

[Promo Power]



COLD CALLS

I hate 'em. You hate 'em. We both hate making cold calls, and we both hate receiving them.

But, there

comes a time, when you really do have to pick up the phone or knock on the door so you can have a human-to-human conversation with your prospect.

You can take a lot of the chill out of your cold calls by making sure the prospect knows your brand before you make contact in person. It's a lot easier to get an audience with the decision maker, if they know who you are and have some reason to believe you can help them.

That's why you advertise. That's why you use direct mail, email, social networking...any number of tools available to help make yourself known to your prospects. After enough effective exposures, they get to know you and know a little bit about what your brand stands for.

Before you spend a dime or a minute of your precious time on any of those media and activities, it's important to know just who you want to talk to. I'm assuming that you have a limited marketing budget (if you have a "budget" at all). It's important that you don't squander your marketing resources talking to people who are never going to do business with you.

Whatever you sell, unless it's toothpaste or toilet paper, there are millions of people out there who are never going to buy it. You must

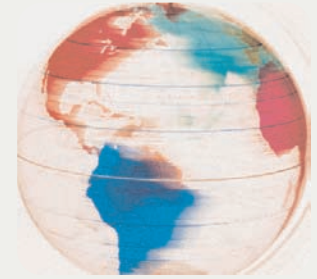
identify who the relative few are who might someday do business with you, and focus all of your efforts on reaching them without paying to talk to a bunch of non-prospects.

Get focused. Who are your absolutely ideal prospects? Think of the people you most enjoy selling to. They listen to and follow your advice. You always seem to have just the right thing for them. They enjoy using your product or service and don't mind paying you a profitable price.

Concentrate your energy, efforts, and expenditures on finding more of those people and repeating your brand story to them over and over. They will get to know who you are, and recognize that your business is built around their needs.

Much of the rejection and resulting humiliation in cold calling comes from pursuing people you shouldn't have been calling in the first place. You've probably received cold calls from ill-prepared sales people yourself; people who think it's a numbers game: Call enough people and you're bound to find someone who's ready to buy. Sales Person: "Are you happy with your long distance service?" Prospect: "Well, I'm on the Board of Directors at AT&T. What do you think?" Sales Person: "OUCH!"

Zero in on a finite number of prime prospects and hit them frequently and consistently with brand-building messages. When you do make personal contact, they'll know who you are and be more likely to give you some of their valuable time. And, you'll sell more confidently, because you're only calling on people that will clearly benefit from using your product or service. ■



WHAT TO SAY?

Open your conversation with something about THEM, not about you. I could open a first call to a Sales Executive with something like: "My name is Larry Mersereau. I'm a professional speaker who helps people just like your dealers bring in more business." Who is that about? It's about ME. They don't care about me, who I am, or what I do. They only care about themselves.

Your prospects don't care about you either. They don't care what you sell, how long you've been selling it, who else uses it, the awards you've won...none of that matters. The only thing that matters to them is THEMSELVES.

What if I opened with something like: "If you're like most Sales Executives I talk to, you've probably seen business from your dealers dropping off a little this year. Is that happening in your company?" Who am I talking about now? (By the way, I know their dealer sales are dropping off because I've researched it online, so I know the answer. That means I also know what to say next, so I can be prepared for that, too.)

Most sales people just open their mouths and hope something good falls out. A little preparation (choosing the right words and rehearsing them until they roll off your tongue naturally) will improve your odds of getting to first base on that first call.

Larry Mersereau works with business owners, marketers, and sales professionals who want to bring in more business, so they can take home more money. More at www.PromoPower.com.