



7 Cold Calling Techniques that Really Work!



Cold calling isn't dead yet. In fact, according to a recent survey by DiscoverOrg, 60% of more than 1,000 polled senior executives from the IT industry reported taking an appointment or attending an event after receiving a cold call or unsolicited email. Yet, the thought of making a cold call makes your gut clench in fear. No one likes to make cold calls much less receive them. How do you get around this fear? We've put together a few awesome techniques that will help you master the art of cold calling.

Be Prepared

Do your research diligently and know everything about your prospect's requirements, challenges and needs. You will be in a much better position in developing a good relationship with your prospect if you have all the information beforehand. Prepare a list of questions and outline the entire conversation before you call. Be ready with a strong

opening sentence and rehearse it. Use meaningful phrases and learn to ask the right questions. DON'T Ask: "Did I Catch You At A Bad Time?" DO Ask: "How've You Been?"

- **Pique their interest by talking about their competition** - "I've noticed that "XYZ" seems to offer this benefit. Would you mind if I suggested something different?"
- **Mention their challenges and deliver value** - "I understand you have an awesome product, but I've noticed a few gaps in marketing that we can work on and I believe I can help you with that."
- **Sell the meeting** - "We can have a quick 15 minute meeting so that you can judge for yourself... Will you be available at 3PM?"

Nowhere do we see the mention of your product. That is because, this call is not about you or your product or your company. It is all about your prospect and their needs. Make your prospect the lead and you will have started the beginning of a successful relationship.

Timing Matters

This one is a no brainer. It is always prudent to know the best times to make cold calls. Mondays are the dreaded days of the week, where no one wants to work obviously settling in from the weekend. Fridays are the happiest days of the week where everyone is getting ready for the weekend. **Your best bet is to call during the middle of the week.** Studies show that the majority of calls lasting over five minutes occur between 3:00-5:00 pm on Tuesdays or Thursdays. **It isn't just the days of the week that matters, but the days of the year too.** Know the seasonal and temporal factors affecting your prospect's buying cycle.

- **Remember the Holidays** - Depending on the type of business it might be beneficial to call a prospect around the holiday season as businesses are keen on promotional offers and spending money.
- **Fiscal year advantage** - Financial organizations do a lot of their budgeting around the last quarter. A cold call for a financial service works better this time compared to the first quarter.
- **Trigger Events** - Keep an eye out for things like mergers and acquisitions or company expansions which could create an excellent opportunity for you to get your foot in and start a new relationship.

The secret to perfect timing isn't really a secret. You can get subtle clues to these opportune moments by keeping tabs on your prospects with the help of publicly available information across a variety of online channels.

Practice Listening

One of the most common mistakes is the thinking that the more you talk, the more you will be able to make a successful sale. Not so! Silence is golden sometimes. Listening is everything. **Make the call about your prospects.** Be kind and take your time. **Know when to**

stay silent and actively listen. Draw out your prospect, letting them lead while you work toward setting an appointment for a follow up.

- **Ask questions that promote more than one word answers** - "Can you explain the reasoning behind this particular strategy?"
- **Use statements that invite your prospects to elaborate** - "I would like to know more about what you have been doing with e-commerce on your website".
- **Paraphrase and Provide Value** - " So, I understand that you do have a website that lists all your products, but can we talk about an online store to improve sales?"

Your prospects have goals and needs and they want to be heard. Give them a platform to do that and you have just positioned yourself as a trustworthy advisor to them.

Focus on the Goal

You have about 15 seconds after a cold call has been answered to prove it isn't a waste of time for your prospect and to make them stay on call. Research and calling at the right time, will get you to this point, but **keeping the conversation going and on track is a heavy task.** Stay engaged and do not lose focus of what it is that you are trying to do.

- **Be engaged,** take notes and stay organized. There are reporting tools available that help you track your progress in each call.
- **Maintain a list** of all the points you want to talk about and tick them off one by one.
- **Avoid distractions.** Do not procrastinate by making too many notes or taking breaks or chatting with colleagues.

Set attainable benchmarks for each call and reward yourself as you achieve each one. Measure your progress and your productivity for each call as you go and learn from your mistakes. Practice makes perfect.

Make Gatekeepers your allies

Be pleasant to whoever picks up the phone when cold calling. The initial goal of cold calling isn't to sell your product, but to get the ball rolling towards a successful relationship with a prospect, more precisely the decision maker in the prospect's business. There is usually the first line of defence - the gatekeeper, before you reach the decision maker. Whether you can get past them or not makes all the difference in either a successful or an unsuccessful relationship with your prospect. **Think of ways to get the gatekeeper on your side.** Learning their names and being kind will also help you in getting one step closer to the decision maker.

- **Engage the gatekeeper and be friendly.** Give out a friendly, upbeat and positive vibe in your tone. "Hello, I am 'XYX' calling from 'ABC'. Good Morning and how are you today?"

- **Briefly explain about yourself and don't oversell.** "I specialize in helping businesses like yours improve their profits by an average of 20%."
- **Ask simple, non intrusive questions** to get a picture of both the gatekeeper and Decision maker. "I was wondering, who do I reach out to regarding your marketing strategy and boosting your sales?"

Even if the gatekeepers are not the final decision makers, they have a wealth of information that will be relevant to you. Make use of this opportunity to verify your facts, learn more about the decision makers and more about the prospect's business.

Keep it positive

"The positive thinker sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible." It is very easy to give up after making about 40 to 50 calls and getting nowhere. **Use rejection to motivate you and learn from them.** Staying positive will help you overcome that gut wrenching fear of making a cold call. Think positive thoughts and make cold calling fun by adding in little things like humor or a funny anecdote

- **Create a positive environment** - If you are doing this in a quiet office, it may not seem all that fun. Have music in the background to help.
- **Walk and Talk** - If you are on a headset or a mobile, walk around as you talk. It energizes you to be more confident.
- **Speak with a smile** - Your prospect can sense your positive and confident attitude just in that initial statement itself.
- **Control Your Thoughts** - Don't overwhelm yourself with worries that you aren't perfect at this. You're always learning.

More importantly, just have fun. If you aren't enjoying it, then it isn't worth doing. If your prospect hangs up on you, it's their loss. Be sure to follow up with a nice email and you might even have made the start to another good relationship.

Use Collaborative Language

There's no "I" in "team." A recent study of about 519,000 cold calls found that using collaborative words, rather than "I" increased the sales success rates by 35%. The language is more inclusive when you use collaborative words. **It gives your prospect the impression of being part of something larger, rather than on their own.** It also tells your prospect of how you will be working together instead of working for them.

- **Teamwork and Inclusive talk** - "We can achieve this target by doing "xyx" together. Are you with me?"
- **Fostering better trust** - "I am sure we can work within those prices. Let's meet and discuss it further at 2PM today. Can we do that?"

Successful selling involves getting the prospect to feel part of the team. Referencing the project in a collaborative way, enables your prospects to believe in you and your promises. The prospect feels reassured when you talk in terms of "We" and "Our" and believes you are invested in a mutually beneficial relationship.



Cold calling is no longer something to be afraid of as it was in the past. **It is time to think of cold calling as introductory calls.** You have an incredible opportunity to create better relationships with your prospects, empower them with knowledge and provide them with innovative solutions. With these techniques and a positive attitude, you can master the art of cold calling and be able to deliver amazing returns. The choice is yours.