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SALES TRAINING, COACHING, AND ASSESSMENT EXPERTS

THE BIG PICTURE: INFORMATIONAL SERIES

WHY YOUR COLD CALLS AREN'T WORKING

Your opening statement can either make or break your prospecting call. We define the opening statement or "elevator pitch" as the first 15-20 seconds of the call once you get the decision maker on the line. In every call you either create interest or resistance; normally nothing in between. Let's review some of the do's and don'ts of effective openings so you can generate interest.

The DON'Ts

"I'm calling to check in with you..."

You're not calling in to your Probation Officer. If you don't have something of value to offer, don't bother checking in. They've got enough people working with and for them "checking in" all day long.

"Just wanted to touch base with you..."

Ditto the above.
"Wanted to call to see if there was anything you needed..."
Need is a matter of perception. If they perceived a need that was intense enough to take action on, they would have done something about it. Calling to "see if they have any needs" is reactive, and actually is a nuisance call if the customer doesn't feel like he gained as a result of the call.

"Calling to see if you received the letter/brochure/package/catalog/price list I sent?"

The literature is not going to sell for you. Most often, the prospect has not read the information you've sent. Take a look at your buyer's office on your next visit. Look for the pile of vendor brochures. It's the tall one in the corner.

"Wanted to introduce my company and products to you..."

So what? They don't care about your products. They can do a Google search and within seconds find 20 companies selling the same thing as you.

"Like to set up a time to get together..."

Just because you took the time to pick up the phone, do you really deserve 20 minutes of someone's time in person? We must EARN the right to someone's time by showing them the value they could receive from us. And we must keep earning it throughout our calls (and visits).

The DO's

Bridge This Call From The Previous One:

Start follow-up calls by reconnecting from the previous call: "Calling to continue our conversation...", "I'd like to pick up where we left off last week"

Remind Them of Their Interest and Action:

"...where we discussed...," "... when we were discussing how you felt you needed to do something about..."

Have Value Added Points on Every Call:

Be prepared with useful news about how some of your other customers are taking fuller advantage of some of the things they are buying now, and so on. For example, "I was at the Flow Controls trade show last week and I thought of you...," or, "We've just introduced something at XYZ Fittings that might be able to work in your situation, and I'd like to run it by you..."

Be Proactive:

Even if you did send literature, don't bring the call to a screeching halt by asking if they received it. Make it part of what you want to DO together on this call: "I'd like to review with you the pricing options I detailed in my letter..." Use words like "discuss," "analyze," and "go through." And if they didn't receive your stuff or don't have it handy? No problem; the literature isn't holding you up like a crutch. Be prepared to proceed anyway.

For Initial Calls:

Cocky, out of the blue claims are a recipe for a hang up. Instead, ease in with words like "might be able to...," "there's a possibility," "depending on what you're doing now" as a demonstration of potential. An example might be: "Depending on your space limitations, we might have some ways to help you keep your costs down during the design and installation stage of your office furnishings. If I caught you at a good time, I'd like to discuss your plans..."

The Key is to add value at every step of the sales process and be empathetic with prospects as their world is changing daily. Brand your method of follow-up by being deferential and by adding insight and interest at every touch point.