

# Selling In Tough Times

Inside Issue 4 Issue:

## How to Get More Appointments by Phone

### THE GOLDEN RULES OF SELLING BY PHONE

#### 1. Get on the phone.

No one will buy from you if they do not know of you or your company. Every product offering has its own sales cycle length – and that must start with initial contact. The sooner you get on the phone, the faster you will close the sale.

#### 2. Make more calls!

The fewer prospecting telephone calls you make the less you sell. Regardless of whether we like it or not – getting appointments by phone is part skill and part numbers.

#### 3. Develop a call structure template.

Plan and script your opening statements. Script your questions. If you don't have a plan then you can only react

#### 4. Target your market

Out of every one in the entire world who might possibly buy what you are selling, who is most likely to buy? Start by profiling your best potential sales prospects.

#### 4. Aim high

Always call the highest-level person that you believe is the decision-maker it, you are dead in the water. Bottom line

#### 5. Measure and report

You must measure the movement you achieve on the call not the activity. The activity is the number of calls you make during a telephone sitting. The movement is the number of appointments / steps closer to the appointment that you achieve. Measure the next step as called by the prospect.

#### 6. Record your calls.

The majority of sellers have never recorded one of their sales calls for review and coaching purposes. Do it once a month and review the effectiveness of your structure and technique.

### LOVE IT OR LOATH IT, THE TELEPHONE IS A GREAT APPOINTMENT GETTING TOOL – IF USED CORRECTLY

No matter how you initially find a lead, whether from a referral, a networking event or simply a cold list, at some point you must pick up the telephone and speak with that prospect. If that initial telephone conversation does not go well, you will not move to the next step in your sales cycle. Step one is always the introductory call where you will introduce yourself, your company and your products or services. The objective of this call, (assuming it goes well), is to get a new appointment with a potential sales prospect.

However, in order to get that appoint you must have a compelling conversation with the potential buyer. This telephone conversation should be structured. It should be well thought out in advance and scripted where appropriate. It should have compelling potential reasons why it will be in the sales prospect's interests to meet with you, and it should be a vehicle to gather information about the potential sales opportunity. It all sounds straight forward?

Yet many, professional sellers avoid using the telephone to set appointments. They cite lack of success, ability to generate leads a different way, and being too busy as reasons why they don't do it. This avoidance leads to poor pre-call planning, poor technique and poor results

In this document, we will provide you with proven best practice techniques and planning guidelines that will take the fear and reluctance out of using the phone to get more sales appointments. We hope you find it useful.

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## YOU MUST GET THE CALL OPENING RIGHT

Every movie or play has a start, middle, and an ending. The purpose of the start is to get your attention and get you interested. The middle of the movie unravels the plot and provides the detail. And the last few scenes bring things to an exciting finale or conclusion.

A telesales call structure is very similar in that objective of your opening lines is to get sufficient attention and interest from the sales prospect so as to get them to accept your call and engage in conversation.

The middle of the call provides you the seller with the detail / circumstances, and issues via qualification questions.

And the last stage of the call is to match with the sales prospects requirements and present the reasons why they should consider meeting with you and asking for that diary date next step.

### The opening statement

The purpose of the opening statement is to get the attention and interest of the sales suspect so as to accept your phone call. To do this you must “hook” the sales suspect onto your telephone line and away from what they were doing before you dialled their phone number. Your ability to qualify the sales opportunity, ask for permission to tender, ask for a meeting, or even introduce them to your new offering matters none if the decline your invitation to have a brief conversation on that phone call. Your opening statement is comprised of five elements

1. Who you are – “Dave Malone”.
2. Who you’re with (“ABC Limited”).
3. What you sell (in very simple terms).
4. How your prospect will benefit from your product or service.
5. A question to gauge interest of the prospect.

#### a) Your Greeting:

State your full name, and your role within your organisation. Use the target’s name in the opening lines if you can, it will ensure that you have the correct person on the line, and people when they hear their name tend to listen very



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b) Your Interest and attention grabbing results based opening statement.

**State the reason for your call:** Your opening statement cannot be a pitch. It must create curiosity by focusing on a result that might be important to the prospect. It must be low on pressure, and put the prospect in a positive frame of mind. Consider starting with benefit statement: This statement will suggest to the prospect why he or she should listen further.

Example: “Hi Jack, This is Emmet Higgins from the ABC Computer. You may recall I met you at the Chamber of Commerce lunch last month. The reason I am calling is that we provide a PC maintenance service to help an SME like you maximise the usage and longevity you get from your lap tops, and I’m calling to see if this might be something you’d like to explore further?”

Remember, the purpose of the opening benefit statement is to get you past the first segment of a call into a qualification stage. So Keep the pressure low and conditional by using phrases like depending on how your handling” and “there’s a possibility we might”. Avoid opening statements which are sales pitches or self indulgent about your offering such as: “Hello Mr. Kelly I am ringing to introduce to a new service here at ABC, it’s an excellent product with the lowest price on the market.” (This is self indulgent) Lastly, don’t try and technique you way past the client – “Would you be interested in cheap accountancy software”.

## ASK DON'T TELL

### CALL STRUCTURE II:

#### Middle of the call

Often sellers are so happy to get their call accepted by the sales prospect, that they often launch into very biased sales pitches – that never work, and mostly end up with the call being terminated in a non confrontational way with lines such as “can you send me something” or leave it with me”.

Don't mess up by abandoning best practice call structure once you get your foot in the door. Here's how you should do it.

#### 1. Getting permission to proceed

Lastly, ask a question at the end of the opening statement to check for the sales suspect's interest.

**Example:** “Okay, so as I can work out how we might be able to best help you, I'd like to ask you a few questions, is that okay?”

In doing this you are again giving choice and perceived control to the suspect – where as in fact you are getting the call structure to follow to call plan you prepared in advance of making the call.

#### 2. Qualification and summarizing the issues

The purpose of the qualification stage is to ask questions so as you can establish whether you will meet a business requirement / problem or create an opportunity for them. The types of areas you need to explore and open up (If you get the opportunity) are:

- Their business – how it is structures / works.
- The way they deliver their offering to the market place.
- The main challenges their business is currently facing.
- The parts of their business where they use / need your offering.
- The risks they are exposed to by not using your offering.
- Changes they would like to make to their current situation (As it relates to your type of offering).
- Timeframes for re-purchasing / decision making etc.
- How they go about selecting a supplier for your offering.

## MATCH & MOVE

### CALL STRUCTURE: Part III

#### Moving the call to the **next step** in the sales process

After you have qualified and summarized the prospect's requirements and you have established and agreed a sales opportunity that they would like to explore further - they become prospects.

It is only now that you suggest / propose a way for you to offer some solutions to their challenges. However do remember business owners" all are only interested in one tune on the radio – and that tune is called “Its all about me” – and they only tune into one radio station **W.I.I.F.M** - (What's In It For Me). So, when it comes to presenting on a telesales call – three rules apply.

#### a) Focus on their issues.

Focus on suggesting the solutions that focus on solving their issues – to present anything else suggests that you are not listening.

#### b) Use low pressure phrases.

Put forward your benefits using low pressure phrases such as “you might consider” or “Might I suggest” – they are not pushy.

#### a)c) Get feedback on every option you present.

Ask the prospect for feedback on all benefits you present. Checking for suitability will give you an indication of whether you have gotten in right and if its time to suggest the next step.

#### Close the deal / Bring to the Next Step- ask for a commitment to meet up.

If you have presented an appropriate solution, your transition to the close should be as simple and automatic as asking, “Do you have any questions?” When they respond with no, you simply ask them how they feel about your suggestion, discuss what do you think of the package? Then it's about asking for the next step.

**Example:** “Based on what you are saying to me, it sounds like it would be worthwhile to get together so I can give you a more detailed picture as to how we might help you?”

**Need help improving your TELEPHONE SELLING results?**

Contact Evolve at [info@evolve.ie](mailto:info@evolve.ie) / 01-8532075

\*Ireland's leading sales performance specialists



## VOICE MAIL TACTICS

A lot of people don't believe in leaving voice mail, and that's alright – however if you prefer to leave messages here are some best practice steps to consider. If you intend leaving a voice mail message, your objective is to create enough interest so as the customer will take the next call. Remember, you can only get the appointment after you have spoken with the sales suspect.

Voice mails are like opening statements in that you can script and practice them. So when that voice says "please leave your message after the tone", you have about 30 seconds to generate a reason why that person should call you back

- **Rule 1: Most decision makers delete messages after 30 seconds.**
- **Rule 2: Most decision makers delete messages on the first listening.**

The majority of voice mails I listened to from sellers calling our office at Evolve sound like they are making it up as they go along.

### Rules for voice mail

- Never leave someone a message for the sake of leaving them a message. Your goal should be to get them to call you back.
- Your message should make your sales prospect want to call you back.

Here are some examples

#### The referral

Conor, this is David Malone from Evolve Consultants. Mervyn Ryan at ABC asked me to give you a call regarding how we helped them increase sales while decreasing price discounting. Sorry I missed you. I will call you back Monday at 10am.

#### Offering an idea...

Frances, this is David from Lazlo. After working with CBA (other company in the prospect's industry) I have an idea to run by you that might significantly impact the way you run position your product in the SME market. Sorry I missed you. I will call you back Monday at 10am.

#### Being an insider...

Hi John, This is David from Evolve. I was speaking with Mark Smith, the head of your Accounting Department, and he suggested I call you concerning the new marketing project. Sorry I missed you. I will call you back Monday at 10am.

Take these ideas and make them your own. We know they work. Engage clients all over the world are using them and receiving massive success. So unless you are receiving an 80% call back ratio from your voice mails or better...you owe it to yourself to try something new

## TACTICS TO BY PASS VOICE MAIL

- Ask the gatekeeper: "When is the best time to reach (prospect's name)?" Call back then.
- Vary your calling times. Call at different times throughout the day and throughout the week
- Ask for alternate phone numbers for your prospect. Ten years ago prospects generally only had one office line. Today there are a myriad of ways to reach prospects: mobile phones, home office phones. Your prospect might have another office location and of course, there is always email.
- Call the extension with one number up or down from your prospect's number. The idea here is that you might reach someone who sits near or has an office near your prospect. Then ask to be transferred.
- Dial 0 for help. Usually at the end of an outgoing message is a statement like, "If you need additional or immediate help dial..." or "To reach someone else in the company dial..." Take advantage of this. Then ask for help.

### Who are Evolve Consultants?

Founded in 1998, Evolve Consultants are Ireland's leading sales performance authority. We specialise in helping organisations' adapt the right sales framework for their business strategy. We offer a blended approach of consulting, training and coaching to help them get there.

- **Sales strategy**
- **Sales deployment models**
- **Sales process and execution**
- **Sales training and coaching**
- **Account management**
- **Sales manager mentoring**

Our approach to improving sales performance integrates every aspect of your organization's sales efforts. Our methods are practical and bespoke. Fundamentally, we believe we can help clarify your issues, focus your sales activities and most importantly help you significantly increase your sales numbers.

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