Art Sobczak's

SMART CALLING REPORT

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Try This Email Approach If You Really Want to Stand Out

Here's an email approach that is so much better than the inane prospecting ones I get every day that pitch me on things I would never need, then ask for an appointment:

1. Do your Smart Calling homework.

2. Find something that likely is relevant to something that is going on in your prospect's world.

3. Send a brief email with link to it to your prospect. No pitch. No asking for anything. Really, no indication that you are even a sales rep.

4. Then call just as you normally would, but don't make the email the basis for the call. Have value.

For example, a sales rep for a company that provides supply chain management consulting is targeting smaller electronics manufacturers. They have had successes in this industry. They already have a case study/white paper on how they helped one of their clients solve a common problem.

The rep uses LinkedIn and several other industry sites, and specialized searches to compile a list of prospects that meet his criteria. He does his online research in batches of 10-20 prospects on a Sunday night to pick up any other personal or company intel he might be able to further customize his approach with.

Further, he sets aside some time to do some Social Engineering before sending out the emails. He calls into departments handling transportation/logistics, customer service, and other departments affected by the issue they help solve.

Then he sends out an email to his targeted decision maker.

Hi Mike,

A major challenge many of our smaller electronic manufacturing clients face is intricacy of the international supply chain, especially as it relates to varying standards regarding compliance and traceability. Here's a brief summary of how several firms are using some unique methods to deal with that. www.LinktoPage. Enjoy!

Best wishes,

Pat Seller

ABC Company

A few glaring things about this email. There is no call to action. Precisely. It's simply giving them something of potential value. Why would someone do that? Especially when they actually view and DO get value. That stands out. It creates intrigue.

Regarding the resource youactually send them to, my recommendation is to have it be a piece that is fairly objective and not blatant self-promotional. Ideally it would be a case study to carry credibility and social proof. If you can feature the actual people, video, and a company name, all the better.

It wouldn't divulge exactly how to solve the problem, just the concept and result. Perhaps someone could figure out how to do it themselves, but ideally they'd want the expert. You.

So the goal here would be to pique their curiosity.

Put it on a company web page with the typical menu links, etc. so they could click around for more info if they chose.

Also, do put this on the page, just in case they do want to contact you right now. They might.

"For more information, contact Pat Seller, PatSeller@ABCCO.com, 800-5555-5858."

How many emails do you think that decision maker gets like this each day?

I'm guessing… none.

Contrasted with the 10 or more bad ones that want an appointment, talk about their stuff, etc.

Now, do you think a follow-up call might have a better chance of being well-received?

Even if they don't get it, open it, or read it, you will place the same call.

The Follow Up Call

The opening pretty much repeats what was in the email. You can personalize it even more, if you scored some intel while Social Engineering. It would go something like this,

"Hi Mike, Pat Seller here with ABC Company. In speaking with one of your transportation analysts, I understand you've been running into a common challenge in our industry, the intricacy of the international

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Sales Observations

We had a member in the Smart Calling Community group ask about what others put in their objections answer book.

I weighed in with how I'm not a fan of "objection books" or "objection rebuttals," since a direct response is not addressing the reason they said what they did; it is replying to the symptom of a problem that we don't know yet.

As I've covered many times, when we do get a real objection, we need to get someone talking so we can learn the real problem, not just try to address a symptom.

The first step in that process is to soften them a bit so you disarm them, let them know you aren't there to argue, and get them talking. For example,

"Let's talk about that."

"Not a problem."

"I've heard that before."

And here is one that as I was initially writing it, I thought about it more and added to it a bit.

"That's what every one of my existing clients said before they asked themselves the question, "How do I know that I'm getting ____?"

There is a lot going on with this one that makes it effective.

First, when you say, **"That's what every one of my existing clients said…"** you are using the same psychology behind the "Feel-Felt-Found" technique.

While that technique in its purest form is a bit canned and overtaught, the reasoning behind it is sound.

You are letting people know that their belief is reasonable, but when others in the same situation got additional information they realized there was another way to look at it.

That notion continues with **"…before they asked themselves the question, "How do I know that I'm getting ____?"**

This is brilliant because you are not directly asking them, "How do you know you are getting the best price?"

That is a great question, and when it is put in the context of someone similar to them asking the question, then it is easier for them to think about it, since they are not being put on the spot.

Think about how you could fill in the blank with something appropriate for the value you deliver, and be prepared to use it the next time you get a common objection.

Here's an interesting line to use after your questioning, to preface your recommendation/presentation:

"**OK, tell me what you think about this option as a solution for you. I suggest our XT model. What it will do is…**"

Very subtly, you are letting them know you are looking for their thoughts on an "option" as a solution to their pain, problem, or need. That is easier to process than if we just go into a pitch, which might cause them to go into more of a guarded mode.

I know I keep beating the drum on this, and that's because I believe so strongly in the value you will get when you participate.

If you haven't gotten in yet, I'm seeing you in the new, private, exclusive Smart Calling Facebook group!

We've been up for over a month now and really are getting some valuable and fun interaction.

The success of any community like this is largely dependent upon the participation of its members, so I encourage you to visit regularly and participate.

I'm participating every day, as well as adding new training, tips, and inspiration regularly.

It's really great to roll up our sleeves and interact with other like-minded, motivated sales pros.

So far we've worked on opening statements, answers to resistance and objections, how to handle call reluctance and rejection, and I've posted recordings of calls I've received.

To join, free, just go to Facebook.com/groups/SmartCalling/

See you there, and make it your best month ever!

Art

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How to Identify the Trigger Events Leading to Your Sales

By Craig Elias

No matter what you sell or who you are selling to, buyers are always in one of three buying modes.

Most salespeople are quite familiar with two of them:

Status Quo: We believe what we have is sufficient, and we see no reason to change, so we'll keep buying from our current supplier.

Searching for Alternatives: We know what we have is no longer sufficient and have started talking to several other suppliers.

In between these two, however, lies the buying mode with the greatest opportunity, namely the …

Window of Dissatisfaction: We know what we have is no longer sufficient, and we've put doing something about it on our "to do" list, but we haven't found the time to start searching for alternatives.

In other words: When you find a decision maker after they realize what they have is no longer sufficient but before they have started the process of searching for alternatives, you have found them in the Window of Dissatisfaction!

Your Competitive Edge

When you start 'seeing' the Window of Dissatisfaction, you've got the beginnings of a competitive edge – an unfair advantage that will help you close more sales, shorten your sales cycles, and increase your average deal size.

One way to create a Trigger Event that will help you 'see' the Window of Dissatisfaction, is a simple form of customer analysis.

Take a few moments to reflect on the new customers you acquired in the last year. Jot down their names.

Now break your list down a little further by putting a check mark next to those names where you:

√ Enjoyed a short sales cycle,

√ Found it very easy to make the sale,

√ Sold at a higher-than-average price, and

√ Ended up with a core, loyal customer who really saw eye-to-eye with you and was willing and eager to sing your praises to other people.

In all likelihood, you got to those with three or more check marks next to their names when they were in a Window of Dissatisfaction, your product or service resonated with the buyer's selective perception, and they 'saw' value in what you sell.

The Trigger Event of doing this customer analysis will put the Window of Dissatisfaction on your mental 'radar screen'! Once you "see" a Window of Dissatisfaction, and relate it to your own best customers, you will start noticing them everywhere.

So take a look at your new best customers and soon you will close more sales by seeing the Window of Dissatisfaction everywhere.

(Craig Elias is the Creator of "Trigger Event Selling" and author of the award winning sales book "SHiFT!" You can reach Craig at Craig.Elias@ShiftSelling.com, or www.shiftselling.com)

Don't Ask This Question at the Beginning. Except with Inquiries

I've always suggested avoiding go-nowhere questions at the beginning of prospecting calls, especially *"Are you familiar with us?"* As in, *"Mr. Prospect, I'm Jan Mackerel with Zygon Industries, are you familiar with us?"* My reasoning is that if they aren't familiar with you, you'll have to explain your company anyway, so why do it after they've given you a negative answer. Plus, you haven't really given them a reason to answer your questions, or to care about your company. If they answer that, yes, they are familiar with you, but they're not a customer, it leads to the beginning of a potentially uncomfortable situation, almost putting the person on the defensive.

You do, indeed, want to find out what they know about you—just do not make that the focus of your opening statement. After you've generated some interest and curiosity with a brilliant opener, you can say, **"By the way, so I'm not being redundant with my questioning, does our company name sound familiar at all to you?"**

Incoming Calls are Different

Incoming calls are an entirely different matter. If they inquire to you for information, you should definitely find out—early—what they already know about you. This pinpoints where you need to start with them. For example,

Prospect: (who called in to the sales rep) "Yes, I'd like to get some information on the Performacal Trioxin you had advertised in Chemical Journal."

Sales Rep: "I'll be happy to help you with that. (after getting name, company, etc.) **So I can give you the best information for your application, let me ask a few questions. First of all, how familiar are you with our company, and the Performacal product?"**

Listen carefully and take notes, as this simple open-ended question could provide you with the basis for some great information. It's quite likely they'll mention some positives which you naturally can build upon, and if they by chance bring up any negative perceptions, you can question further and hopefully dispel them.

How You View These Two is a Good Indicator Of Your Present and Future Success

I firmly believe that at least 80% of our sales success is attributable to our attitude.

Our mindset.

How we think about our position in life, what we want, our environment, and how we interact with others. Which transforms into our actions. Or inaction.

I don't devote 80% of our material here to mindset, but I'm going to give it substantial treatment here.

A couple of weeks ago I was in Cabo San Lucas with my girlfriend, staying at a $1000-per night resort. Over the top awesome. Some amazing gourmet restaurants.

This article is mostly all about what I just said.

When someone says they stayed at a $1000 a night resort, there are a variety of reactions.

Some people might say, "That is freaking awesome. I'm going to do that." Or, "That's my goal to be able to do that and I'm going to find a way how." Others say, "Oh, that's ridiculous. He's just bragging." Or, "Big deal. He can do it, sure. I never could."

How someone reacts to something like that usually provides an insight into their mindset and their possibility and probability for great success. As I have discussed for years, and will continue to, success in sales, and life in general, is mostly due to your attitude.

Abundance and Scarcity

Perhaps you've heard about abundance mindset, and scarcity mindset.

Abundance mindset is what leads to amazing success. It's someone looking at success in all areas of life and believing that there is infinite opportunity for themselves, and everyone. And being happy for others when they achieve it too. Which leads to being positive, creative, and grateful.

Scarcity mindset is found in the people who will typically never get past average.

They feel that only certain lucky people enjoy abundance, and are resentful. They miss opportunities that are there their entire lives because they find the darkness in every situation.

Let's explore this a bit further and leave you with some ideas to ponder.

1. Get Rid of Self-Imposed Limits

First point is, do not think or believe you are limited by your situation, or your history.

I was fortunate in that I had two, hard-working, blue collar parents. I was not poor growing up, but we were definitely modest working middle class. My parents definitely had a scarcity mentality. Their thinking was that everyone should get a job right out of school, settle down, work hard for 40 years and retire with a modest pension.

Well, I love the work ethic they inspired in me, and the creativity I inherited, but I wasn't buying into the scarcity mindset. If I did, I wouldn't be writing this to you right now, and I certainly wouldn't have been at that resort.

When I got out of high school, I knew I would do great things. I believed I'd be a millionaire by the time I was 30. I had no idea how, but I **believed** I would.

When I left my first corporate job at one of the biggest companies in the world after just one year, my parents were not happy. People like us did not do that. True.

But I was not like them.

Oh, I wasn't a millionaire by 30. I was 34. I don't say that to brag. Just to illustrate what someone can do with the right mindset, and when they refuse to believe what they, or others say or think they **can't** do.

Bottom line, wherever you came from, or whatever you have done to this point is in the past. You are the captain of where you go next. You can let your past hinder you, or inspire you.

2. Have a Possibility Attitude

Next, it's important to have an attitude of possibility.

Meaning that you believe it is **possible** for you to achieve great things. If you don't, it can't happen in reality.

For many people, this one is difficult. Just because you haven't done it doesn't mean you can't do it.

Most people fly way too close to the ground, and their beliefs are what keep them shackled to a mundane life.

Don't get me wrong, despite what some self-help nonsense says, you **CAN'T** get *whatever* you want in life, if it is physically impossible.

I will never play major league baseball, regardless of how much I chant, write it down as a goal, and visualize myself doing it.

But for most things we want, there are not physical limitations, there are mental ones.

So ask yourself better questions. Why couldn't you make 50% more money than you make right now? Why couldn't you buy that dream house eventually? Why couldn't you regularly vacation at places like I did?

Chances are, you can't come up with good honest, logical answers. However, most people with a scarcity mindset will have answers based on self-limiting beliefs.

3. Be a Professional, Not an Amateur

Next, as it relates to sales, you can be a professional, or you can go about it like an amateur.

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Professionals do a number of things to be successful, because, well, they are a professional. Amateurs just dabble in sales, like someone who golfs twice a year and jokes about how bad they are, or someone who does something as a hobby.

Professionals are constantly learning. They are proactive in going after opportunities. They are not stopped by temporary setbacks, and have the belief and vision they will accomplish their goals.

Amateurs do not work on their personal development, they do not go after big opportunities, they complain about rejection or that people don't answer the phone, and feel they will never win sales contests. And they don't.

4. Understand There's Enough Abundance for Everyone

Finally, having an abundance mindset means that there is enough success to go around for everyone. Your success is like just a drop taken out of the massive ocean.

As opposed to thinking there is just one drop available. It means being happy when others succeed, as opposed to resenting the rich. It means wanting to be like those who are successful and being curious how they got there, instead of making fun of them.

It also means giving and sharing, because that always comes back to you. Not many people know this about me, but I get great joy in tipping large amounts to people who are working their butts off, and surprise them with as much as they probably make in a few days.

Likewise with giving recognition. If you don't do this now, try it. You'll be surprised how your universe changes.

Ok, smart callers, I want nothing more for all of you than to accomplish great things. I believe you can, because you are here right now and reading this. I just scratched the surface here... but take the ideas that resonated here with you, take action on them right now. Make them daily habits. ☎

How to Swing Luck in Your Favor

Getting and being "lucky" means that the "breaks" go your way more often than they do for others. Upon closer examination, though, the breaks come to those who have been proactive in creating an environment to allow them to happen.

The concept behind the ideas offered in this column are designed to give you an edge. Great or small, an edge is a competitive advantage in the world of sales.

In this year's Olympics, tenths ... even hundreths of a second make the difference between a gold medal, and no medal. The same is true in sales, and life in general.

It reminds me of Jan Carlson's comments some years ago. Carlson, the dynamic CEO of Scandinavian Airlines who turned the company around from a disaster to a dynamo, commented that their success was not due to any one factor. He explained that they did not become 1000% better at any one thing but rather, they became 1% better at a thousand different things. Just 1%!

How to Achieve a "Lucky" Edge

Here are little things that you can do to gain an edge. Alone, they might not be significant. But as a whole, they become powerful tools for success

1. Read, Listen, and View

Find everything you can about sales and prospecting. Online and offline. There is so much available to you if you just look.

2. Create an Edge Diary

Once you read—or hear—something of value, big or small, record it right after you read or hear it. Don't trust it to memory. Use a notebook, a loose leaf binder, your notebook computer, or create a special section in your daily calendar. Keep all of your tips in one handy place; divide the notebook into categories such as "Planning," "Opening Statements" "Questioning," etc.

3. Review

Set aside ten or fifteen minutes everyday (yes, everyday) to review the notebook. Get in the habit of monitoring yourself.

4. Initiative

Take the initiative when you have a problem, question or concern to call an expert. You will he surprised at the help you will get if you just ask.

5. Practice

Get in the habit of trying out the new idea with friends, peers and customers. Tape record yourself.

6. Be Patient

It takes about 21 days for a new habit to become ingrained. You have to consciously apply it during that time before it is natural.

7. Use Visualization

Rehearse your new technique in your mind while in the shower, on the bus, at lunch. Make this mental exercise part of your daily routine.

8. Establish Specific Goals

And develop a strategy to achieve them. For example, use; "post it" notes to remind yourself to cross-sell and upsell.

9. Reward Yourself

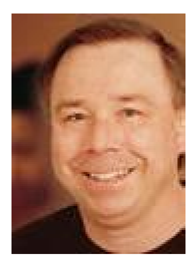
When you do something big or something small that adds to your repertoire of skills, reward yourself. Treat yourself royally.

10. Invest in Yourself

Take a self-development course. Buy yourself the necessary tools such as audiois, videos, books, etc. (and don't always expect the company to pick up the tab). It is your life, so take responsibility for it.

Summary

You can indeed be luckier. Create your own "breaks" by following these tips and you might be surprised at your good fortune!



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Don't Claim That You Can Do it All for Them

When pursuing big companies, most sellers want to ensure that decision makers know all about the full range of products, services or solutions that they provide. Proudly, they brag:

"*We offer a full breadth of services.*"

"*We provide our customers with one-stop shopping.*"

"*We can handle all your _____ needs.*"

These killer phrases are detrimental to their sales objective and actually create massive roadblocks for them. But they don't want to believe me.

Marketing has convinced them that these words are exactly what customers want to hear - that prospects will be impressed with their vast capabilities which differentiate them from everyone else in the market.

And, truth be told, they're scared. By sharing every detail of their offering, they're hoping that something - one thing - will interest the decision maker and a purchase decision will be imminent.

Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way.

Corporate decision makers today don't want to deal with the "jack of all trades." Instead, they much prefer dealing with experts who really understand their business, marketplace and needs.

Plus, when you dump your entire offering on them, you're not connecting with any urgent or compelling business need. With no focus, there's nothing there for your customers to grab on to.

It's Salesy

Finally, by pitching your entire offering, you're setting yourself up as a self-serving salesperson who's only interest is to get an order.

To be successful getting into big companies today, you need a foot-in-the-door strategy that revolves around only one subset of your entire offering.

Years ago, I discovered that it was much easier to get into large organizations if I focused on a very specific business problem which I knew I could positively impact--new product launches. Despite the fact that I was capable of doing training on a wide range of sales skills, I chose to focus my "getting in" strategy on helping salespeople be successful in just this one area.

In my early meetings with my prospects I never confused things by sharing the entire breadth of my services. The focus of our discussion was always on their product launch issues. Once I had a successful project under my belt, I let my clients know how I could help them in other ways.

How can you uncover your own foot-in-the-door strategies? Try these approaches.

Try These Approaches

Let your customers tell you. Look at your existing customers to see if there is any similarity between how you got your first contract with these accounts. Did you start out tackling a specific type of problem or opportunity? If so, what was it?

Find the white spaces. Search for areas that their current supplier or service provider might have overlooked. There are always gaps in their offerings. Check out competitive websites to look for possible shortfalls. Think about areas of their business they don't stress.

Be willing to take the crumbs. You don't want to position yourself head-to-head against an incumbent. Unless they're really screwing up, it's too hard to dislodge them. Go after a small piece of business first, prove your value and then expand.

As far as I'm concerned, phrases like "one-stop shopping" are a bunch of worthless tripe that makes you sound like a cheesy salesperson.

The more you try to be all things to all people, the less likely anyone wants to work with your company. It's time to figure out your own best foot-in-the-door strategy and start using it. Now!

(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.)

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relates to varying standards regarding compliance and traceability. We specialize in working with electronics manufacturers of your size, and have a track record of helping them streamline that process so they don't have to reinvent the wheel in every case. I had sent you an email with a case study of how we just did that with a similar firm. If I've reached you at a good time I'd like to ask a few question to see if we should talk further."

This opening checks all the boxes. It touches on several points of possible value. It doesn't talk about what they do or ask for a decision. It only briefly touches on the email in passing. And it gets them to the questioning.

Email can be used very effectively in the sales process. Or very stupidly. Modify, adapt, and try this approach, and please let me know how you do.

Five Helpful Sales Questions You Should Be Asking Every Buyer

By Ago Cluytens

When I'm asked what most sellers can do in order to virtually instantly improve their results, my answer is often simple: ask better questions.

The quality of your sales depends on the quality of your conversations.

Let that sink in for a second.

The quality of your sales. Depends. On the quality of your conversations.

Questions help us connect with others. Have more engaging conversations. Build rapport. And finally, questions can help us create an atmosphere of collaboration (and thereby win more deals).

Open Ended Sales Questions: My Personal Top Five

The difference between a question and a *great* question is this: questions produce answers.

Great questions produce **insights.**

With that in mind, here's a list of my personal, all-time favourite open ended sales questions.

1. "Imagine we were sitting down together in 12 months. What would have changed?"

This question is great for early-stage discovery meetings – especially those where a buyer is unclear on what exactly they are looking for in terms of end results. It helps the buyer clarify for themselves what kind of end results they are looking for – and positions you as someone who helped them start that process, and get true clarity on what they want.

2. "What's your #1 headache or problem right now ?"

Where the previous questions helps a buyer get clear on what they want, this one helps them focus on what they don't want – or, what they want to get away from or avoid.

When asked together, these two questions form a powerful combination that helps you uncover the afflictions and aspirations buyers are faced with – and position your services as the way to resolve them.

3. "Think of your #1 performer right now. What's he/she doing (differently) ?"

Where the previous two questions probe for afflictions ("things they don't want") and aspirations ("things they do want"), this question helps uncover what's already going well ("things they want more of").

By helping your buyer reflect on what star performers inside their organisation are doing, you help them uncover best practices and success stories to highlight inside their organisation –as well as find examples of behaviours and practices that others should emulate.

4. "What's the #1 thing that will have to change ?"

This question is designed to prioritize. For any given problem (affliction) or situation, multiple solutions may exist, and many things could (or "should") be done about it. This question helps bring out where to start, and what to do first.

Out of all the possible options, asking this questions helps you (and your buyer) zoom in on what exactly should be done first in order to make progress and improve.

5. "What's the #1 thing your team/ organization needs?"

Finally, this question will identify what the team, organisation or group needs in order to get started. Asking this question will clarify the resources (time, money, management support, attention, mandate, …) the project needs in order to get started – hopefully, including your services.

Asking these five open-ended sales questions will help your buyer get clear on:

Their objectives and what they "want more of."

Their challenges and what they "want less of."

Best practices, examples and success stories to build from.

What to prioritise and work on first.

Which resources will be required in order to get started.

Adapt, modify, and use these questions to get better insights, and action from your prospects and customers.

(Ago Cluytens is a B2B Sales Trainer, Coach & Consultant For Tech, Financial & Professional Services with the Rain Group. www.AgoCluytens.com)

What's Underneath Their Answers?

Speaking of quesitioning, keep in mind that most answers are not like islands, floating alone in the ocean.

Your best information is what lies below the surface. What you don't hear with their initial answer.

Get comfortable with listening, pausing a second or two, then replying with a form of,

"**Tell me what's important to you about that.**"

☎

How and When to Ask About Money

There's an old acronym in sales, BANT, that stands for Budget, Authority, Needs, and Timeframe.

While good in theory--we do want to learn information in each of those areas, the Budget item typically did more harm than good for a lot of sales reps.

Asking, "What's your budget for this?", or, "Do you have a budget?" typically kills sales. They come in with a lowball number or try to get rid of you by saying the budget is already spent. Then that causes the rep to reschedule a future call. For another brushoff.

With that said, you DO want to find out if they can pay. Here are some effective ways to do that:

"Mike, I want to be sure we're both on the same page here regarding what you're looking for. What range of investment did you have in mind for this project?"

"So that I can make the best recommendation for your situation, give me some idea of dollar range you were initially thinking about."

Notice that these questions talk more about a range, and not a strict budget. This way, you can qualify them, but yet not limit your chances.

What To Put In Your Notes to Ensure a Great Follow-Up Call

Planning a great follow-up call means having great notes from the previous call. So, what should you record in your notes after a call? I use my ACTION sales model as a prompt for what I should cover during the call, and what's to go in the notes afterward so I can plan for the next. Each letter of the word "Action" represents a category of information I need, or something I'll do.

Authority. What is the specific decision making hierarchy, including users, influencers, money controllers, etc. This is much more than just the name and title of the decision maker. It's the entire journey the decision-making process needs to take.

Commitment. What did they commit to DO as a result of the call?

Timing. When will they buy, and when will we speak next?

Interest/Need. What, specifically, are they interested in, and why?

Overview. Did I summarize at the end of the call what is to happen next, before our next contact.

Notes. It all goes in the notes.

Also put in your notes:

Info You Need on the Next Call. Remind yourself what to ask next time.

Possible Next-Call Objectives. What better time to partially plan your next contact, while this one is still fresh in mind.

Opening Statement Ideas. Ditto the previous reason.

What's that you say?

Can't take the time after a call to do all this stuff?

Think again. These steps actually *save* you time in preparing your next call, and ensures your calls are as solid as possible.