

# Sales Kickoff 20+18 Transcript

By Art Sobczak

Hey everybody! Welcome! Art Sobczak here. Welcome to Sales Kickoff 20+18. You are going to get bombarded with sales tips, ideas, techniques, bad jokes. If you want to, you're going to be motivated to go out and put these ideas into practice. You're going to be able to get through, get in, and sell more, and make more money. Does that at all sound good to you? Good because that's what we're going to deliver here today.

First of all, Congratulations! You're special!

You're special because you're in sales. Most people wouldn't or can't do what we do. It actually goes against human nature, if you think about it, to put ourselves in the way of potential harm... [00:49 proactively]. That's how most people really look at what we do if they're not in sales. We proactively expose ourselves every day to what some people call rejection. Well, we know that it isn't rejection at all. Or if you think it is, I'm going to show you how it's not in this program. Really, when we do get those no's, it's just things that didn't work at that time. Perhaps the timing wasn't right. So we learn from it, we plant a seed, and we move on. It takes a special type of person to do that, and you are that person.

Also, you're a special person because you're investing in yourself. Most salespeople do not. I hate to say that, but I got to tell you every sales superstar I've ever been around in the past 30+ years has had several characteristics. They work harder than most people, they think bigger than most people, and they constantly work at their craft and invest in themselves, and you, obviously, are that type of person because you are here with us today.

First of all, I've got to tell you, in my promotion for this program, I really wasn't accurate. I promised 20 strategies and techniques, and then 18 more. Well, I got carried away. I'm not sure of the exact number that I have here. I actually lost count and it's more than that. Hopefully, you don't mind.

I promised you something else. We're going to give away two prizes today. We're giving away, to two people, lifetime enrollment in my Smart Calling College training program. This is a comprehensive online and hybrid live

training course that goes through every step of the Professional Smart Call. The next session is going to start on January 22, and then attendees become lifetime members – able to attend all future programs and webinars. That's over a \$795 value.

What we're going to do right now, is I'm going to give away the first one, and this is not very scientific. We're simply scrolling at random through the list of attendees, people who have signed up for the program. We're going to pick the first one and we have got Steven Palange. Steven, drop me an email and we'll get you signed up for the program that starts on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Everybody else stick around because we're going to give the next one away right at the end.

Let's get back to the material here. Here's the format. I'm going to be going rapid fire through all the tips and techniques, all the messaging that I'm going to be giving you here. I tried, for the most part, to follow the logical progression of the professional call, the way I teach it, the sales call process. There was going to be a lot of word-for-word messaging that I do suggest you take notes on, but if you miss something, no worries, because you're going to be getting the transcript, the replay, the audio mp3, and the slides.

One more thing, I got to confess. I'm a learning junkie. I invest tens of thousands of dollars every year in training and coaching myself – in courses, and books, audios, videos and more. Personally, as a speaker and a trainer, I have a very low tolerance for fluff, and people who waste our time by talking for a long time without saying anything. That's not going to happen here. I've already talked too long without really saying anything. You're going to get pure, red meat and lots of it. So let's get to it.

## **Pre-Call Planning**

I'm going to start out with our pre-call planning, the first part of our calls. I don't know if you've ever done this. I would say most people have. A lot of people pre-judge when they're doing their planning. They might pre-judge a person or a company, just something by looking at the name, or location, where the lead came from. In many cases, what that does is that gives us a reason to maybe be negative, or not contact someone. For example, in my case, I might look at a big company, and say, "Oh, geez. They don't need my training because they handle their training in-house."

Here's a very important point. This is regarding your mindset in your pre-call planning. Instead, take your prejudgment – take the factual part, and turn it into the reason why somebody would want to buy from you. For example, in my case, I might say, "Yeah, they handle their training in-house, which means they couldn't possibly have someone on staff with the years of specialized experience or depth of material that I do. Plus, I can provide an outside perspective that they don't have in their isolated world."

So you can see, same factual situation, but I've just changed the mindset, and just think about the frame of mind that I'm in now as I'm getting ready to place that call. Next time you're prejudging, look at positive prejudging.

Next point here – can I tell you about a major screw up of mine? I still sell, I still get no thrill than being on the phone and making a sale. I still sell all of my own training services. But I had a major screw up here recently, so I think you can learn from this just like I did. A little back story.

We all live in times of constant distraction and information overload. Right now, maybe you're looking at your phone or another screen – I hope you're not. We also live in this age of instant gratification. The former, I talk about all the time regarding how it affects us and sales people, and how our message really needs to cut through the clutter, and be personalized, and really grab and hold people's attention.

Let me tell you about the latter one, the instant gratification as it relates to prospects.

One thing I'm going to fix in the new year is staying more on top of my LinkedIn messages and connection requests. It's becoming more of a major task for me, but yet it's one that is so important – I can't outsource that. Here's the story: A few days before Christmas I had just glanced at my LinkedIn InMails, and there was one there that really didn't stand out from the crowd as being important simply because the subject line said "B@B Sales." In my haste I just made this snap judgment that it was probably a sales person looking to pitch me on something, which is normally a big mistake in LinkedIn InMails. So, I didn't open it. I thought whatever it is, that can wait till after Christmas. After all, "B@B Sales," really?

So, Christmas passes, and then after a few days after, I get around to opening it. The message said, “I am the CEO of..., and I’m interested in engaging you for your training services. Are you available tomorrow for a call? My direct line is...”

Now, I’m reading this a week later when I finally saw this, and it’s after hours. I checked him out, checked out his profile. Yeah, it was legit, as was his company. Of course, my heart is sinking to the ground. Again, it was after hours, so I immediately replied on InMail. I apologized for dropping the ball, and asked if we could speak the first thing in the morning. Well, I got a reply from him first thing in the morning, and the reply was “We already engaged someone.”

Okay! There’s the lesson learned. I totally screwed this up and it cost me. What did I screw up? The inquiry. Inquiries are like gold that are inviting you to mine it, but the time window can be small. Treat every inquiry from whatever means you get them, like a burning match. The flame of interest can go out pretty quickly. Either you or your company invest a lot of money to get those inquiries. If I were you, like I have been recently, soon as those things come in – normally I do. I’m all over them right away. I would encourage you to do so as well that is your easiest source of new business.

## **Getting Messages Returned**

Popular topic here. One of the biggest challenges sales pros told me they face, in the recent survey that I did last week, is getting messages replied to... Again, for those of you that replied to the survey, appreciate that. Thanks a lot. One of the biggest challenges that really wasn’t a shock to me is getting messages replied to. I experience that too.

The fact is, unless someone has a compelling reason to respond to you, the request sits in queue with many others. Often it never moves.

Put yourself in this situation. Look at all the things that require your attention, on a daily basis, including those things that involve responding to someone, personally, either on the phone or by email. I’d bet you’re sitting on some that have been there for a while. I have. What causes us to then actually respond to something right away, or defer it, or ignore it?

Of course, there are things that are urgent, and those get immediate attention, and the rest get prioritized, or completely ignored, or deleted.

Some things create ‘impulse curiosity’, meaning that we are piqued right at that moment enough to do something right then and there. I’m going to expand on this all throughout the year with my tips and my inner circle and all the things that I provide to my community – maybe do some major training on it. Right now, let’s just look at some of the things you can do with your messaging to get mindshare and to pique that ‘impulse curiosity’, and get someone to take action.

By the way, all of this is predicated on not just calling or emailing someone with a lame request like, “Well, Here I am. Please call me back so we can have a meeting.”

So, here’s what we want to do. Let’s go through some of the ways that you can implement, some of the things you can do to have a shot at moving someone to action in your messaging.

The first one here is called: Assuming there’s no interest.

I use this one all the time. It’s letting someone know after repeated attempts to reach them, you’re just going to have to assume that it’s not a priority for them right now. Note that this should be used after you’ve had a quality conversation maybe they’ve shown some interest. Perhaps they’ve indicated they were going to take some action, but then they go radio silent on you. Yes, the “flakes” fall under this category as one of my followers called them. Here’s what I would suggest that you could say here:

*“Mike, I’m a bit confused since I haven’t had a reply after several attempts, and after our previous call where you were interested in \_\_\_\_\_. If I don’t hear back I’m just going to assume that (benefit) on your\_\_\_\_\_ is not a priority right now. Hoping I’m wrong. If so, just please give me a call back, or reply to the last email I sent.”*

Also, I should’ve added here – “Otherwise, I’ll just plan on getting back to you in a few months.” Surprisingly, you get a fair number of people who will respond to this, and say “Oh, no, no! I’m sorry. You just got pushed to the bottom of the list.”

## Deadlines

Many people, yours truly included, put things off until the last minute. I've got every intention of taking action. It's just that we all take – I shouldn't say we all take – but some of us take all of the allotted time to actually take that action. I know it's a fault of mine. If there's no deadline, well, things can continue to move down the priority list. With these people, reminding them of a deadline can spark them a little bit.

*“Pat, a quick reminder that the special pricing in the proposal are good until the end of the week. At that point they go back up. I know you said you wanted to take advantage of that savings, so please call me at \_\_\_\_\_”*

Again, you can use these in either email or voicemail. I would suggest using them in both. I'm a big believer in multi-media communication.

## **Scarcity**

If you've got something that's limited, appeal to their FOMO, Fear of Missing Out. For example:

*“Hey Mike. We had talked about you taking advantage of the special release of the Reserve collection since you felt it would appeal to your audience. We're down to the last 10% of the supply, and I'd hate to see you miss out...”*

## **Negative Consequences**

If there are any negative consequences attached to them not acting, point those out. It could be a delay in something they want, it could be them missing a deadline, or simply their problem continuing. For example:

*“You mentioned that you wanted to get the training done in Q1, and we're already pushing that because of the planning and the development time that's involved. We can still do it, but I'm going to need to hear from you this week.”*

## **Moving Forward Anyway**

Here's one that takes a little bit of guts depending on the situation – the Moving Forward Anyway. This one should be used judiciously, and only in situations where it's ethical. It's telling them that if you don't hear from them that implies their approval to move forward. I'll give you an example. Let's say you have an automatic renewal on a previous purchase. So, it is something that they actually had purchased before, and it's not where you're just saying "I'm just going to charge your card."

*"Dave, I'd still like to speak with you about the plan you're on that renews next week. There's a couple of options we introduced this year that could be of value to your team, and it would be great if we could discuss them. Please call me at \_\_\_\_\_, or email me with several time options that work for you. If I don't hear from you, your existing plan's going to renew as scheduled."*

I could go on and on on this, and again, I will throughout the year with various trainings. The fact is people DO respond. They respond a lot. It's just that there's so many messages, they can't respond to all of them. If you want it to be to you they're responding to, you've got to give them a good reason. Adapt these ideas to your own prospects, customers, and situations.

## **Interest Creating Opening Statement**

I'm going to give you a technique here that I have not shared with the masses. So I've shared it with just a few training clients, and with my inner circle. Those of you who are in the inner circle, welcome, if you're on the call – you've seen this. If you're an industry where your prospects are getting tons of calls, and the product or service itself isn't very sexy, but nevertheless it's a necessity, you could try something like this:

*"Hi Mr. Prospect. I know when you came into work the first thing on your agenda likely wasn't your office cleaning, and you probably get lots of calls from people who want to be your vendor. However, let me tell you why I'm calling, and why we're different."*

Let me just explain why that works. It's a little bit disarming, and it's slightly humorous. If you are kind of a funny person, you can do that in a light tone of voice. That always helps. What we're also doing is we're empathizing with that person's position because most often when this is delivered

correctly, what we hear on the other end is, “Yeah, you’re right. Yeah, I do get a lot of those calls.” The goal is really just to help them let down their defenses, smile, say, “Yeah, you’re right,” and realize oh, it’s a human, not just somebody that wants to pitch me. You do need to be prepared after this, of course, with your possible value proposition.

Speaking of value, you do want to make sure on every one of your calls, regardless of what type of call it is – if it’s a smart prospecting call, it’s a follow-up call, it’s a call to an inactive account, it’s a call to a regular customer, you got to make sure that you’re bringing something, the what’s in it for them. We’ve covered that many times in my tips. You can see them in my blog post. Those of you in the Inner Circle, you can see those in the member’s area.

### **Always Have Value**

Let’s look at an opening that does a pretty good job of incorporating some Smart Calling intelligence, and then hinting at value. I’ll give you the opening, and I’ll explain the pieces of this. This actually was a call I received. People say, “Well, you always rip apart calls. Do you have any good ones you can share?” Yeah, I share them all the time. This was a sales rep, called me, and said:

*“Hi Art. I saw your sponsored posting for your webinar, and I actually attended it. Since you're targeting salespeople who want to be better at LinkedIn, we've got an audience that you might not be reaching now, that would likely be very responsive to your offer. I'd like to find out a little bit more about who, specifically, you're targeting to see if it would make sense to talk further.”*

Notice what happened here. This was simply somebody who had noticed our advertising and they even went the extra step and attended the webinar. Some people might say, “Well, geez, that’s a lot of work.” Yeah, it’s only a lot of work if you want to appear to be a sales person who does their homework.

Then he’s relating to me, “Since you’re targeting sales people who want to be better on LinkedIn, we’ve got an audience you may not be reaching now.” There’s the benefit, there’s the curiosity, there’s the fear of missing



out that would likely be very responsive to your offer. So now, that would likely be very responsive. He's showing a little bit of confidence there.

Now, he's not saying I want to pitch you on that. He's not telling me who the audience is. He's saying, I'd like to find out more about who specifically you're targeting, see if it would make sense to talk further.

So really, the biggest decision I have to make here is what? To see if I want to answer some questions to talk further. That's really all we're trying to do with a great Smart Calling opening. The Smart Calling opening only has two objectives: to put somebody in a positive, receptive state of mind; and then move them to the questioning phase of the call.

## Call Analysis

This wasn't actually a call I received, but actually, it was a plea from a desperate salesperson who was becoming paranoid about his use of the phone.

He called me and he said, "I'm an outside sales rep, and my prospector quit. Therefore, I have to do my own prospecting, and I hate it. I'm a good outside rep, but I'm freezing up when I have to call people."

Anybody out there ever been in that position? I asked him what he was saying? Here's what he said. He introduced himself and his company:

*"We are a freight shipper, and I'd like to come out and take some of your time and explain what we do."*

No wonder he didn't like prospecting. I would've been paranoid, too, with the no's he was probably experiencing. But that was totally unnecessary because the opening really is awful. Actually, why don't you guys tell me – go ahead and type in the chat box, what is wrong with this opening here? Let's get some comments. rebuffs were invited. That opening is awful.

All those things are accurate. There's nothing of interest there for the prospect. No reason for him to even listen on that call. Much less, agree to the appointment. He's asking for a decision. We never want to ask for a

decision in an opening, other than the decision for them to stay on the phone longer and answer questions.

So really to paraphrase this guy, it says, "We're one of the hundreds of companies that are in the freight business. I want to sit in your office, take your valuable time so I can talk about my company and why I think we're good."

Ooh, yeah. Exciting stuff, right. I gave him a pretty simple suggestion here, and then I'll tell you how I break this down. Introduce yourself.

*"I understand you do quite a bit of less-than-truckload shipments. We've worked with a lot of traffic managers in the (fill in the industry) to help them get the best rates and on-time deliveries with no hassles. Depending on what you ship, and to where, it might be worth our time to talk. If I've reached you at a good time, I'd like to ask you a few questions about your requirements to see if I could provide you some information."*

Let me do a little reverse engineering on this here. Right at the beginning, what am I saying? "I understand that you do quite a bit of less-than-truckload shipments." How would we know that? We would know that by doing some social engineering, by calling into the company and talking to somebody other than the decision maker. We would find out what they ship, where they ship, who they use, what they're paying even. Again, for those of you that have been through Smart Calling, you know the social engineering process.

Now, what are we doing? "We worked with a lot of other traffic managers." I'm filling in the blank with whatever type of person that is. That's a traffic manager because the people are going to relate to someone similar to them in whatever industry. Now, of course you're not going to make that up. This has to be true. To help them get the best rates and on time deliveries with no hassle. Those are three results right there.

"Depending on what you ship and to where, it might be worth our time to talk." Notice I'm not pitching you on how great we are. Really, I'm just kind of creating some curiosity. "It might be worth our time to talk. If I've reached you at a good time, I'd like to ask you a few questions to see if I can

provide you some information.” Now, somebody might say, “Geez, there’s a lot of words there.”

Yeah. Here’s the thing. ‘Too long’ is not a function of number of words. ‘Too long’ is a function of too boring. Tweet that one out @ArtSobczak. ‘Too long’ is not a function of too many words; ‘too long’ is a function of too boring. When you write out your openings, I would suggest that you go through it with a fine-tooth comb and you analyze every single word and say, ‘Is this adding to what I’m trying to accomplish, or is it just taking up space?’ If it’s just taking up space, get rid of it.

Also, I suggest that you put them through the resistance test, resistance test being is there anything there I could potentially resist.

## Questioning

Let’s get into the questioning. How would you like to get people to sell themselves? Here is a great question that you can fill in the blanks with, and I would suggest you do this as an exercise. You’re going to have a lot of work to do once you get off of this.

Here’s an exercise where you could simply fill in the blanks that could help somebody actually think about how they could benefit from your products or service. The first part of the blank you fill in would be the benefit or result of your product or service, something that you deliver. The second is what they want to accomplish. Let me actually show this to you in action so it makes more sense.

This is the result that my product or services deliver.

*"How would having your sales reps be more confident in what they were saying and picking up the phone to prospect more affect your team hitting their numbers?"*

So now, I’ve thrown out a hypothetical there that I’ve presented a picture that would be fairly easy for them to react to. Notice I’m not sitting here pitching my product or service. I’m just getting them to tell me what or how they would benefit, or how they would react in that situation. Here’s another one, different industry:

*"How would streamlining your order entry from going through five screens to just one help you lower your abandoned cart rate and complete more of the sales that are started?"*

Again, we're creating a situation and just getting them to react to it. It's a lot easier for somebody to react to a picture, than to try to paint the picture themselves. This is simply the fill-in-the blank there. Then you just fill in with your benefit or result, then the problem or pain that they're running into.

I mentioned earlier that I've been serving my customers, my followers, and really what I'm trying to do here – the lightbulb is really going on – I really want to understand, of course, the needs of you all out there, so that we can laser-target our marketing and our development, and delivery of additional products, and services, and posts, and videos and things – the things that really people are looking for. It's kind of one of those, "Well, duh?" strategies that should've always been in place, and really, I'm sitting here smacking my head for not doing more of it because it's exactly what I teach in live sales processes. It's what I do when I have somebody in front of me.

Anyway, the lights gone on just as a marketer. So, I have become a student of Ryan Levesque's Ask Method. Maybe you've heard of it, and it does exactly that, but I do have a sales point for you here. His workshop last month that I attended, this was very profound, and I've never really thought about it in this way. He stated that it's difficult for people to tell you what they want if just you simply ask them what they want. For example, if you say, "What do you really want in this area? What do you really need in this area?"

Now instead, what Ryan said, is that it's much easier for them to answer two things instead:

1. What they don't want. Everybody knows what they don't want.
2. A history questions: What they have done before?

Those are relatively easy to answer. So, in our questioning, in the application of this, what we want to avoid is, *"What are you looking for in a supplier?"*

Instead, using this philosophy, you might want to ask what they don't want.

*"What criteria did you use the last time you awarded the contract?"*

Actually, that would be what they did before.

*"What do you want to avoid with the provider you ultimately choose?"*

I had those inversed. Again, it's easier for people to answer what they had done before, and what they don't want. I encourage you to come up with some questions that fit that criteria as well.

### **Don't Miss on the "Amateur Side"**

Any golfers out there? I was talking to a client this morning and he said, "Are you a golfer?" I said, "Well, yes, I am," and then I corrected myself. I said, "Well, I golf, whether or not I consider myself a golfer," but I enjoy doing it, I do it a lot. There's a saying in golf that when a player misses a putt on the side of the cup where the elevation is lower that he "missed it on the amateur side," which means that most amateur golfers will tend not to have the skill, or the experience, or the confidence to trust their stroke, and the elevation of the green.

There's a sales point here. There's a similar example in sales and questioning. Often when inexperienced, or unskilled salespeople (or non-salespeople) hear the first hint of a possible need, or a pain, or a problem, they get all excited, and they jump in, and they begin pitching their product or service. That's not the most effective route, since the salesperson doesn't yet know all of the details, nor do they have the prospect thinking about, and getting emotional about their situation.

A better strategy is to find the reason behind the reason. That is the "why" for their answer. Why did they say what they did? Those of you that have been through my other trainings, you know I have the iceberg theory of questioning, which is when you get an answer to a question, it's like the tip of the iceberg. Bob said it's 30 below wind chill in Michigan, so you might have some icebergs; you may not have golf, but you'll have icebergs.

When you get your first answer, you have the tip of the iceberg. What we want to get is what's below the water level, why they said what they did.

Then we want to go deeper. We want to find out the why for the why. Then we want to go deeper and continue questioning.

Give you an example of this. Let's say a prospect said, "Oh, yeah, we really need some help in that area." The skilled sales rep, the sales pro would say, "Oh really. Well, tell me about that." Then the prospect would, of course, go on. Maybe now they would divulge: "Well, we're just not placing enough calls, and that's the reason only a third of our team's hitting quota. Then the skilled sales pro would say, "Really? Wow. Tell me the effect of that?" Then the prospect might say – sales manager – "Yeah, I'm catching heat from my boss. Some reps are in danger of losing their job, and it's affecting my income."

You could see how now we're getting the why behind the why. Let's contrast that with the amateur who's going to miss it on the amateur side after hearing the prospect say they need help, they might have launched into a pitch. "Oh, okay, well, let me tell you how we can help you in that area. The pro, as you can see, simply got the prospect to continue talking. And they will, if you just give them the chance.

You might be amazed at what you learn, if you just give people the opportunity to tell you. I would say people would give us exactly what we need in order to help them buy, if we just let them. People will write their presentations for you if you just give them the chance. You ask the right questions, you listen, and then you keep questioning.

You're probably not going to be a pro at golf, unless you're one already, but you certainly can be more of a pro at sales!

I heard this question used effectively by a sales rep when I was monitoring some calls for a client. The situation was a prospect had mentioned an initiative that they were working on. Then the sales rep said, "What would excite you about achieving that?" Then the prospect really opened up, and started sharing at a more deeper, emotional level than they had previously.

Think about just the context of that question. "So tell me what would excite you about achieving that?" Think about it, you've got people who are emotionally invested in many of the decisions they make every day. It's always been said people will buy emotionally, back it up rationally. That still is true. If you can get somebody excited, now you're taking it to a whole new level.

## Money Questions You Can Use

Want some money questions? A sensitive area for some sales reps is the money-related question. I've seen many sales that have been lost, and a lot of time's been wasted by sales reps who, ultimately, found out that their prospects didn't have money, or they couldn't get the money to buy.

I'm going to give you some questions that you can use or adapt to determine if your prospect even is in the same ball park. So, I'm going to give you a bunch of these, and again if you don't get them all down, don't worry. You can get it on the replay, or get it in the transcript for the slides:

*"So you already have the money set aside for this, is that right?"*

*"What kind of price range had you planned for?"*

*"Is the money already been allocated for this?"*

Now, again, you have to take this in context. You're not going to ask this question like the second question after your opening statement. We're already talking about needs, pains, problems, concerns. You probably have been into your sales recommendation phase, or maybe you're in your qualification phase and they're giving you some buying signals.

*"I'm assuming the funds have already been approved for this?"*

*"If you decide this is what you want, is the money available to you?"*

*"Is there anyone else who would have to sign off on the money part of this?"*

Notice here we're trying to navigate the organizational, decision making, and financial hierarchy.

*"For what size, model, or number has money been approved for?"*

This is if you have several different options, of course.

*"How are you planning on financing this purchase?"*

*"So if I understand what you're saying, the money part's already been approved; it's now just a matter of where you're going to spend it?"*

If a prospect's offended by money questions, or if they're evasive, think about it. They may not be a legitimate prospect, or they may not be the decision maker. Really, if they're a player in the sense that they're able to buy, money questions are not a problem, this is business like.

NOTE: Again, these questions should be asked deeper into the call, after they've shown interest. I'm not big on just saying, "Do you have a budget for this," because that is so easy to say no to. "Oh, our budget's already been spent." So come up with different types of questions instead.

## Listening

Speaking of questions, let's look at the other side of the question. This is the more important side of the question. We're going to talk about listening here, and I'm going to share some personal experiences first to make my points. Really, I love just being out and interacting with people because there's sales lessons to be learned every day in almost every situation where you interact with other people if you just look for them.

Stores, restaurants, airports, health clubs, certainly on the phone when you're a buyer, and of course, as the seller, the list is endless. I would say the world is my sales lab. I've pretty finely tuned my awareness of these potential sales and learning situations. You can do it too if you look for them. To introduce this point, let me just share a couple with you.

I'm getting my hair cut – what's left of it anyway. The stylist was attempting some half-hearted small talk, and she asked me, "So do you have plans for the weekend?" This was before the holidays, and I mentioned that yeah, I was probably going to play golf, and cook, and get some work done. Mostly my life; those are the things that I do. After a few minutes of silence, she said – I kid you not – "So do you have any plans for the weekend?"

I looked at her in the mirror because of course she's behind me. I almost laughed out loud. My first reaction was to give her a smartass answer, but then, I just paused, and I answered exactly the SAME way I had moments earlier. She replied, "Oh, sounds like fun." I'm sure she didn't listen to that one either.

I'm not a big Starbucks guy, but occasionally, I'll get it if there's no other coffee alternative. I order the way I normally do, and I say, "Yeah, I'll have a large Pike Place. Black." (By the way, I refuse to use their inane sizing



vocabulary of Vente, Grande, whatever). The young guy behind the counter replied, “Do you want room for cream?” Of course, when I said “black” with my order, I thought that I might have answered that question in advice, maybe implied that I didn’t. So again, I very politely replied, “No thank you.” Then, as he was filling my cup, he looked over his shoulder and said, “Do you want room for cream with that?” Arggggghhhh!

Alright, one more here. I was finishing my meal at a pretty nice restaurant, and the waiter stopped by. I was on the road doing some training, and I was alone. The waiter said, “Can I get you anything else?” I replied, “No thanks, just the check.” I was expecting my check when he walked back by several minutes later without the check, and he said, “Can I get you anything else?” What’s the problem here? Here’s the sales point. These people were all questioning habitually, and unconsciously.

Think about the last time you were driving in your car, and maybe you became entranced by some thought. You ever have that happen? All of a sudden you arrive at your destination, and you think, ‘Holy moly. How did I get here.’ You might have driven all the way home without remembering any of it. You were driving habitually and unconsciously, going through the motions. Many people question like that. They’ve got questions that they ask the same way, all of the time. But they often don’t listen to the answers, as my examples illustrate here. Obviously, you can’t be an effective sales pro doing that.

## **What to Do**

Ok, so what should you do? Got some tips here for you.

***Change your listening mindset.*** Right now, I’m asking you, can you make a commitment to listening to everyone that you come in contact with – I mean really listening. Anybody can do this, but you’ve got to want to do it. You’ve got to develop your purpose for listening.

The philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, said “If the ‘why’ reason is strong enough, the ‘how’ doesn’t matter.” If you make this an absolute, never breakable rule that you will give full attention to what is being said – because you must, in order to help somebody buy – you will find a way to make it happen. This does require work if you don’t do it all the time. We all know people who would much rather talk than listen. There’s some sales people who think they are paid by the word. You will become a better

listener, and a sales person, if you want to.

**Prepare to hear the answer.** After you ask a question, don't begin thinking about what you're going to say next while you wait for them to finish talking. Instead, shift into this receptive mode, taking in everything they say, and also examining the way in which they say it. Have a pen in your hand...

**Write down their emotional words.** These are the words that are very important to us in sales. These are the words that signify extreme importance to them, and also opportunities for us. Words and phrases like, "A problem we're seeing is..." or "Where we need to improve is..." Think about that. Those are indicators that what they describe next are priorities for them. Write those down because these ensure that you don't interrupt them. Then you're able to come back and question them when they are done. When you write down their answers, you're going to be able to use their exact language in your sales recommendation phase. This is what I call having them write the recommendation for you. Really, think about it. Their actual words, when they hear them, will have more impact than whatever else you would come up with on your own.

**Respond to their answers with deeper questions.** Lower the water level on the iceberg. When I was on a call, I started my general questioning with, "Why are you looking to do sales training now?" The prospect's response was, "Well, we have a new administration here, and they want to really turn things around. There's more push, and more focus on new business."

Think about what we had covered earlier. What would the amateur do? The amateur, at this point, would go into a pitch about my Smart Calling program. Maybe a lot of people would do that, thinking they've uncovered a need because they said they got to have more new business and we can do that for them.

Instead, when I wrote down notes, I highlighted new administration, turned things around, more push and more focus on new business. One by one, I asked him about those. I drilled deeper, learning all of the 'why's' behind what they had just said, the real reasons why they were going to buy.

This really is one of the simplest and most powerful tools that we have available to us, and that's the ability to listen. Use these ideas, and keep working on your listening. Your sales are going to increase as well.

## Get Referrals from Within Their Company

Let's talk about getting referrals from within someone's company. Let's say you have a customer in a company that has multiple locations, or maybe many departments at one location, and maybe you haven't even scratched the surface of potential business there. Some sales reps think they have. Maybe they're just satisfied because they've got that one buyer. You've already done the heavy lifting, getting the company as a customer. Now that you're in the door, you're part of the family. Now, we really just need to dig for other opportunities. Some of you are probably doing this extremely well, but some of you have such a gold mine already there within your existing customer base.

Here's what I would suggest you do. Ask your existing customer this question, "Who else within your company also uses or does (performs whatever function it is), who could also take advantage of something similar to what we're doing together right now?" Then maybe you might want to prompt them a little bit: "How about other departments? Other locations?"

Even if they come up empty, you could say something like, "If I could find some other buyers on my own, it wouldn't be a problem if I mention your name as a reference, would it?"

**The "negative sell" or "takeaway"**. This technique's been around, or versions of it, forever. Early in my career, I was kind of against them because it was that old thing about never bring up a negative. That's being a negative. I thought they were a bit cheesy. They can be—depending on the context. There's a lot of techniques that depending on how they're used, I would recommend they not be used. Over the past years I was studying and selling into different markets with a new venture, I was really seeing how this technique can have merit in certain situations.

The theory here lies in the fact that people want what they can't have, or again, the fear of missing out. After you tell somebody they might not be a fit for what you have, with some people, that's like flipping a switch that says, "Oh yeah, why not?"

Here's some examples of that, that you might be able to use or adapt:

*"Really, this might not be for you, but let me ask you a few questions and we can find out."*

*“Really, this isn’t for everyone. It might be in your situation, so let’s just discuss a couple of options here.”*

*“I’m not quite sure that you’re in the right place now for what we have, but we’ll be able to find out with a few questions.”*

Or you could plug this into an opening, to help somebody lessen their defenses. Or perhaps at the close, where somebody might be thinking of reasons why they DO want it after they hear this technique. Again, everything I present may not be effective for everybody, but what I would encourage you to do is to look at everything here that we’re presenting and say, how could I use that in my situation?

### **Address Concerns Before They Do**

You’ve likely had some questions or resistance in your calls, or that come up in your business that are there even before you speak with your prospects, or they inevitably arise on sales calls.

Maybe it’s high price, or maybe it’s even a hesitation to do business by phone. Maybe it’s the elephant in the room, whatever that is in your business or industry. In most cases, the best way to handle this is to shoot it down, address it before the objection is even brought up. It’s preempting the objection.

By bringing up the objection before somebody does, what you do is you clear up negative thinking early in the call. For example, the prospect might feel that your price is too high, and he, therefore, might not be listening very carefully to the rest of what you’re saying. However, by addressing the situation early, and resolving the issue, the prospect might be more open now to the rest of the call.

Here’s some ways to transition into bringing up the inevitable question that might be lurking, but it’s unspoken:

*“I bet you might be asking yourself at this point...”*

*“You might be wondering...”*

*“You’re probably saying to yourself...”*

*“If you’re at all concerned about...”*

*“A question many people have at this point is...”*

Then of course, you go in to actually bring it up, and then you answer it. You bring it up, then you answer it. You blow it out of the water before they even bring it up. If there’s an objection that you find yourself answering on every call, bring it up first! You’re going to disarm them, and put them in a more receptive frame of mind.

I’ve had the pleasure of being on the same speaking program at a couple of national sales meetings with Andrea Waltz and Richard Fenton, the authors of the best-selling book, “Go for No.” Although, I’d never heard them speak because sometimes we’re in different breakout sessions. I did have the opportunity this year at a workshop. I got to tell you, they were awesome. Their premise is you’re not going to get a lot of yesses unless you’re putting yourself in a position to get a lot of no’s. The math works on this. In their book, they’re quick to point out that activity and quality are not mutually exclusive. That was kind of my main objection with the whole premise, but then after I heard them and then went through the book again, I agree with it. We need to have both. We do need to have quality activity. If you don’t have that book yet, I would encourage you to pick it up. It’s a brief, little read, but man is it powerful.

A story from their presentation here. They made a point about not stopping your selling until someone is done buying, which means, until you hear a no, or perhaps several no’s, you don’t know if someone’s done, do you. How could you possibly? Richard told the story of being a young salesman at an high-end men’s clothes store. He was helping a client that needed an entire wardrobe. Yeah, the guy came in and said he needed an entire wardrobe, head to toe. The customer bought everything that Richard brought out. Man, was he proud of himself. Then his manager, who was observing, after the guy left, after it was a huge sale, he really burst his bubble. He said, “How do you know the customer was done buying?” He didn’t. The point being, the customer never said no to anything. Richard simply quit asking. Lesson learned.

**Yes, You Can “Do Better Than That**

Speaking of asking, you might have gotten this question before from a prospect, “Can you do any better than that?” as it relates to price. They hear your price and they ask you “Can you do any better than that?”

My experience has been that people ask that question after they're already sold. They've crossed that emotional buying bridge, but they just haven't verbalized it to you yet. They do, however, feel obligated to try to get the best deal. Sometimes inexperienced sales reps will interpret this question as an objection. They get insecure, and then they either apologize for their price, or they begin dropping it faster than an elevator. Skilled reps, hopefully you, remain confident, and answer, “Yep, that's the price.”

I had this last week. A guy just said to me – after he pretty much said we were going to do business together – he said, “Just wondering if you negotiate price.” I said, “No, that's the price.”

What I suggest though, that you be prepared for, is not only saying that that is the price and saying it confidently, but also using it as an opportunity to present an upsell. How about this, “Yeah, you can do better than that.” When you do better, it's not dropping your price, it's something like this, “Well, actually, I can do a bit better. If you get the three-year program, I can give it to you for just \$700 per year instead of \$850.” Notice, that's not dropping the price because you're getting almost three times as much revenue today. Most of us would rather have that.

Think about how you could do better by upselling when you get that question.

### **Salvage Something From Quick Blow Off's**

Let's talk about when you get the blow offs, the quick brush offs. Anybody that's ever prospected, has likely run into prospects who quickly got rid of them, even before we had a chance to complete our opening, even when it was a good opening. When that happens, consider this: maybe the prospect was having a bad day. Maybe they just experienced an office emergency that required their attention. Maybe they had something personal going on in their life. Therefore, another contact might be worth the investment. You could do this on a call, or I've had people tell me that they've done this in an email. Got people that still used the fax and it takes the form of something like this:

*“I had the feeling I called you at a bad time the other day. I apologize. The purpose for my call was to run an idea by you that could potentially help you to (basically, this is just a version of your opening statement. Now you’re putting it in a different form). I’d like to ask a few questions to determine if we have the basis for our conversation. Please call me, or please reply.”*

Give it a one more shot. I’ve got people that have this set up in their CRM system. It’s a template. They just add a couple of things and boom, they send it out to the ones they got brushed off on, and then they feel good that at least they salvaged something on that call because they attempted something.

That’s one of the most potentially, devastating phrases and beliefs a sales person could have, and I hear this occasionally when I’m out doing training, and somebody says, “Well, what I’m using now works for me.” Normally, I’ll hear that after somebody shares a technique or an opening statement that really – I’ll be gentle here – could be improved. Or in some cases, if it’s just flat out horrible. They’ll say, “Yeah, that works for me.”

Keep this in mind. “It works” – that’s all relative. What percentage of the time does something work? What would it mean if you could increase your percentage chances for success? Here’s the thing. Complacency and a lack of desire to improve is what keeps so many sales people performing at the lowest levels. While those of you who are always looking for the edge, even if it’s a little edge, sell circles around everybody else. Which group are you in? Which group do you want to be in this year?

Instead of saying, “What I do works. It’s okay,” ask yourself better questions. When you’re presented with a new idea or a new training, or anything we’re covering here, ask yourself, “How well am I doing that right now?” Apply that to all parts of your call.

Here’s really the brutal, no hiding question, “Are you 100% thrilled with your results right now?” If you are, well, you probably wouldn’t be on this program today. There’s nothing wrong with not being 100% thrilled because that is what gives us our edge, and that is what keeps us motivated. Never lose that.

**Ask BIG!**

Now, I'm going to contradict myself. Actually, I'm not going to contradict myself yet. Ask Big. If you ask large, you're going to consistently get larger results. The math works on this. It's more likely that someone would shift down after you make a big recommendation than raise up after a small one.

Matter of fact, John Orlando, works for a machine shop. He targeted an engine manufacturer as a desired client. He aimed high with his objective. His primary objective was setting a goal of providing the company with all of their engine components. That was an aggressive goal. On a call after doing the appropriate interest-creating and questioning, he recommended to the client that his company be the supplier for all of the prospect's engine components and he asked for the big sale. The prospect balked at it.

They spoke again, John asked a few questions and realized he wasn't going to get all the business, then he backed up. He scaled down his request and he asked for just their parts business. You know what? He got it.

Now, think about what would have happened if John had started out with the request just for the smaller parts-only portion of the business. Of course, we don't know, but I'm guessing it might have been likely that he would have come up empty or maybe had gotten a call back that were to stretch this out further.

In any event, what I suggest you do is get out of your own comfort zone regarding your thinking and your bigger requests. Think big; ask large. You're going to get proportionate results. The math, again, works on this.

## **Think Small**

I jumped the gun here because I told you I was going to contradict myself, and I am. Well, not really. You should also think *small* to get big results. This is just a little shift in mindset as it relates to something else. I'm talking here about the little things, doing the little things correctly and doing them consistently.

Basketball fans out there, you're probably familiar with the legendary basketball coach John Wooden. His record of 10 national championships in 12 years will never come close to being attained again. I can say that with confidence. He was obsessed with the fundamentals. Even down to how



players should put on their socks. Read the book about John Wooden. It's a great business book, and motivational book. He said, "If you do enough small things right, big things can happen." Another quote – there's lots of quotes attributed to him. I don't know if this is a different quote, or just rewording of this one. He said "There are no big things, only a logical accumulation of little things done at a very high standard of performance."

Success comes from making sure you do those little things exceptionally well.

How can you apply this? Well, let me ask you. What is ONE small thing that you can focus on getting better at each day? What's one small tweak, or additional call that you can make every day? Think about that, and put this small piece of advice into action for your BIG results.

So now, we're getting into the motivation and the attitude part, which I really believe is the most important part of our job. After all, people can memorize techniques. You can take somebody off the street and give them things to say, but if you don't have the right mindset and attitude, you're not going to do it effectively. So we're going to continue on talking about this.

**Cesar Rodriguez is a brilliant**, younger guy who teaches the art and science of approaching people you don't know. Prospecting, right. That's a top fear of most salespeople, business-to-business or consumer. He's actually created a brand, called B10xB, which stands for "Be 10 Times Bolder." The premise here is, whenever you're in a situation where fear and self-doubt is creeping in, or has consumed you, ask yourself, "What would I do right now if I were 10 times bolder?" Think about that when you're clutching up, when you're asking for an appointment, or asking for a sale, when you're getting ready to pick up the phone to call that whale account. Be ten times bolder. What would you do if you were ten times bolder? This works folks.

Cesar also says to apply the "three-second rule." When you're faced with a decision that you've got to act on, and where potential fear could cause you to chicken out, apply that B10xB philosophy and take action within three seconds. Just say to yourself, 'Okay, I've got three seconds, I got to do it.' I guarantee you. I do this. It's amazing what we can do when we just tweak our thinking a little bit and we just force ourselves to take action.

If you're into this, you could also use the pain-infliction technique that he encourages. He's got these little black B10xB rubber wrist bands that he says to grab it, stretch it, and snap it on your wrist if you're considering not taking action. Then you can associate more pain with not taking action than just taking the leap.

The next time you're looking at that huge prospect name and number and you're wavering on not calling them, three-second rule, apply B10xB and just go for it. By the way, he also had a great quote as it relates to getting No's, and not taking it personally by distancing yourself from the outcome of the prospecting activity. He said, "You need people. But you don't require any ONE person." Or you can revise that and say, you need sales, but you don't need any ONE sale. So that really kind of puts things in perspective. Let's talk a little bit more here about no's.

### **Think About What is Really Important to Get Over a Fear of "No**

If the fear of picking up the phone, or getting a no is hindering your calling at all, and sometimes people get into one of those funks, I suggest you do this little reality check. Put things in perspective. Does your income and livelihood depend on your production, your sales? How about your ability to pay your rent, your mortgage, your car payment, to feed your family, to take vacations, to live a better lifestyle? Does that depend on your job? If you're paid on commission, does that depend on your income, your bonus, your higher commissions? Really, getting more of what you want depends on what you do every day, right?

Aren't all of those things more important than whatever silly fear you might have of hearing a "no"? Why in the WORLD would you let hearing a "no" from someone that you don't know, who likely couldn't care less about you? Why would you let that affect you?

The next time you let that little devil creep on your shoulder, that fear devil – cause you to hesitate doing what you know you should do, remind yourself of what is REALLY important in your life

We're going to end here. I've got one more point, but what time is it? It's giveaway time.

I've got one more point for you, and this one's also on not fearing rejection and really being motivated every single day. That is so, so important.

Let me tell you a quick story. At age 19, this guy's application to Harvard Business School was rejected. He was devastated at the time.

So he explored some other options; he regrouped and sent in a late application to Columbia, where two investment experts that he admired were on the faculty there. He got accepted. There he learned the values and the principles that guided his future, his investing. Today, he's the third wealthiest person in America and the most famous stock investor in the world. Who am I talking about here? That's right. That's my buddy, my fellow Omahan, Warren Buffet. People say, "Do you know Warren Buffet?" I said, "Well, Warren and I hang out." (Actually, we didn't. I drove by his house, and then security told me to move along. No, I don't know Warren, but I have met him before.)

Warren's a big believer in looking for opportunities in setbacks, which is what all great salespeople do as well.

Matter of fact, we can learn a lot from this. In a *Wall Street Journal* article, Warren said, "The truth is, everything that has happened in my life, that I thought was a crushing event at the time, has turned out for the better."

He also said, "With the exception of health problems, setbacks teach us lessons that carry us along, and we learn that a temporary defeat's not a permanent one. In the end, it can be an opportunity."

Buffet's got many examples of negatives, how they became positives. He said when he was young he was terrified of public speaking. Now people just love to listen to him so much at his Berkshire Stock. They call it Berkshire Stock. I believe it's the annual meeting takeoff on Woodstock.

He was so afraid of speaking that sometimes he threw up before he had to give a speech. He knew he had to do something about it. He enrolled into Dale Carnegie, a speaking course. He says the skills he learned there enabled him to woo his future wife, who was a champion debater. He says he even proposed to her during the course. He said, if he'd already been a mediocre speaker he might not have taken it. The extreme negativeness of the situation is what resulted in the positive.

I've personally got a process I've used for many years that enables me to keep my own personal attitude up even during the most difficult situations, and to find positives in negatives. Although it sounds cliché, it turns problems into opportunities. I believe it could do the same for you. These

are my two magic questions.

## Two Magic Questions

Whenever you experience something that you perceive as being negative – think about it. It could be a call. It could be losing a big deal. A lot of people, sometimes look at these as devastating. What I suggest you do instead: take a deep breath, stop, clear your mind for a minute, and ask yourself these two magic questions:

*“What can I learn from this?”*

*“What good can I make from this?”*

I would encourage you to begin implementing these two questions every time you run into more than a major difficulty, or a major difficulty. We already talked about how to deal with the no’s. let’s talk about those ones that you might kind of blow out of proportion a little bit. If you do this, I know that you’re going to view things a little bit differently. You’re going to see more opportunities where they might not have been there otherwise, and it’s going to keep your attitude high. Let’s face it. We picked this industry. We’re proactive. We’re putting ourselves out in heavy traffic every day. Occasionally, we get side swiped. Occasionally, we take one broad side. It’s how we react to it that really determines how well we’re going to do the rest of the day, the week, the year, our career for that matter.

## Eliminating “Rejection”

Speaking of rejection. Let’s talk about how to never experience rejection again. We’ll end on this one.

Some people say, “Wait a minute. You got to experience rejection in sales.” No you don’t. Matter of fact, that’s in the title of three of my books about how you should never experience rejection. There have been critics out there over the years, and they make fun of that claim. I, of course, know that those people never took the time to actually read the parts of the books where I show exactly how you can avoid it. I’ll going to give you the process right now.

What is rejection? Is it the ‘no’ that you hear at the beginning of a call? Is it the ‘no’ you hear after you’ve lost a competitive proposal? Is it being hung up on, saying, “Never call me again.”

If you think it is, it is. Now, I'm not going to get out there and get all philosophical on you, but I do want you to consider these points:

- The stuff that happens to you in sales (getting the no's), that's inevitable. It's going to happen if we're placing calls. That's what happens to you.
- What happens to you is not rejection.
- Rejection is your definition. It's the definition that someone attaches to what happens to them. Stuff happens all the time.
- There's not one thing or situation can cause you to feel rejected unless you allow it to. Eleanor Roosevelt said, "Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent." So I borrowed that and changed it slightly. No one can reject you without your consent.
- What I suggest you do is change your definition of rejection so it doesn't include getting a no on a call. Getting a no doesn't even come close to what I call rejection. You can call rejection something that would be awful where you family leaves you and they report you to the police and file suit against you.

After a 'no', ask yourself the two questions I presented earlier: What good can I get from this? What can I learn from this?

Also, get a win on every call, something you could attempt, regardless of how minor. That's what I call our Secondary Objective. You can do that on every single call.

I'm going to end with a couple of final comments here. I want to thank you for being with us today. One more thing, more than any other profession, how you feel when you're performing your job really does affect your outcome. Coupled with the fact that all day long we proactively put ourselves in harms way where the outcome may not be the one we desire, there's little wonder that most people would never consider sales as a career, and a lot of people have left it because they couldn't handle what they experienced, the experiences. That underscores the need to follow processes like I've outlined here, both the techniques, the strategies, as well as these mindset techniques.

I've just scratched the surface. I encourage you to follow me all throughout

the year. If you're not a member already, join our Inner Circle where you get this type of training. I do one of these every other month, and I have a guest presenter every other month. I'm going to end with this:

You're a special person for doing what you do. Really to continue surviving, and thriving, and ensuring that you're going to have your best year ever, please do. Go back through this again. Implement these ideas for turning challenges into opportunities. You're never going to experience rejection again, and you're going to experience more wins more often. You're going to get through more often. You're going to sell more. You're going to set more appointments. You're going to make more money.

Thank you for joining me everybody. I really appreciate you all, and I look forward to you having 2018 be your best year ever!