chief of vascular surgery and the office manager to work on sealing the deal. We'd had a large number of phone calls and numerous demonstrations of our software in the previous 6 months. I had spent the morning with the entire vascular unit reviewing processes, features and functions, and concerns from the vascular team.

After some friendly chit-chat, we were leading up to the defining moment that I had been preparing to execute. They fired multiple questions at me as we munched on our sandwiches. In between bites, I returned their volley of objections with nearly the skill of Serena Williams.

The conversation began to slow. So I leaned in, looked at both of them and asked the greatest closing question ever: **"Do I have your endorsement to move forward with the project?"**

Simple and straightforward.

The office manager, who had been my main point of contact up to this point, looked down and away. Even though she had directed many of our conversations and interactions in the past six months, her body language told me the decision was solely in the

hands of the chief surgeon.

I looked at him and began contemplating my rebuttals if he said, "No."

What would it take?

What would you need to see from us?

What is your primary concern?

What is holding you back from giving your go ahead?

The chief surgeon sat there quietly for what seemed like five minutes, but was probably closer to 45 seconds. He was deep in thought, and as the tension built, the more intently I looked at him and studied his face. But, I did not break the silence. Tension in sales can be a powerful tool, and I wanted it to build as he contemplated my favorite closing line.

**"Do I have your endorsement?"** can be a very effective commitment-receiving and closing question for these reasons:

In complex sales, there is typically more than one influencer or key stakeholder. So asking "Can we get this done this month?" may be a difficult question to answer for your prospect, even if your prospect likes you and your product/service - because that person probably doesn't make the final decision or final call.

**"Do I have your endorsement?"** is geared toward the individual's opinion, which in this case is really what I wanted to uncover and a lot safer for them to answer. If the prospect says no or gives a noncommittal answer, I ask, "Why, what's holding you back?" or "What would it take to get your en-

dorsement?" Once they answer the question and their concern is on the table, I can work on overcoming the objection.

My question does not have a deadline or a timeframe. I'm not trying to hot box an individual into a corner (or month/quarter), which no one I've met likes or appreciates. Once I get the "Yes, you have my endorsement" (or a "Yes, I like you, your company and your product"), then I have permission to advance to the **"When, how, and who else is involved?"** questions.

Most professional salespeople get it out of order. They ask, "When will you order?" and then try to determine if the buyer is sold on them, their company, and their solution. In my experience once buyers verbally say, "Yes, you have my endorsement," they rarely go back on their word. They may not own the final decision authority, but you know they are definitely going to be selling internally on your behalf.

Back to the chief surgeon. After what seemed like an eternity the Chief Surgeon looked at me and said, "Yes, you have my endorsement." Afterward he turned to the office manager and gave a smile that seemed more like a smirk. It took until nearly 4 weeks later to receive the final purchase order; it was worth the wait. But, I knew when I jumped on the plane to go home that I had a very solid commitment and it was only a matter of time before the purchase order was in hand.

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## Sales Observations

Lots of stuff in my "Observations" file for you this month so I had to extend this to the next page!

**Just wondering... are any companies** recruiting any of the college kids who got so upset with the election that they can't function any more and need to go hide in a "safe zone"? I'm guessing they wouldn't fare too well in sales. There are no safe zones in the real world—IF you want to be more than ordinary. In fact we need to go out and put ourselves in harm's way every day. That's how we excel and find opportunities that are not handed to us. I'm assuming you are that type of person. Congrats fellow sales pro. Not everyone can do what we do, and even fewer can do it at the highest levels. By reading this and investing in yourself you are exhibiting that desire, and I'm proud to be with you.

**At a recent training with a client** we discussed the response at the beginning of a prospecting call that you will sometimes hear, regardless of how well you structured your Smart Call opening: "Not interested." Or, "We're all set." These are Reflex Resistant Responses. It's a reflex, not an objection. And these often cause sales reps to go into complete shutdown mode. Why, is beyond me. After all, if you know you will hear it, why not have your re-

sponse all teed up.

And here it is.

**"Not a problem."**

Or, **"That's OK."**

Or, **"I understand."**

Or, **"I hear that sometimes."**

And then ask a question.

**"So what are you using for...?"**

That's right. You're ignoring the no just like a beach vendor in Mexico who hears it a thousand times a day. And then just continues with the conversation.

By getting them talking you are getting their mind off their feeble attempt at resistance, and getting them thinking about answering your question. Try it!

regardless of whether you are very familiar with it, ask yourself this question:

**"How WELL am I doing that?"**

Then determine how short you are of ideal, and then **DO** something about it.

**I used to be big time into gardening**, before I really got into golf about 25 years ago. When I had a custom home built I spent countless hours "gardening," putting in trees, bushes, flowers. It was a magnificent yard. Then the excitement eventually wore off ... probably because I got tired of also weeding. Anyway, I know that when we put a shovel into the earth, the best soil is typically not right on the surface. It's when we dig a bit. Just like questioning, and the resulting information. The first answer you hear to a question is not the best information. It lies beneath the surface. Too often sales reps get an answer, and then jump in with what they want to present. Wait. Plant the shovel and unearth more details. Here's a simple follow up after an answer:

**"Tell me more about that."**

There. Easy, right? Just practice that over the next week and you might be surprised how much more you'll learn on your calls.

**Here's a phrase and a belief that** holds people back from achieving amazing things: "I already know that." Or, "Yeah, I've heard that before." Or, "I've been through that training."

Sure, someone might **know** something, or have heard it before, but if they are not doing it, the knowledge is worthless.

I've heard that drinking beer will cause me to have excess weight around my middle. In fact, I **know** that when I drink too much beer too often I carry excess weight, despite working out and eating very healthy. But there are spans of time where I do drink too much beer, and therefore, carry too much middle weight. Sure, I know the information. I just don't always implement it. And the results—or lack thereof—show.

It's not what you know. It's what you **DO** with what you know.

Here's a suggestion for you if you really want to work on YOU, and make 2017 your best year ever. With every piece of education you come across,

**My lease is up on my car in a** couple of months. I haven't given a lot of thought to what I'm going to do, other than probably go with a different make. I'm not a car guy at all, other than I like to have a newer one, a nice one, and something that I don't have to worry about maintenance on. (I'm the least handy male you will ever know.) And I prefer to lease, resigning myself to the fact I'll always have a car payment, regardless of the logical financial arguments people have

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against leasing.

My current car (and previous one) is an Infiniti. I got the first one because a buddy owned the dealership in Omaha. That was seven years ago. He sold it, I moved, and I'm thinking I'll look at something else.

So my sales rep from the dealership here in Arizona called me a couple of weeks ago, giving me a heads up that the lease will expire in February (smart move on his part) and mentioned they have some nice promotions that could get me out of the lease early, give a few other incentives, and of course a good price on a new one. I told him I was likely just going to go with another make, although I hadn't given it a lot of thought yet. His reply? "I understand." (Perhaps he has read my stuff.) Then he continued with a brilliant question you can use:

#### **"Would you be open to at least looking at some options?"?**

Well of course! There is no risk there. And who knows? So now, as I write this, I am in the process of looking through a variety of options. And what happens as a buyer when we look at options? We go through a thought process where we put ourselves in the position of possibly owning and using those options. Which is a prerequisite for buying something.

Think about how you can use that great question!

Make this your best month ever!

*Art*

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# **Maybe You are Just Boring**

By Tibor Shanto

I get to listen to a lot of phone calls made by a whole lot of B2B sales people. Some are selling bleeding edge services to prospects with bleeding edge expectations, others are selling traditional products that are as exciting as watching paint dry, or listening to call recordings. There are always things we can change and improve from a skill and techniques standpoint, in fact, I consider a week less productive from a sales development success perspective when I have not learned some new thing to improve my prospecting.

But the one thing no one can teach you is a zest for what you are doing. A zeal for success, not just your own, but that of your prospect.

Add to that all the silly and self-limiting things sales people do on the phone that throttle their message, especially when they want to come across cute, overly courteous (to the point where it extinguishes any chance you had to begin with), non-threatening, and all the self-imposed barriers to prospecting and sales success.

But it is the zest and zeal that are lacking in most calls, and the result is nothing short of boring. The main reason clients hang up is they don't want to hit their head on the desk as they fall asleep listening to the drivel on the other end of the line.

#### **Emotions are Contagious**

Our state, our intent, our feelings all are contagious, and are all in play when making a prospecting call, much more so than in other forms of prospecting. Which when done well, telephone prospecting is STILL the most effective means of engaging with a prospect other than a direct introduction.

The ones who tell you telephone prospecting is not effective (for them), are the ones who can't do it. They are likely the ones whose emotions

and mixed bag of feelings--and by extension everything they are projecting on the phone--cause them to fail.

And subsequently they draw the second most obvious conclusion:

"Hey this is not working for me."

What's the MOST obvious one? That they don't know what they are doing.

It's not all bad or sad. There are things you can fix, practice and change. You can think about leading with some solid and relevant outcomes for prospects based on past experience. You can teach sales people to focus on clients' objectives, not features, and what your company does. It does not take much to help sellers to understand that it is all about the **end**, not the means, which erroneously most sales people lead with on the phone.

The one thing that sellers have to change on their own is to stop sounding boring (in fact stop **being** boring). All the steps many take to make themselves more appealing, less threatening, plainly said, more beige, just makes them boring as, well you know what. You have to pity the poor prospect who answers the phone, only to be greeted by a series of inconsequential words that sound the same as the last 5,000 or so calls, I mean is there a faster cure to insomnia and no-sale?

So next time, ask yourself and be honest, is it the telephone that does not work for prospecting, or are **you** just boring on the phone?



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*execution of their process. You can reach Tibor at (416) 822-7781, or visit [www.SellBetter.ca](http://www.SellBetter.ca))*



# How To REALLY Set Yourself Apart and Build Value-Based Relationships

Do you want a fast, simple, cost effective and easy way to stay in touch, build value and give yourself an edge with your customers and prospects?

Sound impossible? Not in the least.

One of the most effective ways to differentiate you and give yourself a competitive edge is a simple process that I call the VAA: Valued Added Article. It's a powerful strategy that works!

## **What is the VAA?**

On a purely literal level, a 'value added article' is just that: an article, a special report, a white paper, a news clipping from a magazine, a website address, a journal..virtually anything that you provide to your prospect or client so they might derive benefit, pleasure, enjoyment, knowledge, interest, and ultimately value.

On a deeper, more subtle level, a VAA is the little something extra that you add to the relationship that shows you were thinking of your prospect or client. It's something that goes above and beyond the norm in terms of selling. It's something that positions you as unique and distinctive. It's something that is seen as a positive and often personable gesture that marks your character. It's something that helps get you remembered.

## **The 2 Types of VAA**

The first type of VAA is business related. A business VAA is an article, journal, report etc. that relates to a product, a service, the industry or the marketplace that may be applicable to the client.

It might be something related specifically to your product or service such as a white paper but this approach has a somewhat self serving aspect to it. A more effective approach is to provide a third party or independent source of information

that educates your client. This is seen as an extra bonus and something that the average run of the mill sales rep does not provide.

The second type of VAA is the personal VAA and there are two kinds. The first kind of personal VAA is something that reflects or relates to a hobby, a passion or an interest your client might have. For instance, suppose you learn that your Canadian client is a NASCAR fanatic. One day you see an article on a NASCAR event coming to Montreal. Clip it and send it off. Or suppose you discover your prospect is sending her daughter off to Notre Dame to earn a history degree. You search for an article on the web about the history faculty at ND and pass it on to your client.

Here's the real point: it shows that you listened and that you remembered. It shows you took the time. It shows the client that there is more to the relationship than just a set of transactions.

The other kind of personal VAA is something that reflects a hobby, passion or an interest that you might have and would like to share with the client. Suppose you're an avid BBQer. You might send your client a recipe of your favourite rub or an article on "10 Things Every Person Should Know About Smoking Ribs." It's a lighthearted gesture. It reveals a little about you and advances the relationship a step or two.

Either way, you are doing something that isn't typically done. And that usually gets remembered. It may not guarantee you a sale but it guarantees you an edge.

## **How to Build a VAA Library**

The trick to making a VAA strategy work for you is to have a library of articles ready and available at your fingertips. From a business perspective, one way to do that is to

scan industry trade journals, magazines, e-newsletters, web sites and the like. Look for and keep copies of articles or sites that relate to your market or business.

In effect, you become a clipping service for your client. Remember that most of your clients probably get the same magazines but most do NOT have the time to read the material. By doing so, you save them time and effort. You keep them apprised of events, ideas, trends and the like. At some level, the client realizes the value you create. (And as an added bonus your scanning keeps YOU on top of things in the industry. At some point, you become the "resident expert" and are seen as such. Nice edge!)

Relative to your passions and interests, keep a stack of your favorite recipes or articles or whatever handy so that you can use them if and when appropriate. Of course, your clients' interests or hobbies will vary from individual to individual. This means customizing your VAA. For example, if you hear something that might be of value to your client, note it, and the next time you read a newspaper or visit a bookstore or surf the web keep it in mind. You might stumble on something relevant and meaningful. Use it.

## **The Reactive Approach**

The reactive approach occurs when you see something that might be of value to the client and you send it along with a little note. Use phrases like "**Kathy, I thought of you when I read this article...**" Or, "**Janice, I remembered you said your daughter was going off to Notre Dame this semester and I thought I would pass along this link about freshmen at Notre Dame.**"

These are flattering statements that appeal to virtually anybody and everybody. This 'out of the blue' approach surprises and delights pros-

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pects and customers alike.

### The Proactive Approach

The proactive approach is a little more calculated. There are 3 steps to implementing a proactive VAA strategy.

#### 1. Make a commitment to a VAA.

When an opportunity arises (for example, the client says something that goes 'click' in your mind and you think of a VAA) go out of your way to make a commitment. Be bold and say something like,

**"Don, by the way, I saw an article regarding...that I'd like to send on to you."**

**"Sarah, that reminds me, I have a website address that I'll send to you that talks about..."**

**"Leah, let me send you a special report I just read..."**

What's important to remember here is that most of your clients have heard promises like this before, but then reps fails to send or transmit the article.

Now here's the sad thing, but what actually makes the proactive approach so effective: the client didn't really **expect** it to happen so he or she is not overly disappointed when it doesn't occur. I don't mean to be cynical but the fact of the matter is people break small promises and commitments every day in every walk of life. It is not that they are bad people it just that their follow up is weak.

Having said that, when someone actually GETS the article, the link or whatever, he or she is bound to be surprised and delighted. They think, "Oh, he remembered." At some level, your stock or equity with that client goes up a notch. At a conscious or subconscious level it registers that you kept your word! This resonates strongly with your clients. It suggests you will keep your word in all aspects of business.

#### 2. Send the VAA within 2 days.

Of course, the next step in making the proactive approach work is to keep your word and send the

document within two days. Not a week or two later. Attach a Post-It note to the article if you send it by mail. Write a note in the margin if you fax it. Write a few words if you are e-mailing it. Don't belabor the point. Simply state, "**Leah, here's that special report I promised you.**" Let the VAA speak for itself.

**3. Leverage the VAA.** Don't be afraid to leverage your VAA. Use it to your advantage. That's the whole point. When you make a follow up call, don't hesitate to reference the VAA. For instance,

**"Ken, I just wanted to give you a quick follow up call regarding that Cajun BBQ rub recipe I sent you. I don't know if you've had a chance to whip it up and try it but I thought I'd check and see."**

Of course, this statement can simply be a pre-text to a business related matter but when you remind the client that you did a little 'extra' something powerful happens. It creates reciprocity. Reciprocity is the need for your client to do a favor or kind gesture in return for your VAA. This usually translates into giving you a little extra time on a call, listen a little more closely, provide you with better information, give more candid remarks etc. At this stage, you've got the edge you were seeking.

### Summary

By no stretch of the imagination does a VAA guarantee you a sale but it does contribute to the overall value that clients see in you and your company. This is particularly true if you sell 'like' products and services. Sometimes the little extras are all the differentiation you need. Start your VAA today.



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## Defining What Sets You Apart

More than a few readers have emailed recently saying they're having a problem coming up with their differential advantage.

Try this, fill in the blanks:

"What sets us apart is \_\_\_\_\_."

"What we do differently is \_\_\_\_\_."

I know that's simple, but it doesn't need to be difficult. Then you can use it in your opening statements or voice mails. For example,

**"Jane, I'm Pat Sellar with Info Industries. We specialize in helping companies protect their customer information from theft or viral attack, and what sets us apart is..."**

**"Allison, I'm A.J. Scott with Murano Consulting. We have worked with a number of search firms, helping their recruiters cut down on the number of days it takes to fill their positions. I know you might get a lot of calls like this, but what we do differently is..."**



### Forget About "Making Saving Them Money."

Look at those words again. Don't use them verbatim. Even bad salespeople say this in attempts to generate interest. I'm not implying this isn't a strong buying motivator—it's the wording that is ineffective. Instead, get information about them first from screeners, and then customize your opening to appeal to them personally.

**"I understand you're now in the process of remodeling your order entry department. Depending on your space limitations, we might have some ways to help you keep your costs down during the design and installation stage of your office furnishings. If I caught you at a good time, I'd like to discuss your plans in the area of..."**

# How to Create an Impactful Value Prop

By Jill Konrath

So how does your value proposition look? Can you describe what you do in terms of tangible business results? Do you have documented success stories?

Or do you need to do some work to enhance your value proposition? If it's not strong enough yet, don't despair. Most people and companies have a much stronger value proposition than they realize.

Here are three ways you can unlock the impact your product or service has on your customers' business objectives:

## **1. Define Your Tangible Value**

Tangible value is directly related to your offering and highly measurable. It's typically expressed in numbers or percentages. Examples might be:

- ✓ Reduce cycle time from 3 days to one
- ✓ Cut labor costs by 25%
- ✓ Save \$100,000 in energy costs
- ✓ Increase market share 5%
- ✓ Improving productivity 17%

Typically tangible value gains also have related intangible value gains that aren't as obvious, but help strengthen an already strong value proposition. For example, improving productivity means fewer workers. With a smaller workforce, the company saves a significant amount in the benefits area. Less money is spent in recruiting and hiring. These savings can also be quantified as part of your value proposition.

A well-designed web site may cut the need for customer service staff. A more efficient JIT ordering process decreases the amount of warehouse space and its associated costs. A digi-

tal asset management system's ability to repurpose data reduces advertising expenditures. Always try to quantify the indirect values as well as the direct ones.

## **2. Convert Intangible Value into Tangible Value**

Sometimes the value of your offering is not quite so measurable – such as lowered risk, increased teamwork, improved marketplace image, or better morale. Intangible value doesn't sell well in today's economy. Most decision makers consider it a nice added benefit, but won't spend money for a solution that only provides soft value.

To increase your sales success, take these intangibles and make them tangible. Find ways to quantify their value to customers.

## **3. Outline Opportunity Costs**

Opportunity Costs can also strengthen your value proposition. An opportunity cost is something your customer can't do now because of their current methods of operation. For example, it's what they could be doing with the \$500,000 savings they'd get from using your product. Or it's the business strategy and associated profits they can't aggressively pursue because of the internal conflicts that delay decisions.

For more information about how to strengthen your value proposition, download the value proposition kit: <http://www.jillkonrath.com/value-proposition-kit/>



*Jill Konrath, author of *SNAP Selling*, *Selling to Big Companies*, and her newest book, *Agile Selling*, helps sellers land bigger clients*

*and speed up their sales cycle. To get her free Prospecting Tool Kit, visit [www.jillkonrath.com/sales-resources.](http://www.jillkonrath.com/sales-resources/)*

## **Should You Send a Letter Before a Prospecting Call, Or Just Make the Call?**

Hi Art,

I'm setting appointments for an IT Support company here in Australia and have a question. Could you please share your thoughts? My Business Development Manager employed two telemarketers to gather information, then send out letters to prospects as a way of 'warming' the prospect prior to my call. Normally I'd gather the information via the receptionist then proceed on to the decision maker. If there's a fit then I'd ask for the appointment.

What are your thoughts about sending out a letter before calling for the appointment?

Kindest regards,

Danny Hampel, IXP3

## **Art's Reply**

Danny,

My stance is that letters are OK, and can take the chill off of a prospecting call. You can not, however assume too much, such as that they actually got it, or read it. And please, please, do not start the call with, "I sent you a letter, didja get it?" And in the letter, I suggest using a variation of the opening statement where you are not telling the entire story, but rather just piquing curiosity. Then in your opening, you can use your value proposition, and preface it with "As I mentioned in a recent letter to you..."

But, I like your approach better. The real benefit is that YOU are the one gathering the info, so you are collecting intelligence first hand. You might even speak with an influencer or user of the product or service. And then you can use that information immediately in creating a great opening, voice mail message, and questions.

Art



# Two Messaging Technique for Prospecting Calls

By Mike Weinberg

The single hardest part of telephone prospecting is blocking out the time and actually picking up the phone to dial.

We are ALL very good at finding excuses (and distractions) to avoid starting a call block. But once our butt's are in the chair and we start cranking out calls, the next hardest part is when our prospect answers the phone.

I know, it's often a shock when they do pick up because my clients' salespeople get voicemail about 77% of the time. That's a big number and we'll dedicate an entire article on how to effectively use voicemail in a future article.

## I head up...

After listening to too many sales reps stumble, bumble and get outmatched by executive prospects very early in the call, I decided it was time to upgrade the first few words out of their mouths. When prospecting, as Jeb Blount loves to remind us, we are interrupting the prospect. They aren't expecting our call and, in most cases, aren't thrilled to discover it's a sales call. To both raise the prospect's perception of the caller and to help reduce their reflex anti-sales reaction, it's helpful if we say this very simple, yet very powerful, little line when introducing ourselves: "I head up..."

**"Hi Joe, It's Mike Weinberg from Acme Consulting; I head up \_\_\_\_\_."**

There are two helpful benefits from using "I head up." The first is that it makes us feel good. Has a nice ring to it, wouldn't you agree? Kinda makes you feel important and that you'd be worth the prospect hearing you out, doesn't it? I certainly like the way it feels and many sales reps agree. The other benefit is that it sets us apart (temporarily) in the prospect's mind. The immediate reaction is that someone of importance is calling. And you must admit, that's a very different re-

action than the buyer might have when immediately concluding that some sales rep is interrupting their busy day.

Try "I head up." You'll like it. In almost every situation, we've been able to find a way for a salesperson to deploy that phrase.

**"I head up our agency business."**

**"I head up sales in the western US."**

**"I head up distributor relationships."**

**"I head up the XYZ client solutions team."**

**"I head up \_\_\_\_\_."**

## Let me take a minute...

Once we introduce ourselves, we must acknowledge that we're interrupting and get some type of green light from the prospect to proceed. For obvious reasons, I'm not a fan of the all-too-typical, "Do you have a minute?" or "Is now a good time?" I don't like those bridges into the call for two simple reasons. First, they're overused – just like "I'm reaching out" is overused to the point of nausea. If everyone else is saying it then we don't want to. And the second reason I'm not a fan of those questions is because I don't like the answers they often produce. The truth is that even if the prospect does have a minute or it is a good time (unlikely), why would they tell you that? Asking if it's a good time or if they have a minute makes it way too easy for the prospect to simply say, "Honestly, no."

My coaching is to try this very simple phrase after your introduction (the "I head up" line): "**Let me take a minute.**"

I suggest saying this in the most calm, confident, executive tone. You're an important person (who heads up something) calling another important person. You know you bring value to people and companies just like this

prospect so you go into the call believing it, and assuming that, of course, this person will grant you a minute. They'd be foolish not to :). Instead of asking for permission, we simply state that we're going to take a minute.

**"Joe, Mike Weinberg with ACME Consulting. I head up \_\_\_\_\_. Let me take a minute..."**

If it truly is a horrendous time, as in the prospect is running late for a meeting with the CEO or finishing up a package for the FedEx driver who's waiting in the lobby, the prospect will tell you that. And in those cases, let them go! Don't even think about launching into your mini-story. When that happens, just say,

**"I'll give you a shout on Thursday morning"** and let them go.

Trust me. When you do that, you not only score a respect point, you've also set up your call back. When you call back on Thursday the call doesn't even feel as cold. You are more confident because you've already spoken with that person once and your opening is even easier:

**"Joe, Mike Weinberg getting back with you. I caught you scrambling to get that FedEx out the door the other day. Let me take that one minute now."**

I promise you that when your mindset is right, your voice tone is good, and you start off the prospecting call with simple, effective phrases like suggested above, you will be more confident and more effective.



(Mike Weinberg, "The New Sales Coach," is author of "New Sales Simplified." Read his blog and contact him at [NewSalesCoach.com](http://NewSalesCoach.com))



## Don't Think Out Loud

When you're searching for what to say, don't think aloud. Be sure your comments add to the conversation. Otherwise you might utter some random thoughts you could regret later.

## Questions That Get Results

The way you word your questions has a huge impact on the quality and quantity of information you get in return. Here are some good ways to begin questions.

**"Please describe..."**

**"Please explain..."**

**"Compare for me how you..."**

**"To what extent..."**

**"In what way do you...?"**

**"Give me an idea of how..."**

**"What happens when...?"**

**"What do you do when...?"**

**"Help me understand the..."**

## Record the Time In Your Notes

If your computer doesn't do it automatically, always write down the time you spoke with a prospect or customer. This will help you for future calls, giving you an indication of when they are available. Better yet, ask the person, **"Is this normally the best time to reach you?"**

## Use Multiple Forms of Messaging

Here's something sales reps often miss: you are not your customer. Meaning that your prospects and customers do not think the same as you. They do not know the same things as you about your product or service. And they probably have a different preferred mode of communication than you.

So, when approaching someone for the first time, let's appeal to them with multiple forms of messaging. For example (your order might vary),

- ✓ a follow on Twitter, along with retweets
- ✓ liking an update of theirs on LinkedIn
- ✓ a LinkedIn connection request, along with some form of value for them
- ✓ an email with some hint of value
- ✓ an Inmail with some form of value
- ✓ an initial phone (Smart) call
- ✓ a follow up call
- ✓ a hand written note
- ✓ an email with a video or audio message from you, with value
- ✓ a fax

How many of these do you employ regularly. There is no excuse for someone saying, "They are hard to get ahold of. I left two messages and they didn't call me back."

## Are You Sitting Down for This?

We've often suggested that you stand when you are speaking on a call, since it can help you be more animated, as if you were speaking with someone face to face. Here's an interesting idea a reader suggested: SIT down when you are listening. She said that this allows her to be more relaxed and focused on what the prospect/customer is saying, and less likely to jump in with what she wants to say.

## Go To Job Posting Sites to Get Great Sales Intel

When doing your Smart Calling research, if appropriate, go to the job posting sites glassdoor.com and indeed.com.

**1. Look at the jobs and descriptions** they have posted, which can give you some insights based on what you sell. For example, staffing up for a big project could be an opportunity.

**2. Look at the reviews** of the company by previous employees. Both the good and bad reviews might give you some great intel.

**3. You can search for prospects using key words** for your business. For example, typing in "cold calling" gives us a list of job postings from companies that do prospecting by phone. Further, using the previous point, we often find out that they don't do adequate training for the results they expect.

## If This Newsletter is Not Yours, Here's How To Get Your Own Copy Each Month, and MORE!

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# SMART CALLING REPORT

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Volume 33 Number 10

## Special Report: How to Get New Business From Your Best, and Easiest Sources

Want new business? Need new business?

Dumb questions, I know. Kudos to the rare organization that has all it can handle (or claims they do), but for most everyone else, we need new customers and sales to grow. Or to just stay even by replacing the customers we lose.

As for getting that new business, I've always been amused by the arguments of the "cold calling is dead crowd" and those who jump on the bandwagon of the newest shiny, trendy sales enablement object or "social selling" or "Sales 3.0" system. They tend to ignore what has worked since the beginning of commerce itself: common sense, understanding of basic human behavior, a sound sales and messaging process, a plan, and the desire and commitment to execute it.

You don't need to go outside of your computer (or file cabinet, if you still have one) to get new business.

The potential business that resides within the existing database of most organizations, and sales reps, is staggering. There are dollars just waiting to be skimmed from opportunities where the foundations and structures are already in place. In the real estate world they'd be known as "fixer uppers."

Let's look at where you can meet your quota for new business, why it's wise to drill into this untapped oil well, and the wrong and right ways to approach them.

### **Infrequent Customers**

These are the companies and individuals buying just a time or two per year, or whatever your company deems your "lowest level" customers by volume.

Keep in mind your lower-tier categorization of them is not a reflection of their **potential**, just their *history* with you. Read that again and let it sink in. Many of these could be spending huge amounts with your competitors. Or with you.

Why are they buying just infrequently? Why are they not buying more of what you sell? Why are they not buying **everything** you sell? Look in the mirror. It's not *their* responsibility to ask you about how else you can help them. They likely won't take the time to explore the layers of your product or service offerings to discover other things they can buy from you. That's a salesperson's job, and when they don't do it, buyers go elsewhere. Just like water flows downhill, money flows to ease of buying, and perceived value.

To simplify this point, you and I do the same thing with our personal and business purchases. We all do, or have done business with a variety of companies that could have provided us with more, and more regularly—even becoming loyal die-hard fans—if they took the initiative to ask questions, make recommendations, let us know they wanted our business, and followed up.

Just over the past year I've done business with contractors for plumbing, air conditioning, my sprinkler system, landscaping, outdoor lighting, electrical work, interior and exterior painting, major general outdoor contractor work, window cleaning, housekeeping, and two handy-men jobs. (If you made the conclusion I'm not very handy, that's an understatement.) I know as a fact that many of these people and organizations offer services other than what I used them for, that I bought elsewhere. But because they didn't make an attempt to find out about what else they could help me with—and

subsequently stay in touch with me—I didn't contact them. I usually go with who is convenient, referred, or who comes to mind as "the guy that I use for my \_\_\_\_."

Two strategies here for with this group. First, don't let customers become infrequent unless they buy from you in just an isolated instance. But even those actually aren't that common if you think about it. I'm having a difficult time thinking of an example where someone would buy from an organization but never ever have the need to do so again. I bought a specialty, high-end digital meat thermometer (a Themapen...every serious cook needs one) years ago. I didn't buy from them again until I wanted to give a couple as gifts. I thought that's all they sold since they didn't stay in touch in any way. I realized when I dug into their site that they sell all kinds of cool specialty cooking gadgets that I buy often, and am a real sucker for. The point here is, a first purchase from you is your opportunity to begin a long-term relationship so that they become a frequent, great customers. But **YOU** have to get in motion after the initial purchase.

Ok, back to the ones you have now who ARE infrequent for whatever reason. What you do not want to do is call and say, "Yeah, just checking in with you. You bought a gazmoda from us last year and just wanted to see if there's anything else you need." That's lazy, and ineffective. The answer to that is likely, "You're with who?" Or, "We're all set."

These need to be treated like a typical Smart Call. Do your research, determine what possible value you can hint at to engage them in discussion,

*(continued on page 5)*

# Sales Observations

**In researching for any new** inside sales and prospecting tips I might not be familiar with, I saw a suggestion that is just plain bad. It said, "...as often as appropriate, refer to someone else in your pitch as being involved, even if it's just your boss—'Hi I'm Jill with Company X, my supervisor is asking us to . . .' Even referring to your boss creates a small sense of relationship, because the prospect mentally relates it to their own relationship with their boss."

No. Just no. Why in the world would they care what your boss asked you to do? All they care about is **them**, and they are wondering what you can do for them. As for the point about relating to their relationship with their boss... well, what if they don't like their boss? What if they don't have a boss, like me, and other entrepreneur/decision makers?

**OK, I found a lot more.** I actually could do an entire newsletter—or a book—about the bad sales advice out there. Here's one from an article called "5 Tips for Inside Sales Reps When on the Phone with New Prospects." One of the tips is to "Start Off Strong" with your greeting, icebreaker, and then purpose. Here is their suggestion for purpose: "*The purpose of my call is to get an understanding of how you are currently managing your network capabilities. After speaking with a number of people in your position, I understand they are continu-*

*ing to evolve in your industry."*

That was it. No mention of, say, a possible benefit or value. Just that you want to get an understanding. Seriously. To which I would justifiably reply, "Why should I answer your question?"

So what would salvage this? **"We've been working with a number of people in your position, helping them to expand their network capabilities, in some cases as much as 30%, while also making them more secure. I'd like to ask a few questions about what you are experiencing to see if you'd like to take a look at a recent whitepaper we did on this."**

**At a client training session** this month with newer salespeople, I was reminded of how so many reps fall into the feature-dumping trap. They have product knowledge drilled into their head, but not product *application* knowledge, meaning, "What does that mean to the buyer?"

Here's an easy technique to implement: When you are in your Recommendation phase of the call, force yourself to say, **"...and what this means to you..."** when talking about your products/services.

**Here's a social media technique** that I've recommended, and now am possibly the recipient of: Follow targeted prospects on social media so your name becomes familiar with them, and perhaps they will also then view you favorably. For example, I have noticed that a couple organizations are making more than a casual effort to follow me on Twitter, and like and retweet me. The list includes the CEO of one tech company, various VP's, sales reps, and others. It has made me curious, and I certainly would be more inclined to take a call from them. However, no one has reached out yet. Maybe they just like my material.

**A prospect called me. She** identified herself as a corporate VP of a large organization. She spoke very matter-of-factly and sounded intense and serious. She very quickly said, "We're looking for inside sales training. Why should I use you?"

I paused, then replied,

**"I don't know. Let's talk about what you're looking for."**

She spent about the next twenty minutes talking. Giving me very good information, which I then used to tell her why I'd be the best choice. She agreed. Of course she did—I pretty much repeated what she had just told me. How could she argue with that?

The key is in being prepared for that question. Sometimes reps stumble and bumble their way through a rambling laundry list of features that might be of no value or interest to the listener. And in fact, an unprepared answer to that question often provides the prospect with something to object to. Instead, disarm them, and get them talking.

This is a great roleplay activity. Practice placing a call with a partner. Have them throw the question at you very quickly: "So why should I buy from you?" Be prepared to respond, and then go into questions.

Make this your best month ever!

*Art*

Art Sobczak is President of Business By Phone, and editor/publisher of SCR, and author of several books and audio training programs.

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## Don't Sabotage Your Prospecting

By Tibor Shanto

We have all heard the expression that people make decisions based on emotion, then spend time rationalizing the decision. This interplay between our primal instinct and our later-developed intellect impacts sales success in other key ways. Our beliefs on a primal level have greater influence than we often realize, and despite our intellect and education, our beliefs will either limit us, or empower us beyond what many give them credit for.

Take telephone prospecting, certainly a real and often emotional thing for all involved. There are as many opinions out there about cold calling as there are minutes in a day. Yet whether it works, or not isn't reliant on the techniques we use and the times we live in. It instead comes down to your beliefs and the actions those beliefs lead to, or more typically, actions they prevent. And just like actions having consequences, in sales, *lack of action* has greater consequences.

This leads to the question of which beliefs are interfering with your sales success, and can be recalibrated to change your beliefs, thoughts and actions.

### Core Beliefs

One of my core beliefs, supported by real world experience, and empirical data, is that my customers benefit in very specific ways when they follow my programs. They regularly achieve objectives they set out to accomplish, and realize direct impact on their business. I am a conduit to best practices, and as a result, can help prospects even before they commit to my programs. This allows me to pick up the phone, and call someone I have not met, but have the confidence that I can help.

Now if you don't have that core belief, the belief that you can help your clients, you are going to have difficulty prospecting, which equals difficulty selling. Even though I am a professional interrupter, realizing that I am disrupting the prospects day, I both know and believe that the ultimate positive impact I will have on their sales team will greatly outweigh the interruption.

What's interesting is why people lack the belief that they can help their pros

pects. Some tell me they sell a commodity, and as a result it is all down to price. I get it. It is not easy, but you and I both know that there are people out there prospecting in your hen house and winning the business without dropping their price or pants.

What they have going for them is focusing on the **outcomes** they deliver, not how they deliver them.

This allows you to concentrate the message, avoid talking about yourself, and quickly have the prospect focus on the issue, not the product. The prospectors we turn out never talk about products, who their company is, or any of that intellectually-rooted messaging, it is all about outcomes.

Start by going back and having straight conversations with your clients. Ask them why they continue to deal with you, and then listen--but not selectively. What you'll find is that even if it is a commodity, price is not in the top three reasons, usually not in the top five. Seems to me those three things that keep them with you that are not price should be the areas you lead a cold call with, even before talking about your company. Frankly dear, no one cares that you are the Midwest account rep for a Fortune 500 company. Well maybe your mother, does but not your prospect. Go to the outcomes.

It will take a few interviews with clients, and with people where you lost, or they did not make a decision. But over time you will not only understand what you should focus on in prospecting calls, but as you get traction, you will confirm your ability to help people and change to a healthier and more rewarding set of beliefs.

*Tibor Shanto is a Sales Execution Specialist, focused on helping sales teams and individuals secure more revenue through improved prospecting, selling and*

*overall execution of their process. You can reach Tibor at (416) 822-7781, or visit [www.SellBetter.ca](http://www.SellBetter.ca)*

## How to Grab Anyone's Attention

Consultant, Voss Graham, says that this is the statement that is guaranteed to capture the attention of any human being who is looking for a real solution to their issue...Ready?

***"I have an idea about how you can grow your business."***

Graham says,

"If you are speaking to a high level executive, whom growth is a very important issue to their company, division, business unit or subsidiary – then you will have their undivided attention."



## Forget Sales Goals, Set Activity Goals

Timo Rein, President and Co-Founder of sales enablement software, Pipedrive, says to skip the sales goals and set activity goals instead.

"Imagine a bookseller who sets a goal to sell \$1,000 in books each day. What if he sold nothing after talking to 17 people? And worse, what if prospect number 17 happened to be a very harsh rejection? It would surely get you down and make it harder to keep going.

"Take it from us, before we founded Pipedrive, we got our start in sales in exactly this way – selling books door-to-door and dealing with harsh rejections.

"Now what if the same bookseller had an **activity goal of talking to 20 prospects each day?** Taking your focus off the \$1,000 result-goal and shifting it on the activity goal meant that even if 17 were to say no, it wouldn't matter – he would only have three prospects left to talk to."



**Get Even More Free Great Tips at Art's Smart Calling Blog:**  
**[www.SmartCalling.com](http://www.SmartCalling.com)**

# Words That Can Kill Sales

Art and I often have shared articles here about how sales reps use words with clients/prospects that can actually kill or maim any chance of a sale. This month we'll look at words reps use when speaking to themselves, their peers, or anyone else who happens to be listening.

## Self Defeating Talk

The following example is taken from a real life incident in a sales department. It is typical of many salespeople.

The rep explained to me in a coaching session, "We can never beat them on price."

So what's already wrong? The rep had not even picked up the phone that morning. Yet he had painted a picture of defeat in his mind.

It's tragic. Before they utter a word to a client or prospect they have already polluted their minds with reasons why people won't buy. With that type of thinking, it's easy to see why reps feed their clients a steady diet of "don't-buy-from-me"-type feelings.

## Yeah, But

The interesting thing is that when you try to logically deal with this type of attitude, some people will actually go out of their way to defend their negative tendencies. They invariably use the "yeah-but" defense. It goes like this:

"Okay," I reply, "Price is often a key factor in a proposal. So if price is the motivator why not offer the Value Plan?"

"Yeah, the Value Plan is cost effective, but it does not include scaling. (a teeth cleaning procedure for pets)"

"Is scaling important to the customers?" I inquire.

"Well, I am pretty sure it is. Most customers find it important."

"Did you ask? Was this identified as a need?"

"No."

I replied, "Let's take a different approach. The Elite Plan offers scaling. If scaling is so important to the client, why not offer it?"

"Yeah, but the Elite Plan includes disability."

"So???" I ask.

"Well, clients don't want disability."

"Oh I see," said I. "Did you ask?"

"No."

"Isn't disability a good thing to have?"

"Yeah, but it increases the premium and when I tell the client about the disability it turns them off."

Okay, I can't bear to go any further. The rep was building ready-made excuses for why he could not sell the product. He lost before he had even begun calling.

Apart from maiming his mind by his negative words, there are a couple of other factors contributing to this negative attitude. First, the rep made broad assumptions. He assumed that all clients thought scaling was unimportant. As it turns out, most of the clients had no idea what scaling was. Secondly, armed with these false assumptions, the rep did not bother to question to determine the client's needs.

There's more. In cases where scaling was deemed important, the rep felt compelled to position the disability coverage as an unnecessary add-on which raised the price. In fact, the rep actually told clients that the Elite plan included scaling but also included disability. Of course the clients viewed it as a negative simply because the rep positioned it as one.

This is a classic example of talking too much. If disability is unimportant to the client, then don't sell the feature of disability. If scaling is important, sell the scaling feature and its benefits.

## Where the "Yeah, Buts" Came From

Shortly after the conversation with this rep I met with five or six other salespeople for coffee. These guys were the "grizzled old vets."

It was déjà vu. I heard the same dialogue as I had with the rep that morning about scaling!

We tend to build "support" groups that reinforce our attitudes. Sometimes we fall into the trap of hanging out with negative individuals.

Over a period of time, a subtle brainwashing occurs. We actually begin believing our own negative junk and spread it to our clients.

## What to Do

First, the next time you're with a bunch of reps, stop and listen. How do they speak? How do they position your product or service? Is it negative or positive? Is there a pattern forming? Figure out if those around you jump on the band wagon.

Second, if it is a negative atmosphere try to determine if there is any legitimacy to it. If there is a product flaw of some sort, do the proper people in management know about it? And it is simply not enough to "mention" it. Anyone can do that.

Go further. Gather data. Collect "evidence." For example, when I asked the reps how many clients/prospects actually mention scaling, there were only two out of several hundred who had commented. And make some suggestions or recommendations.

Third, if there is no legitimacy to the whining or complaining, then remove yourself from that environment. Don't hang out with that crowd. It will poison you.

Fourth, if you find that you are already poisoned with negative talk, **stop it**. You have a choice. Learn more about the product features and benefits. Spice up your selling skills by reading newsletters, read sales books, listen to selling and motivational tapes.

Words that kill sales evolve from the same words we speak to ourselves. Keep a close eye out as how you speak to yourself and others, ensure it's all positive, and your thoughts and actions follow.

Good Selling!



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*(continued from front page)*

and look for other ways you can help them.

To simplify, look at what they've purchased and the intervals. This should give hints to complementary things they likely are buying elsewhere. Then confirm that by doing some snooping, some Social Engineering by talking to others at the company. Then craft your introductory value opening:

**"Hi Pat, Stan Seller with Edvantage Services. First, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to provide you with the gazmodas you've gotten from us a couple of times over the past year. Also, I'd like to apologize. I see that you use those in your filtration processing and we work with over 100 companies helping them in all aspects of that process, maximizing their purification results and cutting costs, and we haven't discussed your other requirements to see if you could take advantage of some other options that might enhance your outcomes..."**

Notice how different that is from something like, "Hey, we also sell duraglams and contralias, and I'd like to tell you about those."

### Inactive Customers

These include buyers who at one time were decent, or even good-to-great customers, but stopped for whatever reason. If you don't know these reasons, neglect might actually be one of the causes. In any case, if they are still in business they are likely still buying what you sell, just from someone else. And if there was a problem that caused them to leave, that problem is not like a paper cut that heals itself and everything is all good in a few days; it's like a contagious virus that spreads. Bad experiences travel through negative word-of-mouth. By re-contacting this group you have a chance to right a wrong, and pick up new business.

Wrong Approach: "You used to get all of your gazmodas from us but you stopped buying. I was wondering why?"

You **do** want to find out why. But putting them on the witness stand and

interrogating them, acting as if it's their obligation to continue buying from you is not the way to do it.

Similar to the previous example, we want to take the humble approach. There's a pretty good chance you or your organization dropped the ball. You didn't stay in touch, or screwed up, whether you are aware of it or not. We need to find out so we can fix. And swallowing your pride, with hat in hand, admitting your fault for not staying in contact.

Again, do some Social Engineering. Find out from someone there if they still buy what you sell, from whom, and why. Yes, you can get this intel if you poke around and speak with the right people.

**"Hi Pat, Stan Seller with Edvantage Services. First, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to provide you with the gazmodas you've gotten from us in the past. We've realized that we haven't stayed in closer contact with you... we apologize for that and we want to begin fixing that today. I'd like to ask a few questions about how and if your requirements have changed, and let you know about some of our changes that could have a positive effect on your process there..."**

**Side Note:** Just think how much easier it is to actually get through to these previous two groups than someone you haven't spoken with before. When talking to a protective assistant, you can use the words, "**Oh, you're already customers with us.**"

### Lost Deals

Sure, there still might be a sour taste lingering because you were spurned for another suitor. What you DO know is that they are qualified, they obviously buy what you sell, you know a lot about them, they are familiar with you, and you have an investment in them. Yes, your investment could range from a few minutes on a simple quote, all the way up to tens of thousands invested in calls, visits, demos, mock-ups, simulations, and more. Here's the important variable to bring to the forefront: things change. Constantly. Their needs might change, they might shift into a new focus that would make you more desirable, or the vendor that beat you out might not perform as expected. The opposite of "out of sight, out of mind" is "regularly in touch, top of mind" and being the top choice when change inevitably occurs.

Again, the wrong approach is a reactive, non-value-added one: "Hey, just following up on the gazmoda quote we gave you last Spring, where you went with Ulterior Services. Wondering if anything has changed or anything I can quote you on?"

Sure, some contact is better than no contact. Just slightly though. They can view a call with no value as the salesperson being a desperate, pesty, quoting-machine vendor. Instead, you want to position yourself as a value-added consultant who brings something to the table every time. Then, when things DO change, they will think of you first and then reach out. That's the goal, since your calls will not likely and luckily coincide with their changed need at the moment it occurs.

This impression of you as a value-added option is achieved with every communication you send. Email, mail, samples, reports, calls, voice mails... they all need to contain something that causes them to say, "That's good to know. That guy/gal has it going on."

Technology is your friend here, since you can have automated "nurturing" campaigns set up of various types that you can appropriately plug your prospects/customer into, so that you can have these value-added "touches" going out automatically while you sleep. And then you supplement and complement these pieces of communication with the personal call. Those calls would take the form of,

**"Hi Pat, I thought about you the other day in our meeting where our QA team released their newest report on changes in gazmoda regulations and how it will affect time to market industry-wide. This is some cutting edge stuff and I thought you could benefit from the information and I'd like to send it to you."**

*But Art, where's the selling?*

The selling is when they are **buying**. Either on this call when you transition naturally into some casual—but planned—questions, or when they have that trigger event and call you.

Want new business? Look in your own back yard, follow these ideas, and you'll be a happy quota-buster.

# How Your Prospects Really Want You to Follow Up With Them

I was sipping a large frosty glass of beer in the hotel lobby, getting ready to head home after speaking about business growth for a group of entrepreneurs. That's when Chris approached me.

"Can I ask you a question," he said tentatively. "I'm stumped about what to do about this situation I'm in."

I encouraged him to tell me more. Here's his story:

*"I was recently in a meeting with an executive for a large hospital group. I'd been referred in by a mutual connection, which immediately positioned me as a credible resource.*

*"When we met, I really hit it off with this executive. I asked her lots of questions. She shared some confidential information. And, because I'd dealt with similar issues when I worked in the medical field, I had lots of ideas about how to address the challenge.*

*"It was a great meeting. She thanked me for my time and said she needed to think about what we'd talked about."*

My initial reaction was that he'd probably spilled the beans too quickly. That's one of the most common problems I see. But honestly, he convinced me otherwise. They really had a solid peer-to-peer conversation. So I asked him, "What's the problem?"

*"That was three weeks ago and I haven't heard from her since," he confessed. "What should I be doing?"*

Chris said that he'd called and emailed several times, mentioning that he was touching base or wanted to know her thoughts. As Chris saw the expression on my face, he justified his follow-up strategy, "I don't want to be too pushy."

## How Holding Back Holds You Back

If I've heard that response once, I've heard it a thousand times. No one wants to be pushy. I don't want to be pushy. But there's a big difference between being pushy and being professional.

That's when I decided it was time to turn the tables on Chris—to get him to think "as if" he were his prospect. Here's what I said:

"Let's say you were the decision maker. You'd just met with a savvy business person who truly understood your situation. You were impressed—and even relieved—because a solid resource had appeared.

"Here's my big question, Chris. If you, as an executive, met this savvy person, what would you expect him or her to do next?"

He looked at me thoughtfully. "I'd follow up—but I don't want to be pushy. It might turn her off."

## What Your Prospect Really Wants—It's Not What You Think!

"Chris," I said. "Get over yourself. You're being a total wuss. Now tell me, what would you want this person to do? Put on your buyer's hat. Think. Then talk to me 'as if' you were this person."

I watched Chris struggling with the question, then saw something shift. A new idea was emerging; deep down he already knew the answer. Speaking as if he were the buyer, Chris told me:

*"I'd want this person to take charge. I have a gazillion things going on here in my organization. I'm constantly jumping from project to project. I don't like to take big risks here either. I've seen too many careers get dead-ended."*

*"I don't want this person coming to me with a big humongous plan to solve my problem. That would only throw me into overwhelm. What I'd really like is for the seller to suggest the logical next step."*

*I'd want to test him out on that to make sure that I liked working with him, that he delivered on his promises and that his work yielded results.*

"Exactly," I chimed in. "And what's preventing you from taking charge with this prospect?"

Chris said, "I don't want to be pushy. And, I guess I want her to want to work with me."

## How Your Own Thinking Holds You Back

As I talked with Chris, I could see that his wish not to be pushy was overriding his sense of how he could help his prospect. "This is not about you," I told him. "This is about helping a potential customer address their challenges and achieve their objectives.

"You need to focus on them, not you. Don't wait for them to come begging for your services. Help them. Show them the next steps. Now."

With that, I took the last sip of my beer and said my good-byes. I honestly don't know if Chris ever dared to be a leader, to show his prospect the next logical step, to help them realize the value of making a change and to guide them through the decision process. But if he didn't, he was missing a big opportunity.

That's what it takes to win big deals these days.



(Jill Konrath, author of *SNAP Selling*, *Selling to Big Companies*, and her newest book, *Agile Selling*,

helps sellers land bigger clients and speed up their sales cycle. To get her free Prospecting Tool Kit, visit [www.jillkonrath.com/sales-resources](http://www.jillkonrath.com/sales-resources).)



# The Two Types of Salespeople: Hunters and Vegetarians

By Jeb Blount

In today's world there are two types of salespeople. VEGETARIANS and HUNTERS

Vegetarian salespeople are order takers who sit around waiting to get lucky. They whine and complain about not having enough leads, competitor's dropping their prices, prospects that aren't buying, not having the right products, and are always looking for an easy way out. They have somehow deluded themselves into believing that they are owed something.

Hunters, on the other hand, are Fanatical Prospectors who attack the market place. They are relentless and unstoppable, obsessive about keeping their pipeline full of qualified prospects. They are always on the prowl, prospecting day and night, anywhere and anytime—constantly hunting for their next opportunity.

Hunters view prospecting as a way of life. They prospect with single minded focus. They enthusiastically dive into telephone prospecting, email prospecting, cold calling, networking, asking for referrals, knocking on doors, following up on leads, and striking up conversations with strangers.

They don't make excuses: "Oh, this is not a good time to call because they might be at lunch."

They don't complain: "Nobody is calling me back."

They don't whine: "The leads are bad."

They don't live in fear: "What if she says no?" Or "What if this is a bad time?"

They don't procrastinate

They prospect when times are good because they know that a rainy day is right around the corner.

They prospect when times are bad because they know that fanatical pros-

pecting is the key to survival.

They prospect even when they don't feel like prospecting because they are driven to keep their pipeline full.

Hunters are acutely aware that failure in sales is not caused by a deficit of talent, skills, or training. Not a poor territory or inferior product. Not subpar communication and presentation skills. Not a failure to ask for the business and close. Not tough competitors and not the economy.

They know the brutal truth about sales is the #1 reason for failure in sales is the failure to consistently prospect. Period. End of story.

What kind of salesperson are you?



*(Jeb Blount advises many of the world's leading organizations and their executives on the impact of emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills on customer experience, strategic account management, sales, and developing highperforming sales teams. He speaks to and delivers training to high-performing sales teams across the globe. Get his newest best-selling book, *Fanatical Prospecting*. 1-888-360-2249)*

## If It Sounds Too Good to Be True...

Think of some of the inquiries you followed up on that seemed just too good to be true.

The prospect seemed hot and ready to buy right now. And buy big. They did not ask many questions, but just wanted the proposal or quote so they could get it approved right away.

And then...you never heard from them, nor could you reach them. So what happened?

I dunno, perhaps their boss finally reminded them they needed that competitive quote before they went into contract renegotiations with their present vendor. Maybe they're just collecting information. Could be that they **think** they're a decision maker, but really have to go through many layers. All we know for sure in this case is that we don't know.

What to do? Treat your incoming leads, everything that comes in via web, mail, phone, fax ...whatever, like you would any other sales situation. Question to determine the reason behind their interest. If you don't, you're vulnerable.

I know, it's sometimes easy to not go in-depth when someone is apparently waving money at you. It's simple to just present product/service and prices, because they said that's what they're interested in. Whoa, slap yourself back to reality. No, people buy because they are interested in the **results** of your product/service. And they should be able to clearly explain what results they are interested in and why. Therefore, your questions should include,

**"What prompted the inquiry?"**

**"How did you happen to choose us?"**

**"Why are you looking to change?"**

**"What's happening there that caused the decision to look for something like this?"**

**"Tell me about the process on your end to implement this?"**

**"What is this (product/service) going to do for you and the organization?"**

## A Qualifying Question to Ask Inquirers

Here's a great question to ask of someone who contacts you. This question is designed to determine if the person is a decision maker, or collecting information for a decision maker:

**"Is this something you are taking on yourself, or was it assigned to you?"**



## Tell Them They're Wrong in a Roundabout Way

Directly tell someone they're wrong and they'll resist your ideas even more strongly while defending theirs. But here's a roundabout way to do it that lets them save face, while helping them keep an open mind. Let's say they serve up an objection or make a statement you know to be blatantly wrong. Respond with, **"That's a good point, and it could be a valid concern if..."**

For example, if they say, "We couldn't consider you because your service department is in way over its head and we can't afford to wait for service," you could respond with, **"That's a good point, and would be a valid concern if we hadn't expanded the department, which we did a month ago. Now we're operating on one-day turnaround."**

## You Start With Nothing Anyway, So Why Not Ask?

Regarding asking for the sale, keep in mind that you start with a "no" before you place your calls. By asking for the business, at least you have a chance to change it to a "yes." Without asking, you have virtually no chance. So you have nothing to lose!

## HOW are They Different?

When they interrupt you with, "Yeah, yeah, but our company is different," throw it back to them:

**"Oh, I see, well, tell me about the primary differences."** Or,

**"In what areas?"**

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## Economize Your Questions

Don't use two or three questions when one will do. For example,

*"Is there a particular person who handles that function in your department?"*

"Yes."

*"Oh, who would that be?"*

Better alternative: **"Who handles that function in your department?"**

Here's another,

*"Do you ever experience variations in quality?"*

"Yes."

*"What do you experience?"*

Better alternative: **"Please tell me what you experience regarding variations in quality."**

## Get a Commitment Now for the Future

Speaking of qualifying them for the future, go a step further and get a commitment. Get agreement on something that would move you closer to a relationship or sale.

**"Assuming we have something you like, would you be agreeable to buying from us?"**

**"If your present situation were to change, could you see yourself using us as one of your vendors?"**

If so, find out what would need to change.

## A One-Word Upsell

I needed to grab a bite to eat between two connecting flights. At the airport foodcourt I found a decent looking Chinese place. They had a two entrée special, and a three-choice option that's about a buck more. They were super busy, and the person behind the counter greeted customers with New York deli-type urgency. "What would you like please!" Here's the sales technique: after each person gave their two choices, the woman behind the counter barked out,

**"And?"**

Most of the people I saw, including myself, added a third choice of Kung Pao something or another. And another dollar to the sale.

Think of the opportunities you have to increase the size of your sales. The best time to get someone to buy more is when their wallet is out. Often it is just as simple as one question. Or one word.

## Think, and Ask in Terms of the Decision Making PROCESS

Learn more about the decision-making process. There could be many behind-the-scenes influences on the decision. Ask about actual users of your products/services, anyone else who could influence it, who has to sign off on the ultimate decision or OK the money for it, and perhaps people who would rather not see it happen.

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# SMART CALLING REPORT

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## A 400 Year-Old “Trick” to Be More Persuasive

An article at the INC. website by Betsy Mikel, was titled *“The One Simple Mind Trick That Instantly Makes You More Persuasive.”*

I totally agreed with its premise. Because I have been teaching and practicing it for about 30 years. More, actually.

And as the article points out, this trick is not new. The French philosopher, mathematician, and physicist, Blaise Pascal wrote about it in the 1600’s.

### **The “Trick”?**

If you want to change someone’s mind, do NOT start a discussion with the reason why they are wrong. Take the opposite approach. Begin by focusing on what they believe, and admit there is truth in it. Then ease into presenting a larger picture... getting them to open up to what other angles and approaches might exist. This helps them to reach a belief on their own. As the article points out, “Instead of you doing the persuading, you’re setting them up to persuade themselves.”

Let’s turn back the time machine and hear from Pascal himself about this:

**When we wish to correct with advantage, and to show another that he errs, we must notice from what side he views the matter, for on that side it is usually true, and admit that truth to him, but reveal to him the side on which it is false. He is satisfied with that, for he sees that he was not mistaken, and that he only failed to see all sides. Now, no one is offended at not seeing everything; but one does not like to be mistaken, and that perhaps arises from the fact that man naturally cannot see everything, and that naturally he cannot err in the side he looks at, since the perceptions of our senses are always**

true... People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they have themselves discovered than by those which have come into the mind of others.

In the article they get a more recent opinion from an expert: Arthur Markman, a professor of psychology at the University of Texas. He says, “When you immediately attack someone’s beliefs as wrong, they’ll want only to dig in their heels more. But if you begin by affirming their position, you’ve taken the first step toward a cordial and potentially cooperative discussion.”

He adds, “If I have an idea myself, I feel I can claim ownership over that idea, as opposed to having to take your idea.”

### **Using It**

So, how do we use this in practice?

Despite what some gurus say, you can admit that there is merit to someone’s objection. Somewhat. For example,

**“Yes, I can see why you say that.”**

**“I hear that a lot from people when I first speak with them.”**

**“I understand where you are coming from.”**

We call those “softening statements.” You let them know you are not going to argue with them. And they serve to validate someone’s belief.

Then you go to work. Not by talking at them, but by asking questions.

What the article does not mention is this process. I haven’t validated this through scientific studies. But I have in the laboratory of the real world. And that is to get someone to doubt their belief first, before presenting your argument.

Because, really, for someone to change their mind, they first do need to say, “Hmm, maybe there might be another way.” Then they will be open to looking at the other angles and alternatives.

### **Ask Questions**

So to execute that we ask questions to get them to talk about their belief or objection.

**“Tell me more about that.”**

**“What was behind that conclusion?”**

**“When you say you can get it cheaper online, what are you actually getting?”**

**“Could you clarify for me some of the details about that?”**

And these aren’t questions you just wing off the top of your head. They should be brainstormed for and practiced. Sit down with other reps, come up with the common objections you hear, all of the reasons WHY someone might say those things, and then the initial questions you would ask after softening them.

And then come up with all of the ways they might answer.

And then the next questions you will ask.

Repeat. Repeat.

Ultimately you should lead them to the point where now their guard is down, and they would be more open to your point of view.

Some people might think it’s a trick, but it’s just common sense. Pascal said so about 400 years ago. And it still works today.



# Sales Observations

## **The little things mean a lot.**

A small personal touch can have an economic impact. Here are a couple of examples from this past month.

Early last year in my Smart Calling Blog I gave out my second Art of Selling award. This very exclusive and totally not-on-a-regular-schedule distinction is given out to someone in a traditionally non-sales role, who does something spectacular in sales. The recipient was my dentist, Dr. Mitchell Cooper. You can see that entire article here: <http://smartcalling.com/newsite/the-second-art-of-selling-award-winner/>

To summarize, Dr. Cooper called me at home, at night, after a procedure, just to make sure everything was OK. Fast forward to now. I was watching a ballgame with a cold one, later on a weeknight, when my cell phone rang. I didn't recognize the local number, but answered anyway. "Art, Mitchell Cooper here." It took me a couple of seconds of silence to connect the name to my dentist. "Oh, hi Dr. Cooper, how are ya?" At this point I'm thinking I was actually due for a cleaning, and my gosh, he's calling people himself?

"Great," he replied. "Hey, I was just going through some older emails and I came across what you had sent me about that article last year,

and I know I mentioned something when you were in the office last, but wow, this is really really cool and I want to thank you again."

So now I am blown away. Again. He took the time, at night, to pick up the phone simply to THANK me for something I had done over 18 months ago. Which he already thanked me for.

We chatted for a minute or two and then ended cordially. Without him mentioning a word about coming in to the office for my cleaning. Of course he wasn't calling for that. He called because he genuinely was thankful. He called previously after the procedure because he genuinely cared.

And in my estimation, that's a major reason why he's successful and a patient has to schedule almost two months in advance to get in for a routine visit. That's why he gets tons of referrals. That's why I've written about him twice and tens of thousands of people have read about him. And perhaps some in the local Phoenix area are now going to him.

And yes, I did call to schedule my cleaning after that.

**Here's another. Cindi Tuttle, a** rep with one of my regular monthly coaching clients, Headsets.com, shared her personal touch story. Headsets.com gets some of their new orders through a partnership with amazon.com. The reps follow up on those orders to welcome them, and learn how they can further help the new customers. Cindi first sent a handwritten thank you card to a new customer, and then followed up by phone. The person who received the headset, and the card, was not the main decision maker, but the user. But what she did was—with great excitement—show that card to her IT person, who IS the decision maker. In the meantime, Cindi was unable to reach the customer by phone, since the healthcare company she works for had a very secure phone system that required an ID input to reach someone internally. Fast forward three

months to the present, and Cindi received a call from the customer, who thanked her for the card, shared the story about the IT buyer, who had told her that they need to order from Headsets.com from now on. And she then placed an order for five more headsets. And provided her direct number to call in the future.

There you go. Lots of repeat business as a result of something that cost less than a dollar, and a few minutes of time. The little things.

## **In one of the Facebook groups**

I frequent, which is essentially a user group for some marketing automation software, someone posted this:

"Who can recommend a good book to get someone up to speed fast on Facebook advertising?"

There were a few good suggestions, and then this smart ass comment:

"Does your pager beep or buzz, LOL! Who reads physical books?"

There's a case not only of a jerk, but someone who believes everyone is like them. A fatal mistake for salespeople. YOU are not your prospect or customer. All that matters is what they think. Remind yourself of that before every call, question accordingly, and you minimize the resistance you hear, since you are not **creating it**.

Make this your best month ever!

*Art*

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## **SMART CALLING REPORT**

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## Don't Qualify for Budget Early

By Tibor Shanto

Many people involved in sales seem to be fixated with budget; they want to qualify for it way too early in the process. I know it is important, but you may be disqualifying perfectly good buyers for the wrong reason.

Your job in sales is to, well, sell, which means identifying requirements or gaps in the prospect's current situation.

But, about 75% of potential buyers don't know, realize or admit they have requirements or gaps. Remember, status quo is your biggest hurdle.

So if they don't perceive a need, they certainly don't see a need to allocate budget. This does not mean that they wouldn't, in fact, benefit from your product, they have just lived with the pain long enough so it doesn't seem urgent. Or on the positive side, they didn't realize they could achieve their goals by taking advantage of your offering. Ask this type of person about budget too early and you will end up disqualifying a perfectly good buyer.

If you are talking to the right people in the right way, budget is very much an issue that can be--at times easily--overcome.

### An Example

Consider this example: have you ever walked into an electronics store looking to buy a flat screen TV? You know what you had in mind, and then you encountered a clerk who "qualified you"? They asked a bunch of questions, including budget, and then showed you two or three products that fit what you described.

Contrast that with the time I walked into an electronics store, with a specific flat screen in mind, shopped it online in advance so I had a budget in mind, but I encountered a different type of sales person. She asked me why I was buying the TV, and had I had a flat screen before? What type of things would I be watching?

She then continued to ask what kind of DVD player I had, telling me about Blue Ray, asked if I stream from the web, and of course since I told her I watch music DVD's, what was I using to maxi-

mize the sonic experience. When all was said and done, I had exceeded my flat screen budget by \$250, or 20%. In addition I became the proud owner of an unbudgeted Blue Ray player. (I decided to give my inadequate home theater system to the kids; how else was I going to make room for the new one?)

You can say I was an impulse buyer. I would argue that I was maximizing my investment in my enhanced flat screen. Either way there is no arguing that rather than qualifying me for budget, she qualified me for what I was **trying to achieve** and how to best maximize that over the life of my new smart TV.

Corporate buyers are no different. The higher you go in the organization, the truer this is. Executives are able to create budget, able to shift funds around, and make a buy based on a host of factors beyond budget. I have many clients who did not have budget for training when I cold called them. But after we engaged, and I demonstrated how their investment in what I do will deliver results and returns that will exceed their investment, THEN that justified an unbudgeted expenditure.

Executives want and need to show a difference in their position. Show them how you can help them do that and you will find a person motivated to make things happen.

If you instead give them the impression that your primary interest is their ability to spend money with you, even those with a budget will self-disqualify. It's about engagement and investment – not budget. Go ahead, qualify someone for a better competitor.

*(Tibor Shanto is a Sales Execution Specialist, focused on helping sales teams and individuals secure more revenue through improved prospecting, selling and overall execution of their process. You can reach Tibor at (416) 822-7781, or visit [www.SellBetter.ca](http://www.SellBetter.ca))*

## Asking About Needs Doesn't Get Them

A sales rep for office supplies called me, didn't have a very good opening--but I stayed on the call anyway thinking I'd get some material out of it--and he immediately started with, "Tell me about your office supply needs."

I told him I had no needs. He said thanks and hung up.

If you hit someone with a vague question like, "What are your needs?", and they are not thinking about their needs at that very moment, what are you likely to hear?

"Uh, we're satisfied with what we have," or, "We're doing fine where we are."

Bottom line, you will not get them talking about something they haven't thought of, or aren't thinking about at that second. As an alternative, frame a question around a need they likely have ... a question that helps them visualize and feel the need you can fill. Don't force them to come up with the possible need on their own, you paint it for them, then ask them to react to it. For example,

**"Tell me about your ordering process, and how many different vendors you usually need to contact to find the supplies you want."**



## You Do Not Need To Apologize For Helping Them

Don't apologize for taking someone's time at the beginning of a call. It diminishes your importance. For example,

"I know you're busy, and I'm sorry for interrupting ... I'll take just a few seconds, and here's why I'm calling."

Stop. Think about what you're really offering. You have something of value that will help make this person's life better.

You need to present that feeling with conviction. If you're not sold on your importance, they certainly won't be.



# How to Really Move the Sale Forward

There are only four outcomes to any sales situation: a sale, no sale, a continuance and an advance.

The first two outcomes are easy to comprehend. But the line between continuance and advance is the line between mediocre reps and immensely successful reps. If you're interested in reducing the sales cycle, working on better qualified leads and generating more sales, pay attention.

## **Continuance**

Unfortunately, the vast majority of reps are superb at "continuing" a sale. A continuance is where it appears that the sale cycle is being closed but in reality, it is only being extended. This is sometimes a tough concept for reps to understand. Here are some examples to illustrate what I mean:

*"I'll send you some product brochures in the mail."*

*"I will give you a call sometime next week to discuss the proposal."*

*"Give the sample a try and we'll review it later on."*

*"I'll fax you the material and we'll go over it."*

*"Let's meet sometime next month and we'll assess your need then."*

On the surface, these statements would suggest that the sale is moving forward. Not so. Did you notice the two common denominators?

1. There is no firm commitment on behalf of the prospect or customer to take specific action.

2. There is no firm follow-up date.

Some sales will, of course, occur.

But if you are interested in getting more sales in less time, and if you would like to disqualify those clients who are not actually interested in your product or service, then you must learn to "advance" the sale.

## **The Advance**

The advance differs from a continuance in that it gets the client to take a specific action within a given timeframe.

Here's how the above examples would look/sound like with an advance:

**"I'll send you a product brochure on the Deluxe version by email and what I would like to recommend is that we review these together next Thursday. How does 10:15 look to you?"**

**"I'll give you a call next week to discuss the MEA proposal. Suppose we schedule Wednesday at 2:20?"**

**"I'll be glad to provide you with an Atrium sample. Specifically when will you use it? What is the criteria for evaluation? What I would like to recommend is that we set up an appointment for Friday, at 8:30 a.m. to review your evaluation. How does that sound?"**

**"I'll send over a link to the demo material right now. Can you review it so that we can go over the details together in about 45 minutes?"**

**"Let's set up an appointment for next month, say the 15th, at 2:45. At that time we can reassess your situation. Is that date okay with you?"**

Do you see the difference?

Each example suggests a specific action that must or should be taken by the client. This creates active participation from the client which moves the sale further through the cycle.

Next, each example has a specific time frame for the accomplishment of the action which creates commitment. This is a powerful one-two sales punch.

## **Withdrawing the Advance**

If the client will NOT commit to any action or follow up, it suggests that perhaps their interest is not particularly strong at this point in time.

If the client will NOT commit to the action, then withdraw the advance.

For example,

**"Ms. Finn, I get the impression that perhaps now is not the best time to send the literature. If it is not possible to set up a review date, perhaps it would be best if we waited and I call you at a later date."**

It takes guts to do this but what it really does is allow you to focus only on genuine sales opportunities. You don't waste time "watering dead plants."

This is an extremely powerful technique.

Use it and advance the sale!



(Jim Domanski is President of TeleConcepts Consulting, a telesales consulting and training firm. Contact him at Jim@TeleConceptsConsulting.com, 613-591-1998)



## **How To Make Your Voice Mail Message Stand Out From the Clutter**

Want to enhance your chances of a voice mail message being remembered, maybe even evoking a return call?

Back it up with a written message by an assistant. Ask the screener, assistant, or anyone in the area to scratch out a brief note for the prospect. For example,

**"Pat Walters left a voice mail regarding cutting maintenance expenses by 25% and will call back tomorrow."**

Ask them to NOT put it on your prospect's desk, but on his/her chair. That sets you apart.

Further, ask them to draw a little smiley face next to the message.

Don't laugh. Corny to be sure, but memorable, right?

Reinforce it with an email, if you have or can get the address.

Of course all of this must complement a great value proposition.

The message must be about them and their world, and what they want or wish to avoid. What we're doing with that message is making it stand out from the clutter.



# Selling to Distracted People

I stopped in the local Subway to grab a quick sandwich. Luckily there wasn't a line, but I was still left waiting as no one was there to handle my order. Two other employees were busy helping other customers, and one of them yelled,

*"Michelle, counter!"*

About 30 seconds later a 20-something customer servicer came out, didn't look me in the eye and blurted, *"Hep ya?"*

I was ready, since I had ample time to prepare my script.

*"Yes, please. I'd like a six-inch turkey, on whole grain, not toasted."*

She slapped on gloves, then looked at me a bit puzzled and said, *"You said meatball, right?"*

That was odd. "Turkey" sounds nothing like "meatball." "No, I said turkey. On whole grain."

She searched for the turkey, fumbled around a bit, then looked at me again and said, *"White bread?"*

I thought she was joking. I gave her a "You're kidding right?"-kind of smirk.

Realizing she actually didn't know, I replied, *"Well, again, I'd like whole grain please."*

A few seconds passed as she feverishly threw together the sandwich, looked up and said, *"You said toasted, right?"*

Now I'm laughing. I replied, *"Actually, no, I didn't say that. And no thanks, not toasted."*

Finally she asked, *"What would you like on it?"*

Given my experience up to this point, it took everything I had--trust me-- to not return with something like, *"I'd answer, but I don't think it will do any good, so just ask me a second time right now."*

Instead, I maintained my composure and very slowly told her what I'd like, item by item. I even pointed at them to help her visualize.

I'd like to think this experience is the exception with service people, sales

people, or even just people in general. You and I both know that unfortunately it is more the norm.

The typical attention span today is mere seconds--if that. People are addicted to distraction.

Young and old. We communicate in abbreviated phrases. We get news in headlines, scrawls and tweets. If a website doesn't grab our attention in seconds, click. Next.

And don't even get me going on the entire notion of "present but absent," which is using your mobile device to text, call, tweet, email or whatever-- when you are WITH another person. Any time someone does that they are indicating, *"I've got a more important person on the other end of this."*

While walking through a restaurant to my seat the other day, I observed at least 80% of the tables where there were couples together, one, and sometimes both of them were tapping on, talking into, or staring blankly at their mobile devices. Present but absent.

OK, let me get this rant back on the tracks. My point is the reality today is that we must operate in the environment where people in general have shorter attention spans than ever.

We are more distracted and inundated with stimuli than ever before. To be effective in the sales game, we need to proactively counteract that when we are sending, and receiving messages.

A couple of very rudimentary, but nevertheless important points.

## Pay Attention

I believe that to truly be an effective communicator, you need to work hard at the art and science of simply paying attention.

Yes, that means actually listening to what the other person is saying, and not thinking of what you will say next. Or worse, interrupting them with what you want to say.

It means not checking your emails, texts, tweets, Facebook or any other site while you are speaking with a prospect or customer. I heard a speaker say that there

is no such thing as multi-tasking, since a person can only do one thing at a time. If you are flitting from thing to thing, you are not doing any of them very well. Certainly you wouldn't have your A-game when you are talking on the phone and trying to perform several other activities.

Here's a test worth taking: on the remainder of your spoken communication today, on the phone and face-to-face, practice "over the top" listening. That means grabbing on to every word you hear as if you would be tested on it, with dire consequences if you failed. You might be surprised at how much you really hear.

## Pre-empt their Distraction

What's harder to control, but certainly doable, is grabbing and keeping their attention. How? Talk about their favorite subject: them. This is not new. But then again, I don't know why more reps don't do it.

Sitting in my voice mail inbox right now is a message from a clueless caller who left a 90-second message about the service he provides to call centers and how he wants to set up an appointment so he could show me how I should be using his service in my call center. Uh, hello. It wouldn't take more than a few seconds to find out exactly what I do, which is not run a call center.

What my business is, is helping salespeople do what he didn't. Create interest, engage prospects and customers, and move the sales process forward. That's what I constantly talk about and your member site is full of info about, and there is even more on my free sites..

So, if you are having a difficult time reaching decision makers, getting prospects to read--or even open--your emails, and then if you are able to get through, actually selling, well, brace yourself: it's you. Money, and attention, flows to value. How can you communicate that?

If you made it all the way to here, congrats. You either have a refined attention span, and/or I kept your interest. Follow these ideas and you will be way ahead of those who are busy being distracted.

# The Easiest Way to Keep in Touch Without Harassing People

Virtually every time I speak to sales organizations, I get asked, "What do I do when I don't hear back from people? I don't want to be a pain in the you-know-what." Keeping in touch is so darn hard!

So I ask to see what they're doing now. Usually it looks like this:

*"I'm checking in to see if anything has changed since we last talked. I suspect you're probably busy."*

*"If you have time in the upcoming week, I'd love to chat. Let me know!"*

Big UGH! Boring, pathetic, deletable.

With today's savvy buyers, we can't do that if we want to be seen as a credible resource ... someone actually worth talking to about important business objectives. That's why we need another approach to our sales strategy.

## 1. Be Helpful

It sounds too easy. Not like a salesperson -- who's supposed to always be pitching. But honest to goodness, it's what works.

For example, one of my clients sells a product that significantly improves customer service. I suggested that they send out an email as simple as this:

**When I read this article today in the Harvard Business Review, I immediately thought of you.**

It includes info on social media trends related to customer service.

[www.InterestingArticle.com](http://www.InterestingArticle.com)

Hope you find it interesting.

Notice how you're not asking for anything — just providing value — which positions you/your company as a credible resource.

## 2. Pique Curiosity

Another great sales strategy is to send people to a resource on your own website. I'm not talking about a place that touts your product and services. Gag me! Doing that is so 1970s.

Instead, I'm talking about something that could help your prospect achieve their objectives. Like a white paper, case study, article, or interview that's informative — or shares insights. You could send an email like this:

**Last week, I sent you info on how XYZ company is leveraging their online community to drive incremental revenue.**

**I thought you might also be interested in how Generic Systems reducing customer churn by 17%. Here's a link to their case study:**

[www.linktocasestudy.com](http://www.linktocasestudy.com)

**I think you'll be impressed with all the results they're seeing.**

Tempting? It should be if you've found the right resource for your prospect. Again, there's no pathetic "circling back" or "checking in."

Every email (or phone message) you send to your prospect has to stand on its own as **VALUABLE**. Once you get the hang of it, it's easy. And honestly, you feel better communicating this way.



(Jill Konrath,  
author of  
*SNAP Selling*,  
*Selling to Big Companies*,  
and her

newest book, *Agile Selling*, helps sellers land bigger clients and speed up their sales cycle. To get her free Prospecting Tool Kit, visit [www.jillkonrath.com/sales-resources](http://www.jillkonrath.com/sales-resources).)

## The REAL Numbers Game In Sales

Thinking back to all of the math I took in high school and college, most of the algebra, calculus, statistics and accounting was never of any use to me in the real world. What would have been really helpful is some basic sales math that most of us use the rest of our lives.

Numbers of course play a huge role for anyone in sales, and business. Look around you and in the news...pro athletes and team owners argue about percentages of revenue, congress and the President are arguing about budget numbers, tax percentages, etc. And we use numbers in a variety of ways to persuade and sell.

We use numbers to describe degrees of pain, pleasure, profits, losses, income, and time. And there are smart ways to use numbers on the phone in your sales. Let's look at a few of them.

### Reducing Price to the Ridiculous

This old technique refers to minimizing your price or difference in cost between you and a competitor. "Ridiculous" refers to how insignificant the amount really is when you put it in daily terms.

**"Pat, we're really only talking about a difference of two dollars a day to have the souped-up model."**

(Or, ridiculous could mean how crazy someone could get with this technique, which can sound cheesy: "Chad, it's only 30 cents per hour difference over the 10-year life of the machine.")

### Raise it to the Outrageous

Conversely, this is taking a savings and extrapolating it over a longer period. It's useful in pointing out how much someone will save, over a greater period of time, by buying from you.

**(Continued on next page)**

(Continued from previous page)

"**You'll save the shipping cost on every order. On two orders per month at an average of \$15 per, we're looking at \$360 for the year.**"

### Can You Say "Dollars"?

When you want to maximize the perception of a number, say the word "dollars."

"**With us, your savings will be over three-thousand dollars.**"

Conversely, to minimize it, just say the number

"**To upgrade will only be an extra one-fifty.**"

### Use Exact Numbers

Stating exact numbers adds more credibility to your statements than using rounded numbers. For example,

"**Our program is in place at 358 dealerships,**" sounds authoritative.

"*Our program is in about 400 dealerships,*" leaves a feeling that the number might be fudged a bit.

Likewise, if you want to minimize the importance of a number, you could use a rounded figure.

"**We're only looking at a figure for customization somewhere in the 200 range.**"

### Place Price in a Different Perspective

You probably can recall those hair-pulling situations here you've established the savings or additional profits you could help someone realize, but yet, they don't act on it. It's normally because they don't see the number as being significant enough. So put it in

terms they can understand.

"**Paul, you're right, we're only talking about \$600 a month savings here. But I bet that would make the monthly payment on one of your delivery vans.**"

Or, here's a powerful one:

"**The \$200 cost reduction might not seem like a lot, but let's look at it a different way. You said you're profit margin is about 10%. You'd need to do another \$2000 in sales per month just to make the \$200 I'm basically offering you, for free.**"

These examples just scratch the surface of how we use numbers all of the time in sales. I'd like to hear yours. Please email me with some numbers-techniques that you use to persuade and sell.



## A Decision Maker Reveals, "How to Get a Meeting With Me"

(Brendon Cassidy, founder of Cassidy Ventures posted this as an update in his LinkedIn profile. We've reprinted it as is. Some interesting points.)

### What To Do: Personalize. Big Time.

**1) Play the Relationship Game.** Do you know someone that knows me? Do you not know someone that knows me? Both of those trump any other scenario. If you are vetted through someone I know (or better put, I think you're vetted through someone I know), your odds go up considerably. If you don't have a common relationship to play...a good friend once said "fake it til you make it." Example: "Brendon, I am friends with Aaron Ross, whom I know you know. I recently joined XXX company, and we are trying to simplify how companies YYYY. I know this is an issue that you and Aaron have spoken and blogged about often. Do you have some time today or tomorrow to talk...?" That's pretty solid.

**2) Play the Ego Card.** I'm no

narcissist, but like anyone else, I don't turn down compliments. There is TONS of data available on the web on prospects. Look at shows they've spoken at, panels they've participated in, podcasts they've done, blogs they've written. "Brendon, I saw you speak at Saastr and I'm a huge fan of yours. You spoke passionately about being data driven in your decisionmaking, and I'm working with xxxx that is solving yyyy problem for zzzz companies. I think we'd solve this problem for you. I'd love to get your feedback on what we are doing etc etc etc.

**3) Tell Me Something I Don't Know.** The most valuable commodity I know of is information. Maybe the VP of Sales at our competitor just left. "Hey Brendon, So the VP of Sales at xxxxx just left (not sure if you know this). It seems like a great time to turn the heat up on their customer base. Our product can give you access to over 1,000 companies that use their product. Would you be interested in having access to that kind of data? Do you have 20 minutes to talk later this week." (yes I just described Datanyze)

### What Not To Do: Don't Cold Call Me. And Don't Send Marketing Pitches.

**1) I Know Cold Calling is All The Rage.** Hey, maybe it's just me (it isn't by the way), but I ain't picking up your cold call. And guess what? If I didn't pick up your call the first time, I'm damn well not picking it up the second time. Or the tenth. I recently accidentally clicked on a Quicken Loans ad. 18 calls in 3 days. HORRIBLE. Number of times I bought from someone that cold called me: Zero Point Zero.

**2) Don't Send Me Generic Marketing Content.** "We are providing analytics that solves the age old problem of xxxxxxxxxxxx." Delete. Not gonna happen. At a minimum, make your content fresh, funny, and outside the box. Show me something I haven't seen before. Your 0.5% goes up to 5%. Hey, sometimes that's all you need.

Bottom line: Personalize, personalize, personalize. And for gosh sakes, if I want to talk to you I will let you know. Happy hunting.



## Competing Against the Cheaper Online Vendors

If you're faced with the resistance of "We can get it cheaper online," a good strategy is to not get into a price discussion, but rather get them thinking and talking about what they really want, which many times is not included when purchasing online. For example,

**"Of course most things today can be simply purchased online for lower prices. But let's look at everything that you really want..."**

## A Tip to Get Through

Having trouble getting to a decision maker? After leaving repeated voice mails with no reply, opt out and find a person to speak with. Listen to their message for whom that might be. Then ask, **"About how often does she/he get around to making return calls?"** You should also ask them to leave a handwritten note for the prospect saying that you called.

## Get them to Elaborate

To build on the cover story, I've always taught that the best way to deal with objections is to question them in order to find the real reason behind the resistance. Otherwise, you likely are focusing on the symptom, not the real problem itself. While coaching some reps after training on this topic, a couple of them had great success with simply replying, **"Could you please elaborate on that?"** after hearing the objection. It really got people to open up.

## Listen for This Lead Source

Want a good source of leads? Listen for these words from existing prospects and customers,

**"At the last company I was at..."**

Then just ask them where that was, and probe further who might now be in that position.

## Just Close It

Don't overcomplicate the "ask." Simple works just fine:

**"Shall we move forward with it?"**

**"Would you like to get started?"**

## Help Them Visualize the Result

It is widely believed that we will not accomplish something until we can actually see ourselves in our mind's eye going there. Therefore, we want our prospects and customers to see themselves taking the next action. Here's a very simple, yet powerful question I've used several times with great success over the past month:

**"When do you see yourself doing the training?"**

In all cases it helped the prospect give a clear indication of where they were in the buying process. Some were ready to move, and a couple were not and it helped me to disqualify them.

## Ask How They Feel About Their Decision

Here's something a sales rep did with me. I'm not sure I've ever heard it used or taught, and not even sure if the rep was consciously using it as a sales technique, but it worked. I was giving buying signals, leaning toward making a purchase, but hadn't verbally said I was pulling the trigger. The rep, who was assuming the sale, said, **"Do you feel good about your decision?"** At that point I thought, and said, "Yeah, I needed to do something."

## Help Them Read the Other Proposals

On a rep's call I was listening to as part of preparation for a training program with them, I heard him skillfully tell the prospect how to read the other competing proposals. He suggested looking for items that are typically left out regarding guarantees, and in the way others priced. Naturally, his company was stronger in these areas. Then he put that information in a follow-up email

## Breaking a Slump

If you ever experience a slump, or just feel like you're getting stale, try what Jason Stoddard does. Come in the office on a weekend. Completely clean your office or cube. Toss anything you haven't touched in a year. Rearrange and reassemble your surroundings so it looks fresh to you. On Monday, dress up a notch higher than normal. Come in a bit early and hit the ground running!

## If This Newsletter is Not Yours, Here's How To Get Your Own Copy Each Month, and MORE!

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# SMART CALLING REPORT

August 2016

Volume 33 Number 8

## Voice Mail Ideas to Use, and Avoid

As you likely know, the mission of this publication is to share with you the best of what's working in sales and prospecting. That's why I not only provide content I've written, used, teach, and experience, but also have lots of guest and regular columnists. And, I'm constantly on the lookout for material I pick up by reading, watching, and listening to many many other sources.

This month I found an article on getting calls returned, by John Carroll, on his insurance marketing website, InsuranceSplash.com (I told you I go to the most exciting places!)

John actually got these ideas from other agents, and he even warned that some of them were unethical. So, I'm going to share the ideas that have merit, and at the end mention some of the unethical ones just to show more of the garbage that is still being practiced out there.

### **People Must WANT to Call Back**

He points out in his first couple of tips that this is the fundamental premise that everything else falls under. He says that people don't ignore you for any other reason than because you failed to do your job, which is to make them WANT to call you. Therefore, "When you're leaving a message don't sell the price, the options, or the service; sell the person exclusively on why it's worth their time and energy to return your call."

### **Restate Your Referral**

This was a very good point. If you are calling as a result of a referral, mention that person's name early in the message and frequently. This does a few things:

- It reminds the person that you should be trusted and respected.

- It catches their attention just to hear a name they recognize.
- It provides social proof since their friend is also a client.
- It reinforces any concerns that treating you poorly will reflect badly on them.

### **Speak Like a Journalist**

This was a good analogy to get to your valuable point quickly. The article said, "In the newspaper world of deadlines and limited page space, journalists are taught to organize their stories with the most important information first and less relevant details further down the page. The premise for the journalist is that you never know where the editor is going to cut off your story so you want to make sure the major points are relayed as quickly as possible. Your prospects are the editors of their own voicemail, so make sure you get to the point ASAP."

### **Ask Questions**

Although not new, one tip suggests asking questions in a voicemail, since it can make the person on the receiving end more likely to call back to close the loop.

### **Remind Them You're Local**

The article says, "In some insurance sales situations, you might be the only local salesperson for a prospect and you don't want them to treat you like some call center dude five states away. Aren't you a bit nicer to salespeople that call you from a local number?"

Depending on what you sell, this could be of great value for you.

### **Set Callback Timing Expectations**

This again is a good take on an old idea: "One of the reasons people don't

want to call you back is they're afraid of getting into a long call. If the reason for your call only requires a quick conversation, make sure you mention that. Avoid using round numbers: a five minute call never really is, but a four minute call probably will be."

### **Humor**

I agree that if you can use humor effectively, it's to your advantage.

While they give an example of how you could set up a joke on your message and tell the prospect they need to call you back for the punchline, which I find a bit out there, one that I smiled at was pretending like you're confused about the beep:

"Wait... Was that the beep?... Am I recording?... Oh shoot... Oh man, it's too late to hang up now... This is John from..."

Again, it likely not for most people, but perhaps you could adapt something.

### **Multi-Pronged Attack**

I've taught this one for a long time: "If you can hit those people with an email, a letter, a fax, a text, and a tweet all at the same time you'll be sure to get their attention."

### **Give Your After Hours Cell Number**

This is a good suggestion that not only applies to insurance, but a lot of industries: "There's plenty of folks out there who would LOVE to call you back if only they could do it at 7pm when they're free. If you're serious about selling insurance, you're going to need to talk to clients when it's convenient for them. Leaving your after-hours cell number is one great way to do it."

*(continued on page 7)*

## Sales Observations

**On my long list of many things** to get to, I'm planning on doing a training, or at least a longer article on being different on your calls. Being unique to stand out from the crowd and to grab attention. That will include saying things that are out of the ordinary, maybe even shocking. And also using humor.

Don't misinterpret; I am not talking about being totally outrageous, or sounding like a goofball or a jerk (there are trainers out there that take that approach). Everything will still fall under the umbrella of having possible value, but not sounding like every other salesperson out there.

Here's just a hint of some of the messaging you can use:

In an opening:

**"You probably get lots of calls from people who say they can save you time and money, right? Well, I actually can, but we're a bit different, here's why..."**

After your brief Possible Value statement, qualify it with,

**"Now I know this might sound too good to be true, but here's why it isn't..."**

Or, **"I know you weren't sit-**

### **SMART CALLING REPORT**

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**ting there hoping to get a call today from someone who wanted to talk about your pressure components..."**

Similar, but the opposite:

**"And I know that on your to-do list today, right at the top, was, 'take a call from a workman's comp specialist.'"**

What do YOU do that is different, or humorous? I've love to hear it, and include it in whatever I put together.

**I'm going to be partnering with** Steve Richard, founder and Chief Revenue Officer of ExecVision, a company that has an unbelievable platform for recording calls and coaching with them. I'm also going to do one of his Call Camps where we "break down the film," so to speak, like a coach after a game. But we do it with reps' phone calls. On a previous one I listened to I heard a rep use a great technique on voice mail. In a very confident voice, after leaving a nice message that had some value, she said,

**"Please give me a call back. I promise not to waste your time."**

That's different. It's powerful. Another variation would be,

**"I promise it will be worth your time."**

Again, you need to do this with a confident tone. And of course you need to deliver big time when you do speak with them.

**I received a LinkedIn Inmail message** from one of our new Inner Circle members who said,

"I'm looking for some information on closing a prospect email— what is the best way to close a prospecting email to try to get an appointment? Best to give a possible date/time for the meeting (phone meeting) or leave it open to the prospect? Thanks!"

I don't believe in asking for an ap-

pointment in a prospecting email... or are you referring to a phone appointment? If you're simply looking to get someone on the phone, I like to end with,

**"... I will try you again Monday morning, or if there is a better time for you, please hit Reply with a couple of times and I will confirm with you."**

After I read her message again, I'm pretty sure she was referring to just a phone appointment, in which case this still applies.

**It really seems so simple. I wish**

I didn't have to learn it the hard way early in my career: just shutting up and getting out of the way.

I asked a training client, "Where do you feel your people need improvement?" He began talking, and, these are word-for-word, the answers he gave me in rapid-fired succession:

"What we would like to do is..."

"Where we are having trouble is..."

"We are weak in the area of..."

"What we are faced with is..."

I could barely write fast enough. And of course I drilled down with deeper question in each of those areas. When it came time for my recommendation, I just plugged his words back in.

Make this your best month ever!

*Art*

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# 3 Things To Not Say On Prospecting Calls

By Tibor Shanto

Many sellers ask me what they should add to or say in an initial telephone prospecting call.

Having listened to and analyzed thousands of calls, I have come to the conclusion that most salespeople would make great strides if they first focused on what to leave **out** of their calls. There are things that people say in the call that make sense based in “normal” situations, but not in prospecting, where you are calling people who you have never spoken to, who are not expecting your call, not looking for your product, and who were busy doing something they thought was important at the time you called.

As discussed in the past, your prospect has heard it all before. If they get five calls a day, that's 25 a week, 1,200 a year, some 6,000 calls over the last five years! So you have to break through the apathy and “deafness” if you are to have any chance at all. This means not just being different from the others, but sounding different than all the other callers they'll encounter this week.

To help you avoid sounding like the also-rans who did not get the deal, here are three things to leave out of your initial prospecting call; And, oh, I have heard all of these in the last week, by people who most would consider to be “good” sales people. Here we go:

**1. “How are you?”** I know it sounds simple, polite, and innocent, but it adds little if anything to the call, and opens some risk. I have a very binary view of initial calls: if something does not add measurable upside to the call, it does not belong in the call. “How are you?” is definitely one. It is one of the things that we hate about the calls we get in the middle of dinner, where a strange voice asks how you are as though they were your best friend concerned about your day. Skip it, respect their time and intelligence. Instead of asking how they are, get to why you are calling.

**2. “Is this a good time?”** No! As I have spoken about in the past, our

job is that of “professional disruptors,” professional interrupters. By definition, a cold call is when we call someone who does not know us, is not expecting our call, but fits the profile of someone who would benefit from our offering. With all that, no it is not a good time, but I really don't care, because I have something important for the prospect, something that will help them achieve their objectives and improve their business.

**3. “Who is in Charge Of?”** Want to tell a prospect you don't care, you can't be bothered, or that you really don't enjoy your job? Just start the call like that. I swear if I had a dollar for every time I hear that each week, I could subsidize my coffee habit. It is not impossible to find names and titles, and if all else fails, ask for just a specific title, **“May I speak to the VP of Operations?”** Or pick an afternoon and call in advance to collect names to be ready when you make the money call.

Now I know some will sit there and say “I know this, this is too basic”, and you would be right, which is what makes these kind of calls **so wrong**.

## Leveraging The “Nice To Haves”

Sales people are good at looking for prospects or buyers with “pain” or “needs,” those ready for the seller’s “solution.” I get it. These are more immediate sales, more cooperative buyers even when the motivation is rooted in “pain.” But is that enough?

Most groups I work with will tell me that to make quota they will have to close business with more than just the “lower hanging fruit” of self-declared buyers with “pains” or “needs.” They will need to reach beyond this group, and bring other players “into the market.”

A few days ago I was in the back of a room when a pundit was telling a sales audience that they should segment their prospects’/buyers’ state-

ments into three types:

- Needs
- Wants
- Nice to haves

He went on to say that successful sales people focus most of their effort on the prospect's “needs,” a lesser amount of time and effort on the “wants,” and by addressing these two you will win the business. Don't waste time on the “Nice to haves,” “because they are likely not funded and usually reflect the individual, not the group, and therefore will not achieve consensus.”

That may be logical on the surface, but I have always found that exploring the “Nice to haves” usually helps me get the sale, or at times allow me to walk away, without adding much if any time to the sales cycle.

“Nice to haves” are usually more personal or individual and certainly more subjective than other aspects of the decision around the purchase. As a result, we know that it is not likely to be the things everyone coalesces around, but it is often a key stop or the critical element in getting to that consensus. According to the CEB in the *Challenger Customer*, a buying group is more likely to have discord and failure in deciding the “type” of solution to deploy than in selecting a specific vendor once they have agreed on “solution.”

Against this backdrop, it is clear that the clutch that brings people together, is the degree to which their “nice to haves” are part of the consideration and the path forward. It is the salesperson's ability to help each stakeholder see how the core decision and ultimate deliverable, actually moves them closer to their “nice to haves.”

Don't look at exploring their “nice to haves” as a waste of time. They are personal and telling. You may find that individuals who may not see eye-to-eye on elements of the decision, may have similarities in their nice to haves. Creating connections and allegiances on that level could make the difference between one path and another, or one supplier vs. an-

(Continued on page 6)

# How to Use Email and Voice Mail to Get a Return Call

Are you frustrated by the lack of response to your voice mails and the impact it has on your Smart Calling efforts?

You can increase your odds of getting a return call by integrating e-mails with your voice mails. Here is a simple, easy to use Three-Step combination that you can adapt and use in virtually any industry. It combines polite persistence with a touch of humor to compel the prospect to respond.

## **Step 1: 10 Minutes of Your Time Voice Mail and E-mail Combo**

Assuming that you have made several attempts to reach your prospect live, the first step in the process is to leave a simple voice mail message using the template below. The key to the message is the request for a 10-minute chat:

**"Hey Dan, This is Mike Wray calling from Logistical Shippers. We work with freight handlers who are frustrated with late and delayed shipments. Dan, the reason for my call is to arrange a brief, 10-minute chat to learn more about your situation and to see if we can reduce some of the hassle associated with shipping delays. Please call me at \_\_\_\_\_. In the meantime, I'll send you a brief e-mail."**

The subsequent e-mail you send echoes the voice mail message by providing a visual message to the audio message you left. It begins with a good subject line,

### **Re: Dan, request for 10 minutes of your time**

The subject line contains the prospect's name and references a request for 10 minutes of time. It not only echoes the voice mail message, it creates a degree of curiosity especially if the prospect has not yet heard of the voice mail i.e., "What request? Did I miss something?" The body of your e-mail should contain elements of your voice mail:

**"Dan, as I mentioned in my voice mail, we work with freight handlers who are frustrated with the hassle that delayed shipments can cause. We have a simple solution that virtually eliminates these head-aches. Could we chat for about 10 minutes so that I can better understand your situation and needs, and to see if we might be able to make your job a heck of a lot easier? My number is \_\_\_\_\_ or simply reply with a time and date."**

The e-mail provides a lot of "teasing copy." It references both the pain motivator (frustrated and hassle) and the gain motivator (a heck of a lot easier) without belaboring either.

## **Step 2: 8 Minutes of Your Time Voice Mail E-Mail Combo**

Persistence is the key to make this process work. Wait three days for a response before leaving your second voice mail/e-mail combo. Three days courteously gives the prospect enough time to reply and helps avoid the "stalking syndrome" that typically occurs if you follow up too soon.

**"Hi Dan, Mike Wray calling from Logistical Shippers. Dan, I am following up on the e-mail left about setting up a telephone appointment to review your freight handling needs. I asked for 10 minutes of your time but I suspect you're busy, perhaps dealing with a late shipment or two. Kidding aside, how about 8 minutes of your time? I'll send you a quick e-mail with some additional information. In the meantime, my number is..."**

It is vital that the tone of your voice is light and easy. Notice the request for time has diminished to 8 minutes. It's a lighthearted message that acknowledges the importance of the client's time. Also notice the fun little jest: dealing with a late shipment or two. This is a brief reminder of a possible motivator. The e-mail follow up continues the theme in the subject line:

**"Dan, how about just 8 minutes of your time?"**

As you can see, reduced time request is emphasized once again. This is deliberate. It's what makes the message unique and catches the eye. It also has a playful ring to it. The body of the e-mail looks like this:

**"Dan, I know how busy things are in the freight business. I deal with handlers every day...so I'll only ask for 8 minutes of your time instead of ten. In that time, perhaps we might be able to explore some ways to help streamline freight tracking and delivery. Sound reasonable? In the meantime, my number is \_\_\_\_\_ or simply reply to this message."**

The message is very brief and colloquial in nature. "Sound reasonable?" is an incomplete sentence but it gives it that off-the-cuff and "no big deal" flavor to the message.

## **Step 3: Five Minutes of Your Time Voice Mail/E-Mail Combo**

The final step in the strategy is to wait another three business days and give the prospect time to respond. If that doesn't happen, your third voice mail/e-mail combo should follow the same pattern as the first two messages by making an easy quip about the time required.

**"Hi Dan, it's Mike Wray calling from Logistical Shippers. Okay, it sounds like you're super busy so here's my one last shot. How about just five minutes of your time AND I promise you it will be the best five minutes you spend this month. My number is..."**

There are a three things at work here. First, is your persistence. You have made two sets of five follow-up contacts spaced about six business days apart. By now the prospect will realize you are tenacious. Second, you create ongoing interest—and maybe

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even amusement—by whittling away the time that you're requesting. Third, is the sincere promise of the chat being "the best five minutes you'll spend this month." Delivered with conviction, this is a bold and confident statement. Let the prospect hear it. The follow up e-mail has the following as a subject line:

**"Re: Okay Dan, here's my last shot: only 5 minutes of your time?"**

If your prospect reads nothing else, he'll read the subject line and remember you. But your subject line also reveals a graceful way of saying you won't pursue him beyond this message. This can help buy some good will and perhaps urge the prospect to respond. The body of the message does not have to be elaborate but it should maintain the easy nature of your earlier messages.

**"Dan, here's my last kick at the can: 5 minutes of your time. No more. Promise. But kidding aside, if you can spare just five minutes of your time there is a very good chance that we can help reduce or eliminate the hassle and headaches of delayed shipments. Using a simple process, we take the checking and verifying out of your hands and put it into ours. It's all we do. And that gives you time to work on other more significant matters. 5 minutes? Please give me a call at \_\_\_\_\_ or simply reply to this e-mail. Otherwise I will call you next quarter."**

Note the layout of the message. Short sentences. Lots of white space. Easy to quickly read and understand. The "look" of your e-mail reflects what a quick 5-minute look might feel like. Also take note that there is a reference to the solution you offer. It's not a pitch but just a broad overview. And finally, the message points out that if there is no reply, you'll call next quarter. In effect, you are saying this is the last chance they have to respond.

## Summary

This process works. It's been "borrowed" from IT specialist Brian Borrows who explains that he gets a 30% response rate.

This is not surprising. The process combines persistence with creativity. It's easy going, amusing, and gentle. It creates a one-two punch by marrying the power of audio messages with the power of visual message. Because it is a process, you can use it repeatedly with virtually every prospect as long as you change the name. This saves you time and effort. Take the time to adapt this process to your situation. It requires a little thought and effort but the return can be significant.

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## Link the Closing Action to The Benefit

If you're closing for an appointment, or any action for that matter, always mention the action you want them to take along with the benefit for doing so. For example,

**"Pat, it seems that it would be an excellent idea for you to bring your last two years' tax returns down to my office. I'm confident I'll be able to show you a way to cut your taxes significantly."**

**"Dale, the next step at this point should be for you to send me copies of your bid specifications. I'll be able to get back to you within the day with a price that will at least be 10% less than you're paying now."**



## The Power of Daily Prospecting

*by Jeb Blount,  
Author of Fanatical Prospecting*

When you prospect consistently - and, that means every day - amazing things happen. The cumulative impact of daily prospecting is massive. You begin to connect with the right people, in the right accounts, at just the right time. Suddenly, you start getting "lucky." Opportunities drop in your lap out of nowhere (my team at Sales Gravy calls this phenomenon "The Sales Gods").

Most salespeople never get lucky because they only do the minimal amount of prospecting required to just squeak by, and when they do start prospecting (usually, out of desperation), they expect instant miracles. When those miracles don't happen, they gripe that prospecting doesn't work and crawl back into the warm comfort of mediocrity.

You can't expect to make prospecting calls for a single day and expect miracles any more than you could expect to hit the driving range once and go on to win a golf tournament. It requires consistent commitment and discipline over time—a little bit every day.

So, go hit the phones, knock on doors, send e-mails and text messages, pound LinkedIn, ask for referrals, attend networking events, and talk to strangers. Be fanatical. Don't let anything or anyone stop you.

The more you prospect, the luckier you get.

*Jeb Blount advises many of the world's leading organizations and their executives on the impact of emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills on customer experience, strategic account management, sales, and developing high performing sales teams. He speaks to and delivers training to high-performing sales teams across the globe. 1-888-360-2249*



# The Three Tough Sales Questions I Should Have Asked

A few years ago, shortly after launching my new website, I absent-mindedly answered the phone when it rang. When the caller announced that he was from Southwest Airlines, I quickly snapped to attention.

He'd been all over my website, was very impressed, and also very interested in my training programs. The airline was going to be putting its salespeople through training in the not-too-distant future and was evaluating its options. When I asked who else he was looking at, he named off a bunch of industry biggies. I was over the moon.

As we continued talking, Mr. Southwest asked dozens of questions about my content, delivery models, remote training options, learning reinforcement, and more. I answered every single one in glorious detail. When he requested a proposal, I asked, "How soon?" and quickly agreed to his two day timeline.

The proposal I sent to him via e-mail covered everything we had talked about in our conversation, plus a full range of pricing options. I never heard from Mr. Southwest again—and it was my own fault.

## How To Keep a Sale from Going South(west)

In retrospect, I mistakenly let my own eagerness to do business with this marquis customer outweigh my common sense. I should have known better, but I was seduced by the opportunity.

Over and over again, I see other sellers make similar mistakes when they have a ready-to-buy-now prospect on the line. Like me, they expound on their capabilities and benefits. They willingly provide detailed information and do tons of extra work to create proposals or presentations—anything the prospects want.

While that puts you into the "nice" seller category, it doesn't help your prospects make the best deci-

sion for their organization. Nor does it enable you to separate yourself from your competitors. You just come across as an overeager beaver. And usually you don't get the business.

That's why, when these prospects contact you, it's imperative to not let your common sense fly out the window. Here's what you can do instead: ask questions

## Why Tough Sales Questions Matter

It's good for both you and your prospect to dig in and ask the hard questions. At first, they often feel inappropriate, especially when you feel like you should be "selling." But in reality, they are exactly what you should be doing—helping potential clients make the best possible decision for their business.

Here are three questions you must ask about—even if they're uncomfortable:

### **1. Are they 100% sure they're going to change—or are they trying to determine if it makes sense?**

This is crucial in determining your next step. If they're still trying to decide, your focus needs to be on the business case. If they're committed to taking action, then the focus becomes differentiation.

### **2. What other options are they considering—and have they ever done business with any of these companies before?**

If your prospect has an existing business relationship, make sure to explore why they'd consider changing. It's a lot more work than staying with the status quo and if they don't have a good reason, they're likely not going with you.

### **3. What are their decision criteria, and why is each factor important?**

When you find out what criteria they plan to base their decision on, it ultimately helps you:

Figure out which aspects of your own product/service you should stress;

Determine how you stand against your competitors; and

Uncover any possible misconceptions about the best solution for them.

Plan these questions now. Do it *before* you talk to a real, live, ready-to-buy-now prospect. You'll also want to practice asking these questions aloud too. Ultimately, asking the tough questions will make you more likely to identify the opportunities with potential and thus close more deals.

(Jill Konrath, author of *SNAP Selling, Selling to Big Companies, and her newest book, Agile Selling, helps sellers land bigger clients and speed up their sales cycle. To get her free Prospecting Tool Kit, visit [www.jillkonrath.com/sales-resources.](http://www.jillkonrath.com/sales-resources.)*)



## *(Continued from page 2)*

other. Having two allies you brought together on a personal level can't hurt.

Knowing their "nice to haves", will also put you in a good position for future upsells and renewals with the company, based on the rapport you established when you took their individual "nice to haves" into account. Remember, often the difference between a "want" and a "nice to have", is the sales person's ability to make the "nice to have" possible.

(Tibor Shanto is a Sales Execution Specialist, focused on helping sales teams and individuals secure more revenue through improved prospecting, selling and overall execution of their process. You can reach Tibor at (416) 822-7781, or visit [www.SellBetter.ca](http://www.SellBetter.ca))



## Voice Mail

(Continued from cover page)

### Use a Sexy Voice

I'll just leave this one alone and you can draw your own conclusions: "You probably already knew that "sex sells." But did you know it can also get phone calls returned? Now I'm not saying this will work for everyone, but if you're calling a member of the opposite sex and you make your voice a little deeper nobody's going to get hurt. It worked for Elaine, right? Next time you're about to make a phone call, channel your inner Barry White or Madonna and let's see if it doesn't get you a callback."

### On the "A Bit Suspect" Side

Here are a few that are in the grey area, which means that for many people they are totally unacceptable tactics. Personally I wouldn't recommend them as is, but using the theory, with a different example I might condone.

### Use Information Gap Theory

Information Gap Theory is when we feel there's a gap between what we know and what we want to know. It is saying something that will arouse your prospects' curiosity so much they'll HAVE to call you. Their example is,

"Mr. Jones, I was reviewing your insurance history and I was a bit surprised at what I saw... I'll explain when you call me back."

Now, if indeed that IS true, it could be effective. If it's made up, then of course it's not acceptable.

### Disregard My Former Message

The author shares a tactic that an agent in the field uses:

"Sometimes I leave a message saying 'please disregard that last message,' without actually leaving a prior message. People respond pretty quick asking about that last message."

I'd only suggest it if you did indeed leave a previous message, but perhaps that would diminish its intended power.

### The Ugly

These are the unethical ones I share only for entertainment value, as I shake my head in amazement.

### Imply That You Have a Mutual Friend

"If you say something in your message implying that your prospect and you might have a mutual friend, they're more likely to call you back because: They want to know who the mutual friend is. And, They won't want you to tell their friend they're an unresponsive jerk."

And then you'll be the jerk if they call back and realize you lied.

### Quote an Insanely Cheap Price

"If you want a callback, leave a price on their voicemail that is half what it should be. Sure you'll have your work cut out for you when that call comes, but at least it came."

Oh, and that's the way you want to start a relationship. The means does NOT justify the end.

### Offer a Prize

"Leave a message with, 'Call me back and I'll give you a prize that could be worth \$5,000...' And give them a scratch-off when they come in to sign the paperwork."

Please.

### Leave Half a Message

"Call your prospect, start to say something very interesting and then CLICK..."

"I was talking to my wife about you and...CLICK".

He actually cited the famous, bombastic trainer with lots of followers who suggests this. I won't even give him the publicity here.

So, there you have it. I'm out there for you, sifting through the good, bad, and ugly and breaking it down for you. Take the good ideas here, adapt them and use them to deliver value. Stay away from the bad ones and you'll not be contributing to the negative impression that some salespeople perpetuate.

## Price

### A Question to Ask Purchasing

Do you ever end up talking to the purchasing department and getting frustrated?

At a recent training program the discussion shifted to dealing with purchasing agents and how they typically try to beat you down on price and usually don't care about any other aspect of possible value.

One of the reps, Laura Mantz, shared that she at one time worked in procurement, and reminded everyone that they are actually human (despite what some reps might think). They, in fact, **do** have a stake in making the best choice for the money, and don't want to look bad if they buy the cheapest alternative and it turns out badly. She suggests asking,

**"If you ever did buy just based solely on price, and the quality was inferior, would the users come back to you for an explanation?"**



### Uncover the Competitive Price

Finding out what your competitor charges, and what your prospect/customer pays or is quoted is valuable information in a negotiation. Here are techniques from Gerald Nierenberg on finding out that information.

**Guess.** "OK, you're paying \$1.45 per unit now. Oh? You say you're paying \$1.43?"

**Reversal.** "Alright, suggest a fair price to me, tell me why it's fair, and I'll see if I can meet it."

**Comparison.** "You have to consider other things besides price—delivery, dependability, quality. What's the best package they could offer?"

**Umbrella.** "The market's been volatile lately, and everyone seems to be shifting their prices. What's the best offer you've received?"

**Direct.** "The industry average is probably \$1.45. but I'm interested in what Pat Smith at XYZ is offering I'm sure I can get close to his price."

(*"Negotiating the Big Sale,"* Gerald Nierenberg)



## Communicate Precisely

Do you know anyone that regularly speaks in vague terms and you find it difficult to pin them down for a commitment for anything? For example, if you are suggesting an activity together, hearing a response like, "That sounds good. We'll need to do that. I'll let you know." Frustrating. Well, it has the same effect on your prospects and customers. Look at these vague terms and their more specific alternatives.

Vague: "I'll be back in the office later."

Better: "I'll be at my desk and available after 2:30."

Vague: "We'll get the proposal out as soon as we can."

Better: "You'll have the proposal no later than Friday's FedEx delivery."

Bottom line, be specific in your communication, and you get better results.

## What are You Thinking Before Calls?

The next time you're about to dial the phone, STOP! Ask yourself, "What am I thinking about this prospect/customer right now?" Surprisingly, some reps allow little negativisms to creep in and pollute their thinking . . . thoughts such as "I know this guy will want to beat me down on price." These thoughts then turn into self-fulfilling prophecies. Instead, move into a state of mind where you're visualizing your call objective as already having been accomplished. Also ask yourself, **"What does this person want and how can I help them get it?"**

## Interesting Quotes on Wants- and Needs-Based Decision Making

In his book, **Selling to the Top**, David Peoples shares a few thought-provoking quotes: Dale Carnegie said, "When dealing with people remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic but with creatures of emotion."

Dr. Tom Stanley, author of the book **Marketing to the Affluent**, said, "Of the hundreds of millionaires I have interviewed, only one reported using totally objective evidence to evaluate sellers of investment services."

Former Chief Justice Hughes of the U.S. Supreme Court said, "Our level of decision making is 95 percent emotional."

Neil Rackham, in his book **Major Account Selling** reports that in a study of lost sales where vendors were told they lost on price, follow-up interviews showed that 64% of the time the real reason was other than price.

## Plan for Your Off-Phone Time

Most of us believe that we just don't have enough time to get everything done. Particularly those of you who handle details other than calling during your day, such as chasing down answers to problems, sending out samples and literature, and checking on orders. An efficient way to get your calling in **and** handle the functions and crises that arise is to have a set amount of time each hour—10 minutes or so—as your "other duties" time. Schedule a constant time each hour, at 50 minutes past, for example, and stick to it. This way you can lay aside those little nagging jobs until their set time, instead of dropping the phone to perform the duty. This way, your calling tempo remains in rhythm, and you still get plenty done.

## Put Excitement in Your Statements

In addition to the aforementioned attention-grabbers, you want to make statements that exude excitement and confidence. For example, analyze the emotions that the following pairs of statements evoke:

Neutral Statement 1: "Here's a proposal I have for you."

Colorful Statement 1: "**Here's an exciting opportunity you'll want to take a look at.**"

Neutral Statement 2: "Well yes, our price is higher."

Colorful Statement 2: "**Comparing just the amount you would write the check for today, yes the price is higher. But look at it this way, you'll enjoy the benefits of higher quality, plus over time you'll actually pay less.**"

## If This Newsletter is Not Yours, Here's How To Get Your Own Copy Each Month, and MORE!

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# SMART CALLING REPORT

July 2016

Volume 33 Number 7

## A Unique Tip to Use With Prospecting Warm-Up Emails

What's the most-read, and usually the first-read part of a direct mail letter, or email?

The P.S.

So be sure your prospecting emails have one as well, and that you use it to ask a question.

Don't misunderstand me here; I'm **not** suggesting you send out the mass, untargeted email campaigns that give a long-winded pitch and then ask for an appointment. (These are also characterized by the annoying follow-up emails that say, "I wanted to be sure you got my last message. You did not reply." Right, that's because your email had no value for me. In fact, I would never ever be a prospect for what you sell.)

I am suggesting you can use email to warm up a prospecting call. And do include a question as the P.S.

### An Example

For example,

Hi Mike, a mutual acquaintance, Doug Stevens at Grande Industrial felt it would be beneficial for us to connect. We helped him to cut his processing times and associated labor costs by 20% on commercial projects and he mentioned you might have interest in those types of numbers.

I'll give you a call Friday morning, or if there is a better time please just hit Reply and give me a couple of choices that work for you. Or if you'd like to speak before then, here's my mobile 555-555-5555.

Looking forward to speaking with you.

Emily Knowlton  
National Accounts Manager

P.S. I see on your LinkedIn profile you volunteer for Special Olympics. Will you be at the Torch Run?

### The Components

To break down this email, first notice what is NOT in it: a product pitch. If you talk about your product or service, you have just given them enough information to decide they do NOT need to speak with you.

Here are the components in this one you can model:

#### 1. Reason for Contacting and Possible Value.

The reason for reaching out: in this case it was a mutual connection.

The possible value for the prospect: here it is the "social proof," what you have done for the mutual connection. The results you have provided, which likely would be of interest for the prospect as well.

#### 2. The next-action intent and request.

Notice here the rep is stating that she will call. She is **not** asking for an appointment up front, although she does ask him to hit Reply (an easy action to take) and offers a couple of good times to speak. Then she gives another soft option for the prospect to call, if so inclined.

### 3. The PS.

The PS shifts gears into a lighter, personal area. One that likely is of great interest to the prospect. This shows the sales rep did homework, and cares enough to touch on something the prospect has interest in.

And finally, it asks a question. People are conditioned to answer questions. Particularly if the topic is something the person is passionate about.

I received an email from someone who did not know me, and his format somewhat followed this process. Not bad overall.

Then at the end he said, "I know you're a huge baseball fan and at one time you were on a mission to see every stadium. (That was in one of my books). How many do you have left?"

I replied with a several sentence answer. AND took his call when it came in.

Your options for the PS here are limited only by your creativity. But be sensible. You don't want to come across as the creepy stalker. I'd keep the questions to things you see on their LinkedIn page, not on their personal Facebook profile. Ask about previous jobs, companies, experiences in positions, or about an interest they state in their profile.

Again, email is not a replacement for selling. It is an effective complement, and when used wisely it can help you tremendously.

PS. Don't forget the PS!



## Sales Observations

**I've so had it with the "cold calling doesn't work" crowd.** These are the folks who for the most part are trying to sell their social media or marketing courses. And when meek salespeople opt for the path of least resistance—buying into the promises of not having to talk to people they don't know, and then spend—actually waste—their time on these marketing activities, instead of calling, they burrow themselves further into the hole of no results.

Granted, social media, email, and snail mail are all great complements to a sales strategy and process. I use them all extensively myself. But they are not a replacement for the quickest and most effective way to enter into a sales conversation with someone YOU want to do business with—as opposed to waiting for someone to contact you like a teenager hoping someone will call them for a date.

And even though you can get instant success by making a call right after you read this and get a "yes" from someone, we all know that is not typically the case, any more than a baseball player getting a hit most of the time. There will be more "no's" than achievement of your primary objective, no doubt. It's part of the game. Just like prospectors in the

1800's, we sift through lots of gravel before finding gold. But the gold is what we take to the bank. The more gravel we go through, the greater our chances of hitting the gold.

Which also means if you are serious about getting a steady supply of new business, prospecting needs to be a habit. Not something you do when you have downtime, or just do it in spurts. That would be like going to the gym once or twice a month when you can fit it in, and expect to drop weight and build muscle.

It needs to be something you do EVERY day. Non-negotiable. It's an appointment you set with yourself. It's a priority. You can't wait for a convenient time, because that does not happen. People who aren't committed to their prospecting always find something else to do.

And the magical thing about taking action... massive action... is that this mystical, magical, mojo and karma kick in. Good things happen when you are putting yourself out there. Opportunities beget other opportunities. Momentum feeds off of itself. All of a sudden, you get "luckier."

But it's not really luck. Luck is what happens when consistent, education action meets the marketplace.

So, as we know, the "cold" in cold calling is dead, but not the calling. Now go and make that next call, and make things happen!

**Quick personal story about cold calling success.** My doorbell rang on a Sunday morning. I usually don't even answer my door if I am not expecting someone or I see it's someone I don't know. In this case I saw it was a small, middle-aged, sweet-looking Hispanic woman. I opened the door. She stepped backwards, smiled, and said, "Hi, my name is Leticia, I'm a housekeeper and I do a couple of homes down the block. I have references and do great work and I'm looking for one more home in this

area. I was wondering if you needed a housekeeper?"

My first spoken reaction was the same as many people when they are hit with a pitch on a cold call, or by a salesperson in a retail store.

"No, I'm all set."

She smiled, and looked at me and said, "Oh, OK, well if you ever need anyone I do really thorough cleaning and I'm very reliable."

Now, the backstory. My housekeeper had actually quit two weeks prior because she was consolidating clients and staying closer to her part of town. I actually had another housekeeper that was referred to me coming **the next day** for an interview. So I said to Leticia, "What would you charge for a house like this?"

She gave me a range and said she would need to look around and find out what I needed done. So I invited her in.

Fast forward. I had her do a "try-out" cleaning that day. She was awesome, as a cleaner and a person. I checked her references. They were glowing. I cancelled the other interview. Leticia is now my regular housekeeper. From a cold call. A door-to-door cold call, no less.

But cold calling doesn't work,

Make this your best month ever!

*Art*

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### SMART CALLING REPORT

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# Sell More By Asking “Why?” and “How?”

By Tibor Shanto

Much of the discussion around social selling vs. traditional selling, or even old school selling like cold calling, has distracted many from the central issue: successful selling.

When was the last time someone congratulated you on landing a big account and asked you “BTW, Ann, did you use social or other selling to win this deal?”

It is more likely that someone would ask about the steps and techniques that could be repeated to deliver similar results consistently.

## The Proven Method

There is one tried and true approach, that when executed properly can help you and the buyer in a number of ways to come to the right decision in a shorter and less painful time frame and atmosphere. No magic or silver bullet, but a series of questions framed around two simple words and concepts:

- Why
- How

Using these two in a one – two combination helps you resolve a number of potential hurdles but avoid some as well.

One common example is when you have worked a sale in accordance to your process. You have interviewed the buyer(s), qualified them, understood their objectives, and then validated them for good measure. You deliver your proposal, expecting to have some discussion or negotiations, and then ultimately leading to a decision (preferably a buy decision--but at times any decision will do.) Only to be told that they need to take it to someone who has not been part of the process to date (owner, boss...). None of us can pretend this has not happened to us.

However, using the **Why** - **How** early in the cycle can reduce or eliminate this, but only if you leave the product out of it, and focus on the buyer's objectives. And by buyer, I am

talking about the individuals and the collective organization.

Start by asking **Why** they chose the product or process now in place. No pre-bias or agenda, just an honest question as to “**Why that?**”

If they are unable to clearly articulate why they chose the product/provider--and this should be in detail--that means you need to be ready with a number of follow-through questions in order to fully explore specifics. What were they trying to achieve, why didn't they like some of the common alternatives? Why automate instead of outsource? Why on-premise vs. cloud?

## Question Deep

Go deep, don't just skim the surface. Many prospects will be able to provide answers that are really just talking points, but to get real answers, answers that give insight into the situation and the person's role in the situation, you will need to have at least three follow up questions.

- Why that objective?
- How do they measure that?
- Upside of achieving the objective
- Plus, implications of a miss; etc.

If they can go into detail about these, contrasting the choices they had to deal with and why they landed where they did, then you are more likely dealing with someone who was involved in the decision, vs. someone who can't answer, and therefore was not likely core to the decision. Which is a clear signal you'll need to engage someone else, and now.

Along with the **Why** questions, you need to have **How** questions.

**“Great, I understand why you went with that route (product service, provider, etc.), tell me how you went about selecting Vendor X?”**

The goal here is to get a step-by-

step of the **How**, giving you a window into how they make decisions.

Again, if they can detail How the decision was made, you're in the right place heading in the right direction. If not, and it is clear that they were secondary in the process, then it is clear that you need to engage others. The goal is to do this really early in the discovery phase, where curiosity and interest are rewarded with information, especially as the questions you are asking relate to them, but provide you with multi-level insights.

## Conversational

Again, if you are ready with your follow-through questions, then you will also be in a position to learn who was involved in the decision, and is likely necessary to get a decision now. The great thing is that once you make this **Why-How** combo part of your routine, you'll discover that it is a very conversational and inclusionary approach, where buyers are allowed to reflect and share info rather than interrogating or pitching.

The **Why-How** works on almost any element of the sale, but it does require practice and preparation.

Rather than doing the conventional probing around the decision process, who is involved, what are the steps, are the steps defined or is it ad-hoc, etc., ask anyone if they are the ones to make the decision, and they'll likely say yes.

Ask about **Why** and **How** the current vendor was selected, and you may find a different scenario, with additional and at times more important players that will have to be engaged to get the decision you want. But that's just the start. You can leverage **Why - How** in a more granular way to give you further insights about the buyer, their organization, and how to adjust your execution to achieve success.

First is across time. Look to the past, present and future. Looking to the past will tell how they do things. How they bought software last year or the year before, unless there is an entirely new crew,

(Continued on page 7)

# A Different Kind of Opening Statement

(NOTE: This is the opening that Art had covered briefly in the July Inner Circle Coaching Call.)

Anyone in sales knows how difficult it is to capture a prospect's fickle and fleeting attention, especially if you sell "like" or "identical" products or services. And if you can't grab their attention you are not going to sell them.

Here is an opening statement that has had some remarkable success and is something you might be able to adapt to your situation.

It's called the McCarthy Opener because I stole it from Ryan McCarthy, a sales rep for Softchoice Corporation, a company that sells computer hardware and software. You can't get a more "like" product than hardware and software. I have taken a few liberties in the example below, but the key components of Ryan's approach are evident:

**"Jim? This is Ryan McCarthy calling from Softchoice Corporation. We are a reseller of hardware and software technologies. And Jim, believe me, I know you can get this kind of stuff at a lot of different places. But we really do things differently here at Softchoice to add value for our customers by helping them, among other things, develop strategies to mitigate legal risks associated with software purchasing. If I have caught you at good time, I would like to ask you some questions and, if it makes sense to do so, provide you with a presentation that explains how Softchoice approaches the market. How does that sound?"**

## Initial Reaction

When I first heard Ryan deliver this opening statement, my jaw hit the desk. It seemed so flippant, so off the cuff that I had difficulty imaging that anyone would give him the time of day. Well, I was dead wrong. Ryan went three for three on getting clients to listen. He also used it as a voice mail message and got a response. He explained that he had tested numerous opening statements and this one had the best hit rate.

After giving it some thought, it occurred to me that this opening statement works

because it has the right mix of words that conjure up positive thoughts in the client's mind. When you look at the opening statement you will see there are four distinct parts.

### Part 1: Identification

Pretty standard here: Ryan introduces himself and his company. He also includes a very brief description of what Softchoice does. This is helpful for a prospect that may not be familiar with the company.

### Part 2: The Hook

This is where the opening statement really excels.

Ryan's hook begins when he says "...believe me, I know you can get this kind of stuff at a lot of different places." The statement is absolutely refreshing and candid. No one expects a sales rep to be so forthright; so blatantly honest. Consequently, it catches the prospect off guard and because it does, the prospect is drawn further into the opening statement. He listens because he is intrigued. You can almost hear the prospect say, "Wow, that's a line I haven't heard before."

Because the prospect is truly listening it makes the second part of the hook more effective. The second part of the hook is the benefit statement. Ryan refers to how Softchoice can help mitigate legal risk associated with the use of software licensing. To an IT director at a business firm, this is a pertinent topic. (Ryan has other benefits that he can insert here as well).

### Part 3: Reason for the Call

Ryan's reason for the call is to set up a presentation call. It is NOT to sell, it is not to send a proposal, it is not to provide a quote and it is not even to set up a face-to-face presentation. For the prospect, the reason for the call is relatively harmless. In other words, there is no concern that he will be 'pitched' a product or a service. This helps drop the reserve that many prospect have with unknown vendors.

Ryan positions it effectively too. He uses the phrase "...if it makes sense." This is an excellent choice of words. Again, the prospect does not feel he is being "pitched." He understands that he is not being cornered. The implication is that if it

doesn't make sense then the call will go no further. The prospect is put at ease and is more receptive.

### Part 4: Bridge to a Dialog

The last part of the opener is very 'techniquey' but very effective. Using the phrase, "if I caught you at a good time..." Ryan shows respect for the prospect's time but he inserts that thought with a request to ask a few questions. He sums it up by asking: "How does that sound?" What this statement really does is it stops Ryan from talking further and gets the prospect engaged in the dialog.

If the prospect says yes, the first 'sale' has been made. Ryan has sold the prospect on asking questions. At this stage, Ryan goes on to qualify the account and determines if a follow up presentation makes sense.

Speaking of presentations, Softchoice did their homework. They developed a compelling USP – unique selling proposition- and bundled it into an effective presentation. Obviously, for this opening statement you need to understand and develop your own unique selling proposition. You need to be able to articulate what makes you "different." You don't need a Power Point presentation but you should certainly have a clear and concise message.

The McCarthy Opener works well in almost any industry or market. I have "borrowed" the template and tested it with several other clients. It doesn't work 100% of the time but it does get more people to listen further. It works well because it is different and unique. Prospects have become jaded with slick and cheesy openers. This opening statement cuts through the clutter because it is bold and brassy. It tells it like it is and prospects seem to respect it. Give it a try.

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# How to Get Out of a Sales Rut

By Jeb Blount

I spent the past week working with one of my client's inside sales teams. My objective was to map the sales process of their very best reps in preparation for writing a custom sales training curriculum designed to accelerate the performance of their entire sales team. To gain the information I needed I listened to the calls of their best reps as well as reps that were not producing at optimum levels.

Several of the underperforming reps I worked with had once been top performers but were no longer at that level. As I listened it struck me that they did not sound enthusiastic, took short-cuts during the call, and were not as likable as the top reps. When I questioned them about it, at first they defended themselves. However, when I pointed out that they had once been performing at a much higher level than now, most of them came clean.

## Just Going Through the Motions

They were just going through the motions. The reps were aware that their performance had dropped and admitted that they were burned out, un-happy, and tired. They told me that they liked the company, the people they worked with and that overall it was a great job. Yet, they just couldn't seem to get out of their rut.

In sales it is easy to get stuck in a rut. Burn-out is common. The reasons are simple. First, sales is chock full of rejection. The reps I was with heard no, on average, 40 times a day. That's a lot of rejection for anyone to endure. Over time it adds up and begins to impact attitude, confidence, and overall happiness.

Next, sales can be incredibly repetitive. Same questions, same responses, same objections, same product or service, over and over again.

It is no wonder that so many salespeople find themselves down in the dumps, bored, angry, tired, and sometimes depressed. They whine and complain about the leads, environment, economy, prospects, peers, and boss.

Commonly they don't even know why. Instead they plod on and hope for the best. But nothing really changes (and often things just get worse) because they fail to address the real issue – their attitude.

## Attitude Reset

The key to getting out of a rut is resetting your attitude because until that changes nothing else will. What is important to understand is that you didn't get into a rut overnight and likewise you won't upgrade your attitude overnight. Changing your attitude requires self-awareness, a commitment to change, and time.

The first time I got into a sales rut I was mad at the world. My attitude stunk and my performance, which was usually the best on my team, was going the wrong way. My sales manager told me that I was better than that but his admonishment just put me into a deeper funk. I didn't know what to do but I knew I had to make a change or I'd soon be an angry, depressed sales rep without a job.

My reset began with a copy of No Bull Selling by Hank Trisler. I'd decided to read it as a way to motivate myself. Each morning I had to make outbound calls to set appointments with prospects. In my funk I could barely dial the phone. I hated making those calls. So I made a pact with myself. Every time I made 15 dials, I could read 5 minutes of No Bull Selling.

## Invest in Yourself

A little bit every day my attitude improved. Even though I hated the dials I looked forward to reading the book and the book inspired me to make the dials. The more I read the better I felt. Three months later I was the sales rep of the quarter. I'd come out of my rut and outgunned the entire sales team.

I learned a valuable lesson from that experience. If I wanted to change my negative attitude I had to feed it positive food. I had to invest in myself. No one else was going to do that for me.

This is the key to getting out of ruts. Fill up with positive energy and a little bit at a time you will emerge from your sales rut.

(Jeb Blount advises many of the world's leading organizations and their executives on the impact of emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills on customer experience, strategic account



management, sales, and developing high performing sales teams. He speaks to and delivers training to

high-performing sales teams across the globe. 1-888-360-2249)



## A Prospecting Opening Statement Template

Here's a simple way to brainstorm for some of your Possible Value Propositions. Fill in the blanks:

**"We specialize in working with**

(title of buyer/type of company, group, organization)

**who/that**

(describe a situation or problem)

**and help them to**

(the result you provide)

**which means**

(further describing the end result).

(Mention specific customer/client results)"

For example,

**"We specialize in working with sales teams that have new business quotas, helping them to use a proven prospecting process which means they are able to confidently get through to and sell to new buyers. Our most recent client has already opened up 10 new accounts in a week, more than they did the past three months."**

You get the picture. Give it a try. Build a sales meeting around it.



# Don't Suffer from Seasonal CALLergies

Are you one of the 5.4 million sellers\* worldwide who suffer from seasonal callergies?

It's that time of year again! Seasonal callergies are in full swing and sellers everywhere are suffering. How do you know if you've been afflicted with this malady—and what can you do to treat it?

**The Center for Sales Disease Control\* has just issued this statement:**

*Seasonal callergies frequently arise when the sun is shining and it's a gorgeous day. Sellers typically feel a general lethargy towards prospecting. They may even experience adverse reactions such as an inability to concentrate and a severe itching to get outside.*

Left untreated, seasonal callergies can wreak havoc on meeting your sales goals.

The good news is that you don't need to suppress your urge to avoid the phone and get out of the office.

Instead, use it to your advantage. You can enjoy this beautiful weather if you do the following:

## 1. Get Off to a Faster Start

Each day, block time on your calendar to identify who you need to call. Have your list ready to go when you come in each morning — and then get to work. Research shows that you'll move even faster if you do ALL pre-call preparation before you initiate contact via email or phone.

## 2. Play "Beat the Clock" Games

Rather than dilly-dallying around or complaining about prospecting, challenge yourself to get it done within a certain time frame. Seriously, playing games is highly motivational, especially if there's a nice reward at the end. Maybe you could take the afternoon off — or even a full day.

## 3. Set a Quitting Time

Believe it or not, leaving your office (even if it's in your home) at a certain time is the best guarantee that your work

will get done. Think about how much you accomplish in the day before you leave on vacation. Work does not have to drag on and on, especially when the sun is shining.

## Seasonal callergies are nothing to sneeze at!

But, they don't have to ruin your summer's sales numbers. Use them to get more work done in less time.

**\*Source:** The above statistic is entirely fictitious and was used in the spirit of fun. And, there is no Center for Sales Disease Control. I made that up too.

(Jill Konrath, author of *SNAP Selling*, *Selling to Big Companies*, and her newest book, *Agile Selling*, helps sellers land bigger clients and speed up their sales cycle. To get her free Prospecting Tool Kit, visit [www.jillkonrath.com/sales-resources](http://www.jillkonrath.com/sales-resources).)



## Create Your Own Hypothetical Questions

Politicians are often asked contrived questions in order to get their opinions about something supposedly based upon facts. You can ask hypotheticals to get prospects and customers to consider what they would do in certain situations:

**"Jane, how would you handle it if your supplier was not able to deliver because they were backordered on something you needed overnight?"**

Create your own hypotheticals designed to get them to react to very real problems they might encounter ... ones you can solve.



## Handling "We're Happy With the Vendor We Are Using Now"

Scott Hodges sells material handling products to manufacturers. His are the highest priced in the market, so he naturally faces resistance like, "We're happy with who we're using, and have no problems whatsoever." Scott's best response is to simply ask, "**When you replace the existing product, why is it replaced?**"

What a great question! Notice the psychology here: the question doesn't address the reflex resistance response "we're happy."

That's smart, since a lot of rational thought hasn't been devoted to that response. Questioning the response would only frustrate them, and perhaps help them come up with good reasons why they are using their present vendor.

Instead, this question focuses on what Scott is really doing: solving problems. In doing so, he's positioning the real value of his product. Because when the prospect answers by explaining that he replaces his palette jacks when the cost of repairs become higher than the cost of a new unit, he can layer questions deeper to get the prospect thinking about those costs. Ideally the prospects begins realizing how even though the equipment had a cheaper price tag initially, the real costs piled up in terms of replacement parts, labor, out-of-service time, and ultimately a shorter life span. Then the prospect is in a very receptive frame of mind to hear about Scott's products . . . most importantly, how his problems could be solved.



**(Continued from page 2)**

in which case exploring their past will still provide visibility to how they do things. Assuming the players have not changed, exploring the past will give you a clear picture as to their propensity to change.

If they have continuously lagged the market in adopting new technologies, if they are still sitting back waiting for cloud computing to be validated, you need to adjust your sales approach accordingly, at times even to the point of moving on and revisiting the opportunity in the future. At the other end are innovators and early adopters. Where they are will dictate how you execute and win them as a client.

Exploring the future, especially when that exploration is through the prism of their business will also dictate execution.

If they have clear objectives, aligned around elements of their business and how they look to grow it, it will make your sale easier, more like straight forward.

Assuming their plans make sense, you can focus on helping them achieve them. If they have clear objectives but have chosen a less than optimal means of achieving them, then you need to first get them to consider alternatives. **Why-How** will help you to get them to change course. Preaching at them would be ineffective, but a series of "**Why that?**", and "**How will that look?**" questions will help you to get them to look at things differently, and from there to look at different things.

**Individual AND Organization**

The other way that **Why-How** will help is by exploring both the individual you are speaking to, and the **Why's - How's** of their organization. This is especially important when there are multiple stakeholders or decision makers. This helps in aligning personal agendas with corporate objectives. It can help you create alignment among the players by focusing on common elements, of each

of the individuals, and those of the company. Minimize differences, especially when not critical to the project, and build on overlap and common elements that you can enhance by virtue of your experience and past success.

I know there are some sales pundits out there who are afraid of the word **Why**, and would rather have you wait for a random event to trigger your success. I say take control of your success by asking **Why > How**, early and often

*(Tibor Shanto is a Sales Execution Specialist, focused on helping sales teams and*

*individuals secure more revenue through improved prospecting, selling and overall execution of their process. You can reach Tibor at (416) 822-7781, or visit [www.SellBetter.ca](http://www.SellBetter.ca))*

**Success Tip from a Smart Caller**

Here's an email I received from Charles Knighton, a Smart Calling Prospecting course owner, sharing his success and a few tips. (Charles sells commercial real estate investment opportunities).

Art:

I hope you're doing well. My call plan has greatly improved and now I've stepped up my game.

I'm also targeting large franchise owners and commercial investors and am reaching the gatekeepers. I recently called Disney and got past the gatekeeper — I was calling the wrong person, but it was still pretty cool.

I'd like to get as much information from the gatekeeper as possible. I've been asking the following questions:

**"Are there any topics I should avoid when speaking with him?"**

**"Why/why not?"**

**"How does he/she like to get their messages?"**

**Reacting to a Brush Off**

When Smart Calling, you likely have, or will hear right after your opening, "I don't have time to talk right now."

This could be a Resistant Reflex Response, which is simply an attempt to get you off the phone.

Or you might indeed have reached them in the middle of something. (Which begs the question, why did they answer the phone? Ok, maybe they were expecting a call from someone else.)

In any event, we want to reply in a non-threatening way that acknowledges what they just said, but doesn't accept it totally, and makes an attempt to either speak briefly now, or set up another call.

Here's how. Respond with,

**"Not a problem," or, "I understand."**

Then follow with,

**"Actually, first I just wanted to ask a couple of questions to see if it would be worth our while for a conversation. Can you take two-three minutes now, or should we set up a time?"**

You'll find that if it is just a RRR and they were trying to get you off the phone, they truly aren't too busy to talk and now you can ask your initial questions, and if things are going well, you can continue.

If they opt to schedule a time, at least you now have salvaged the opportunity and gotten a commitment.

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## Increase Your Chance of Reaching Them

Having a difficult time reaching that coveted prospect? Don't call them at the same time every day. They might have a routine... perhaps a daily meeting at the same time. Mix it up. Look at the times you call and try other times. Of course the old stand bys are before or after regular business hours. Some sales reps have gotten their biggest deals by calling on Saturday morning.

## YOU are Not of Interest to Them

I hear lots of calls that begin with, "And I'd like to introduce myself as the Account Manager for your territory and tell you what we do."

The needle on their Care Meter immediately pegs to zero. Here's an important point: until they know you and trust you, YOU are not a reason that they are going to be interested in you. You need to be prepared with the possible results and value that you have delivered for others, and might be able to for them, in order for them to be even remotely interested in speaking further.

## Objection-Handling Technique from a Political Pundit

I heard this while listening to two opposing-view political pundits debating on a cable news show. One was screeching and yelling her points while the other would calmly listen and then reply. She started one of her responses with, "**Well, that's one way of looking at it. Actually, the facts show...**"

What a great way to respond to an objection!

For example, after hearing an objection that actually isn't based in reality—but certainly their feelings and emotions—you could first acknowledge it with the same technique: "**Well, yes, that is one way of looking at it.**"

Then, you could continue in a similar way: "**In actuality, here is the return on investment that others are now getting...**"

## A Unique Addition to Your Opening

If you are in an uber-competitive space and your prospects get tons of calls daily, not only from your competition but from reps selling virtually anything, here's a technique lots of my clients have been using. It begins by separating yourself from the masses since it's unique, it empathizes with them, helps them let down their guard, gets them to laugh depending on what you say, and gets them talking, which is your goal.

The technique is this:

**"Hi Mary, Tom Davis with Logistic Partners. First, let me ask you how many calls you got today from sales reps who told you they could save you time and money? (pause) Well, I'm not going to tell you that, yet. We're a bit different. We specialize in ..."**

Then you give your opening, which does still hint at a result, and then you get into your questions.

I'll probably do a longer discussion of this in a future issue, but for now, give it a try!

## "And Does He/She Know What This is About?"

David Copple works for a firm that provides staff and management for the emergency rooms of hospitals. A difficult situation he said he runs into is when screeners say,

"And does he/she know why you're calling?"

Usually, the prospect does not and admitting so is a negative, indicating to the screener that you're prospecting. He likes to immediately respond by justifying the reason for the call:

**"The reason I'm calling Dr. Smith is that I have a couple of ideas I'd like to run by him that he might find interesting from both a financial and managerial perspective regarding the operation of your emergency room. I'll need to ask him a few questions to see if these would make sense in his situation."**

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# SMART CALLING REPORT

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## Five Steps to Handling the Price Objection

By Colleen Francis

If you've been involved in sales for more than a week and a half, odds are, you've probably come across those particular five words at least once in your career. In fact, if you're like most of us, you've likely heard them a thousand times and counting.

In my experience, price is the single most common objection encountered by salespeople in every industry, city or sector of the economy. It can also be one of the most difficult objections for many sales professionals to overcome.

Fear not - an objection over price doesn't have to be a deal-breaker! The following five-step process can help you handle price objections from both new and established clients (and more on client success here), and go on to build long-term - and profitable - relationships.

### Step 1: Talk it Over First

The first thing is to make sure to talk about the price before sending the client anything in writing. Verbalizing what you think the price will be before sending a formal proposal can significantly reduce the chances that a price objection will arise.

For example, while you're still in front of the client, give them a rough estimate of what you think the price will be. Say something like, "it's going to be around ten thousand dollars. How does that sound to you?"

If they object, this allows you to deal with the issue face-to-face and right up front. If you write the price down and email it to them later, on the other hand, there's a good chance that - if they don't like your price - they might simply not call you back.

### Step 2: Be 100% Committed

Next, make sure you are 100% committed and convinced that your price is fair before you tell the client what it is.

If you don't think your prices are fair value for the goods or services you have to offer, no one else is going to believe it either. As a salesperson, you must be able to say to yourself: "You know what, if I was in the buyer's position, I would buy this. This is a great deal, at a good price!"

How can you reach this level of confidence? Start by doing your homework. Find out in advance what your competitors' prices are like, so you know whether your customer is comparing apples to apples.

Plus, remember that an objection over price is often just an attempt by clients to see if they can make us squirm a little. They know that most salespeople are terrible at handling that objection, so they figure it's worth a shot to see if they can get a better deal.

As long as you keep in mind that an objection over price isn't necessarily an indication that the client is about to walk away, you'll be able to keep your cool and remain firm in your conviction that your prices are exactly what they should be.

### Step 3: Don't Assume Anything

I'll save you the old joke about what you do to "u" and "me" when you "assume" anything. Suffice it to say, it holds true when it comes to finding out exactly what "too high" means to your client.

When most sales people are told that their price is too high, they make an immediate assumption about what "too

high" means. If they're presenting a \$10,000 proposal to a client who says the price is too high, for example, the sales person might automatically think that they're 10% too high, or 25%, or 50% or so on. Then, they offer a discount based on that assumption, rather than basing it on what the client really had in mind.

"Too high" is a very subjective comment. So before you start making any counter-offers, take a deep breath, relax and don't say anything for a good three seconds. Just pause, look at your customer and gather your thoughts.

Sometimes, those three seconds of silence are enough to encourage the client to elaborate. If they don't, come right out and ask them precisely what they mean.

### Step 4: Find Out What "Too High" Really Means

Start by acknowledging the objection and showing the customer that you appreciate them sharing it with you.

This can be as simple as saying something like "thanks for sharing that with me," "I appreciate you noticing that" or "I appreciate your honesty." Giving them a small compliment helps them to feel good about asking the question and reassures them that you're both on the same side.

Remember, the client has every right to raise any objections or make any comments they want. The worst thing we can do is to try to justify our position or defend our prices. As lawyers have known for centuries, nothing makes an innocent person look guiltier than trying too hard to protest their innocence.

*(continued on page 7)*

## Sales Observations

"The powers above decided to go with another solution."

Ever heard that before. Probably.

The path some reps follow is dejectedly hearing the news, mumbling something about "keep us in mind," getting off the call and dejectedly thinking how they made a bad decision.

A more productive route would be to ask your contact the reasoning behind the choice. Find out what criteria they used to make their decision. Maybe you won't get that, but you want to keep the lines of communication open with your contact. I'm going to assume that they were sold on using you. (You did ask that, right?)

Also ask that if anything changed would they contact you. And get agreement that you can check back with them. Then do so. When you do, gauge their satisfaction level with the other vendor. Even if they are not open to changing at this point, it's now an opportunity for you to ask for referrals from your contact... find out if there are any colleagues in their network you can contact. Prep for this in advance by checking their LinkedIn connections.

Even if you don't get the sale today, you could still ultimately gain from your work.

### SMART CALLING REPORT

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**Be careful of questions asked of** you that might appear difficult on the surface, and could lead you down a damaging rabbit hole if you are not prepared.

For example, let's say that the word on the street is that your company has had service issues and is losing customers as a result. In actuality, perhaps there was a situation that caused some problems temporarily, but it is now fixed. You want to avoid coming across as defensive and apologetic.

If they say, "I've heard you have had service issues and are losing customers because you can't deliver on time, is that right?"

One option is to acknowledge and reframe their question:

**"We did have an unfortunate three-day stretch of inventory availability that is now fixed. Are you asking if we are now able to deliver orders the next day?"**

**"Last month there was a software hack that hit us pretty hard. We now have double safeguards in place so it doesn't happen again. Is your main concern our product availability?"**

**I just heard a local radio commercial** where the owner of the auto body repair shop said, "... and we feel we give the best service in town." Yawn. Big deal. Who cares what he feels and thinks. All that matters is what the customer feels and thinks. Don't make the same mistake. Talk in terms of "you" and "your," helping the buyer see himself already owning and getting benefit from your product or service.

**As I repeat so often the quality of** your question determines the quality of your answer.

If a sales rep asks, "Do you now have situations where you need to get a project done by a deadline and are understaffed?", there is the potential for them

to say "no." Granted, they might say "yes," and we hope they do, but if we have the opportunity to prepare in advance—and we do of course—why not just eliminate the possibility of the answer we don't want, and maximize the chances of getting pure gold?

We do that with "assumptive problem" questions. We don't ask if they have the problem, we just assume it, paint a picture of it, and get them to react to it.

Using the example above, we'd change that to, "**Tell me about the last time you had a situation where you needed to get a project done by a deadline and were understaffed.**"

Notice how much easier it is for them to answer. With an answer that gives you precisely what you're looking for.

And in the process they are now re-living the problem in their mind as they describe it, reminding themselves of the pain they'd rather avoid. Which is the frame of mind you want them in, in order for them to hear your recommendation.

Beautiful, isn't it?

Analyze your questions. Listen to recordings of your calls. Are the answers what you're looking for? If not, tweak your questions accordingly.

Make this your best month ever!

*Art*

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# Focus on Customer Objectives Instead of Hurtful Pain

By Tibor Shanto

People ask me why I focus so much on prospects' objectives. After all, if you can find a pain and play to it, you are bound to get a sale.

Well, maybe.

I always find it amusing that when I ask people what they want to know about a potential buyer, too many say "I want to know what their pain point is...their needs, the problem."

When I ask what they want to achieve in a first/second meeting with a prospect, they start gushing on about wanting to establish a relationship.

One guy at an IT consulting/systems integrator said this to me when I asked what his goal is for a first meeting:

*"I want to find the soft underbelly of the beast; stab it; then serve up the cure."*

While you may be shaking your head, and rightfully so, I hear this same type of thing said differently by so many in sales, including pundits. This cause me worry.

## You Don't Have To Hurt The Ones You Love

So maybe I am missing the point, but how does one go from poking (or probing) for pain-latent or other--and in the space of one hour or so go to forming a relationship?

Maybe it is a Bizarro sales version of the Stockholm Syndrome.

How else can you explain the expectation that one can search for or deliver pain with a blunt instrument, and establish rapport or a relationship, even if you hand out Aspirins.

What I see as being more effective, even with buyers who are screaming with pain, is to focus the buyer on a point down the road, a point in time 18 – 24 months in the future. You want the buyer to "see" themselves, their aspirations and their

opportunities in your narrative and experience.

Your ability to create an authoritative dialogue aligned with their objectives, based on specific instances where you have enabled and enhanced clients' ability to reach their long term objectives, but to speak convincingly about specific impacts and outcomes.

While there is no doubt that in the near term pain relief is paramount, it does beg the question, what then?

Pain is short term, usually negative, and limiting. While objectives are long term, tied to other initiatives, uplifting and positive, and as a result have an energy "pain" and "needs" don't.

By marginalizing the "pain," and focusing on the big picture beyond the current pain, you can create a level of involvement and emotional commitment that is not available when it's only about solving an immediate problem.

Long term relationships should be tied to the long term, be that goals, objectives, etc. Clearly you want to address and resolve immediate "problems," but you need to position that as a small line item in a much bigger plan. To do that, you need to open up the conversation to align it with the big picture.

As mentioned, pain discussions are narrow and limiting, so in conversation with a client, assume you will solve the problem, and steer towards the long term.

## What to Say

I have written about this in the past, but I find a two-part question to be an effective way of practicing and fine tuning this. You will need to make it more specific to your buyers over time, but use this as a primer.

Once you get past the usual social element at the start of the meeting, ask:

**"I am curious, Jane, if we were sitting here 18 months from now, and you were telling me your team had hit a grand slam, what would that look like?"**

The goal is to get them to look past their current positions pain or perhaps problem, and refocus the on their success plan, hence the grand slam reference. You'll find that there is a moment of reflection, a couple of basic things, and then it gets interesting when they start detailing what their equivalent of a grand slam is. Once you have let them share their vision, you really do need to shut up here and intensely listen, you can then ask the second question:

**"Help me understand why we are not there now?"**

You will often find that they reflect again, and start telling you about what's keeping them from hitting a grand slam.

What you'll also find is that they will talk about many of the same things you have helped others achieve, and build a relationship around.



(Tibor Shanto is a Sales Execution Specialist, focused on helping sales teams and individuals secure more revenue through improved prospecting, selling and overall execution of their process. You can reach Tibor at (416) 822-7781, or visit [www.SellBetter.ca](http://www.SellBetter.ca))



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# Jim Blows a Call: His Annual Blunder

**H**ere's an old Polish proverb taught to me by my grandfather: "If you have to eat crow, it is best to eat it while it is young and tender. Crow does not get better with age."

Translation: when you are wrong or when you make a mistake, it is best to acknowledge/admit it right up front. The real point is to deal with the issue as soon as possible. Avoiding it or delaying it only makes the matter worse.

What are you talking about, Jimbo? I am talking about my annual blunder: that time of year, when, despite years and years of training, knowledge, experience, and expertise, I blow a call. And I mean *really* blow it. It happened last week. Let me tell you about it and let's learn from the experience. (Actually, I need to purge myself and confess. The Jesuit priests in my youth obviously had an impact.)

## The Hot Lead

I received a hot lead from a colleague. The client wanted training for a sales conference for their inside reps. I questioned intently. I listened. I learned of the needs and the depth and the breadth of those needs. They wanted a proposal. I delivered. Darn good pricing. Powerful copy. Enticing and exciting, if I do say so myself. I made the follow up call in the prescribed period of time. Got voice mail but I employed my famous (well, it's not famous yet but one day) "4/3 strategy" of follow up voice mails. I did all that I should and maybe even more. A sure thing. A cinch.

Or so I thought...

On the third follow up call I reached the prospect, established rapport and went for the close. Heck I followed the book from beginning to end. The prospect replied:

"Oh, well, we decided not to include that portion of the training."

Ever-savvy Jimbo replied,

"Oh, okay, well, thank you."

## Jim Carey Screams

Did you ever see "Ace Ventura, Pet Detective," starring Jim Carey? He utters a word in the movie that has been screaming in my head ever since the

moment. That word? Loser.

I am being somewhat dramatic and I really haven't beaten myself black and blue, but it was a nice little wake up call.

## Analysis

I did a lot of things right. I established rapport, I questioned, I presented a strong selling message, I followed up and I closed. But there are two things I did not do; two things that most sales reps are guilty of at some point in time.

## Pre Call Planning

First, I did not bother to plan my call. I was so confident of getting the sale I did not take pen to paper and plan the call. I assumed the sale was a shoo-in. I got "cocky" or maybe a better way to put it was that I got lazy.

I wasn't prepared for the prospect's remarks. I was totally caught off guard. I did not have prepared a secondary objective nor did I even remotely think about an objection.

## Handling Objections

Okay, so I did not prepare. That doesn't really excuse the second blunder. I did not bother to handle the objection. I accepted it at face value.

The question now is, why did they decide not to go with the training? Was it my price? Was it the training proposal? Was it me? Was there a competitor who hit the nail on the head? Did the budget run out? Heck, I don't know.

## Two Questions

My father taught me a lesson once a long time ago when I screwed up on something. Dad said to ask myself a question:

### "So what did you learn from all this?"

And that's my real point. I am not a "loser." I simply screwed up. I made a mistake. That happens. It will happen to you sooner or later. And that's okay. It is okay to blow calls and make mistakes.

But what is not okay is to ignore

the lesson that can be learned from the mistake.

That cannot be forgiven. That really deserves the moniker "loser."

Every time you miss a sale, go back and review it closely and ask yourself "What can I learn from this?" Keep a notebook and call it "Lessons I have Taught Myself." Record your impression. Toss your hurt feelings aside and be absolutely honest with yourself and analyze the moment. Sometimes you **really** screw up. Learn from it. Don't beat yourself up because that's an utter waste of time. Try not to do it again. If you do, record it again. And again if necessary. Check your "Lessons" book from time to time and see if there's a pattern. Fix it. Sometimes you don't screw up. Write down what you learned from the moment anyway. Learn from it. Who knows maybe you can write your own book one day.

The next question my dad would ask is this;

### "So, what are you going to do about it."

Dad was saying that it is fine to do an analysis. But that wasn't enough. The next step was to figure out what you should do next. Sometimes the next step is to do nothing. But more often than not, it means you have to do some uncomfortable things. Do them.

As for me, I plan to eat my crow next week. I will send the client this article with a note explaining what I have done. I will make the follow up call and learn from it.

Good Selling.

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# How to Avoid Losing the Deal With Your Demos

*By Jim Keenan*

In the world of SaaS (software as a service) and cloud solutions, the demo is everything. As the demo goes, so goes the sale. Give a shitty demo, and you're not gonna get the sale. Give a good demo, and you've just increased the chances of closing the deal. Give a killer demo and get ready to cash your fat commission check and prepare for President's Club.

With the demo carrying so much weight in the sale, treating them as a way to highlight every feature your product or solution has is stupid, annoying, unnecessary, boring, and unsophisticated. That is how too many sales people treat them. And, managers take note, how too many managers and sales organizations teach sales people to do them.

## The Only Way to Do It

Here's the ONLY way to do a demo. Pay VERY close attention. This isn't a suggestion. This isn't an ideology. This isn't one person's thoughts. This is the concrete, irrefutable, only way to do demos and if you're not doing it this way, you're doing it WRONG!!!

Listen up;

When doing a demo, every feature you show must be tied to a specific business goal, operational process, work-flow, execution issue or opportunity that specific customer has — PERIOD!

In other words; if you're showing a feature and are saying; "If you email your clients for meetings then this feature will . . ." or "If you have two systems for doing reports, this reporting feature will . . ." Or worse, if you just whipping features around like they are cars on a car showroom floor by saying "And the next thing I want to show you is." You are doing it wrong — very wrong!

There is no room for "if" in your demos. There is no excuse to show a feature that isn't germane to the specific business and highly targeted to the operational or executional needs of the buyer. Demos should not be used to demonstrate your product, but rather to show how your product can affect your buyer's business. Demos need to be used to give the buyer a vision of how your product

will change their current environment for the better. Demos should be used to show the client how what they are doing today can be done differently with your product. The buyer should feel silly, outmoded and inefficient as you seamlessly execute a process they are currently doing poorly. They should bubble with joy as you demonstrate how your product can execute brilliantly on a process they can't currently do, something they have wanted to do for a long time. Your demo should be enveloping them in the power of your product changing their specific and unique environment for the better, not in features and functions that may or may not be relevant to them.

## Examples

This is how a demo should go.

**"You stated you use three systems for reporting, let me show you how reporting is done with our product and how it would create reports in your environment in a tenth of the time."**

**"I know that being able to track email response is important to you, let me show you how you will be able to track responses faster with our solution and how you will also be able to . . ."**

**"Understanding that you're trying to increase revenue by 15% this year through your existing client base, let me show you how we can make that happen with the . . . feature."**

**"I recall you were saying you're struggling with getting (insert customer problem), let me show you this feature. It is designed to do exactly what you said you were looking to do as well as . . ."**

The key to a successful demo is to make sure every feature, every function you demonstrate is attached to your buyer's unique problems and challenges. If it's not, your not giving a good demo. You're wasting everyone's time.

Demos are not meant to be product highlights or product showcases. Good

demos demonstrate how problems will be solved and how opportunities will be leveraged. Good demos temporarily and virtually insert the seller's product into the buyer's world. They are like digital or virtual changing rooms where the buyer can see how everything fits.

Good demos let the buyer try on your product for fit. Like a changing room, the buyer wants to see how your product fits their unique body type, curves, and all.

## A Virtual "Changing Room"

Give your buyers a virtual changing room. Structure and deliver your demos like changing rooms where they can see themselves in your product. Attach every feature and function you demonstrate to their unique environment so they can see how it fits. Don't show features that you can't attach to their business. Don't ever, ever, ever say, "If you . . . then this feature will . . ." There is no room for "if then" statements in demos. Don't show a feature unless you know exactly how and why it is germane to your buyer.

Demos are not spectator events or shows where the buyer is a participant on the sideline. They are meant to be interactive, virtual tours that put the buyer in the product, allowing them to see how it fits on them. Anything else is a waste of everyone's time.

Stop wasting time!

(Jim Keenan is A Sales Guy Inc's CEO/President and Chief Antagonizer. He's been selling something to someone for his entire life. He's been teaching and coaching almost as long.



He is the celebrated author of "Not Taught: What It Takes to be Successful in the 21st Century That Nobody's Teaching You." Contact him at ASalesGuy.com)

# How to Not Rush the Sale, AND Get it Quicker

Sometimes just getting that first meeting feels like a major victory!

You've been dying to work with this company for months and you're finally on their radar! You can't wait for the first meeting—and neither can they. You've piqued their curiosity and they want to learn more.

Except when you actually do talk to that prospect, their enthusiasm starts to wane.

They bring up obstacles and no longer seem so motivated to move forward. It all happened so fast that you don't even know what went wrong.

## The Speed Backlash

If you've ever had a hot prospect suddenly cool down, I have one thing to say, "Slow down!"

It's highly likely that you misjudged your prospect's interest as readiness to change. In your eagerness to capitalize on this opportunity, you made sure they knew all about your competitive advantages, top-notch service, latest technologies and more. And you probably talked fast to get as much as possible into the time you had.

If that happened, you're probably starting to feel the speed backlash.

How can you know if your prospect thinks you moved too fast? They tell you everything is fine, even though it couldn't be with their current status quo. They brush you off with a price objection. They turn a minor obstacle into a show stopper. Or they simply thank you for the update and promise to contact you when the need arises.

Prospects who receive massive information dumps unconsciously erect barriers to slow or even derail your sales efforts.

If this is happening, you've made the mistake of talking too much. When your prospect can barely get a word in, they feel like you lack concern for their needs—and that you only want to make the sale.

## How to Increase the

### Success of a First Sales Meeting

Top sellers realize that making a sale is a slow, deliberate process. They know multiple people are involved in the decision process—and they all have to agree before moving forward. They understand it takes time to demonstrate value and develop strong relationships.

Knowing this, they put together a one-step-at-a-time sales strategy that actually advances the sales process much faster than if they tried to do everything in one or two conversations.

Here's how to earn your prospect's trust in that crucial first sales meeting:

#### 1. Do your homework

Learn as much as you can before your meeting. Review your prospect's website. Look for gaps between where they are and where they want to be. Identify primary initiatives. Figure out how your product or service helps achieve those objectives or ties in with critical business drivers. For example, if you know that "Earning Customer Loyalty" is important to your prospect, determine how your product can contribute to this objective.

#### 2. Focus on results

Your product is a tool—nothing more. People buy it because of what it does for them, so make sure you know what difference it makes. Be prepared to talk about the business results your prospects will achieve when using your product or service. Be ready to explain how it helps reduce time to market, increase operational efficiency or improve sales—and have a relevant story to share that illustrates the points you're making.

#### 3. Plan your questions

Questions are key to your success. They demonstrate interest and concern. Prospects feel you are more knowledgeable when you ask good questions. Questions provide valuable

insights into customer needs and the decision-making process. They are the basis for developing a strong relationship. Plan at least ten questions ahead of time. Make sure you find out their status quo related to your offering, priority objectives and relevant strategic imperatives. To keep you focused, have them in front of you during your conversation.

#### 4. Establish a logical next step

Before your meeting, determine how you want it to end. A successful advance might be an information-gathering meeting, an analysis of current work flow or a presentation to other decision makers. Feel free to recommend the next step. You know what typical prospects go through when they want to change, so share the process with your future clients.

The sales and buying process can't be short-circuited. If you go too fast, problems are guaranteed to arise. Your opportunity will evaporate into thin air.

#### The Big First Sales Meeting

When it's finally time for the big meeting, get down to business fairly quickly. Start by stating your purpose. It's enough to simply say, "As we talked about in our initial conversation, we work with companies like yours to help them [insert business driver/value proposition]." Then, share a short story about how your company helped another client and the specific results they attained. Talk results, not products!

Explain your process in working with accounts. Tell your prospect it's essential to understand their objectives, needs, issues, and challenges in order to determine the value you can provide.

Transition to questions and spend the bulk of your time investigating. Find out why their curiosity was piqued in the first place. Ask about the current situation as well as related business objectives. Explore any issues or chal-

*(Continued on next page)*

## Jill Konrath

### (Continued from previous page)

lenges that may arise if they stick with the status quo. Discover what they've already done to reach these objectives.

Even though your prospect asks, don't be tempted into talking about your products or services. Answer their questions briefly, then refocus on the business issues. Unless there's a clear business case for moving forward, nothing happens. If they already have one, you want to know that. If they don't, you need to build it with them. Before you leave, suggest that logical next step.

This is what the top sellers do. They don't rush the sale and, as a result, they get the order. And quicker. Follow their example and you'll soon be enjoying the same success.

*(Jill Konrath, author of SNAP Selling, Selling to Big Companies, and her newest book, Agile Selling, helps sellers land bigger clients and speed up their sales cycle. To get her free Prospecting Tool Kit, visit [www.jillkonrath.com/sales-resources](http://www.jillkonrath.com/sales-resources).)*



## Ask an Unusual Question

Almost everyone has experienced that gut-wrenching feeling of thinking a sale is "in the bag," only to have it suddenly fall through for some unexpected reason. To help ensure this doesn't happen, ask this question:

**"It appears that we will be doing business together within the next two months. To prepare for the unforeseen, is there anything that could hold this up?"**

Their answer could help you answer some objections in advance, or allow you to prepare them more effectively to sell their superiors.



## Price Objections

### (Continued from cover page)

Instead, the very best salespeople look their clients square in the eye and say, "you're right; our prices aren't the lowest in the market. How much too high are we?" or "what do you mean by too high?" You can even just repeat the statement "too high?" and wait for the client to fill in the blanks.

By acknowledging the validity of their objection, you're turning a potentially costly confrontation into a sincere invitation to work together towards a solution that will be beneficial for both of you. More importantly, by being so straightforward, you stand a better chance of finding out exactly what the difference is between the price you quoted and the figure the client has in mind.

Early in my career, I once had a potential client tell me that my price was too high. Turns out, they were only looking for me to come down by a grand total of five dollars. That kind of discount was well within my authority and my comfort zone, and I considered it a small price to pay for establishing a profitable relationship.

Now, if that same client had wanted me to come down by five thousand dollars, well, let's just say the story might have had a different ending.

### Step 5: Listen, respond - and if need be, move on!

Last but most definitely not least, listen to the answer the client gives you.

If you say, "How high is too high?" or "What do you mean by too high?" and be quiet, you will get a nice long answer. Once the client has explained their objection, I usually respond by saying something like: "if we can't get our price down to that lowest level, does that mean there is no chance that we will go forward?" Or I might ask, "so is pricing your only consideration?"

By asking these questions (and what questions should you avoid asking?), I want to find out - once and for all, beyond any shadow of a doubt - whether they are making their decision based solely on price, or whether any other factors will influence their choice.

I'm hoping that price isn't the only thing they care about, so I can move the conversation onto that other topic. But if they really are only interested in buying the cheapest option available, I want to know that as early as possible so I can decide then and there what I want to do with that information.

As salespeople, we have to be prepared to walk away from business where the client isn't willing to pay what the marketplace has determined is a fair price. This can be much easier to do if you have a healthy pipeline of other prospects to sell to.

You can't and won't sell to everyone. Having a healthy pipeline (and constantly prospecting to keep it full) is your best defense against any objections, because it gives you the confidence to walk away from a deal that could cost you more than it's worth.

The ironic thing is, the more business you walk away from, the more business chases after you. As often as not, the minute you tell a client that you don't think the deal is going to work, is the same moment they come running back to tell you that they're ready and willing to do business.

*(Colleen Francis, Sales Expert, is Founder and President of Engage Selling Solutions. Armed with skills developed from years of experience, Colleen helps clients realize immediate results, achieve lasting success and permanently raise their bottom line. Contact her at [EngageSelling.com](http://EngageSelling.com))*



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## Paraphrase When Negotiating

A good use of paraphrasing is repeating someone's request when they are negotiating with you, particularly when making a request you might consider a bit unreasonable.

For example,

**"If I understand what you're saying, you want the right to duplicate the training material for your other locations, for free? Is that right?"**

Then ask,

**"What is the reasoning for that?"**

This gets them to justify the request.

## Get Them Thinking and Talking About Their Urgency to Solve Their Problem

Once you have a prospect/customer talking about a need or problem, and they have spoken in terms of what they need to do to solve it (i.e., they contact you about a price quote or proposal), it's good to question them further on their sense of urgency to move forward, and what's driving that urgency. The answers will give you additional great information about their intentions, plus they will be selling themselves.

For example,

**"Mike, what led to the decision to do this now?"**

**"What is causing the urgency on this project?"**

**"How did you conclude that this was something you needed to move on this quarter?"**

**"Why now?"**

If you analyze the possible answers to these questions, you see that the prospects/customers will provide you with valuable details.

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## "Small" Could Be Just In Your Thinking

Mine your database and pull out the customers who bought from you once, or those who just buy one or two items or limited single services from you. Are your customers small because you THINK they are? Or are they buying other things that you sell from your competitors? Chances are, the answer is "yes" to both questions.

## Call The Ones You Didn't Get

Scan your database and pull out the 10-20 biggest sales you really wanted, worked hard for, but did NOT within the past year. Call them. But, please, do NOT say, "I'm just calling to touch base."

Review your notes and develop a value-added reason for calling. Say something like,

**"I came across some interesting information in Info Industry Journal, and remembered how you were concerned with the issue of external data security locking in a multi-user environment. I wanted to send that to you ..."**

Of course you would then ease into a discussion of their present situation, and perhaps uncover any possible areas of dissatisfaction.

## Sort Prospects By Who They Now Buy From

Regarding your database and recordkeeping, most contact management programs allow you to customize fields and sort accordingly. Consider assigning a field for "Current Vendor." Then set up a Google NewsAlert for your main competitors.

If there ever is an event that could negatively affect them, you can be quick to take advantage of it. Then it's a breeze to do a quick sort of all the prospects who have the competitor's name in the field, and plan your next contact accordingly.

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