



Cold Calling Made Easy

In my many years of sales and marketing work with small businesses, many of them would ask me all kinds of questions about cold calling like the ones below. They would profess to be leery of doing it for fear of rejection or simply through fear of making the call. See if any of these resonate with you?

1. "Does cold calling really work?"
2. "I hate feeling like I'm being sold, so I want to learn how to come across less like a salesman."
3. "What's the MAIN purpose of cold calling anyway?"
4. "Is it to get the decision maker's name or to make an appointment?"
5. "Do you recommend phone calls, or personal visits, or mailing literature first?"
6. "How often should I try to contact a person?"

First of all I want to mention that you need to make sure any list of names or prospects or whoever you are calling is not on the Do Not Call List or you could get in big trouble. Go to www.donotcall.gov to find out more about it or to sign up as a consumer or a telemarketer.

I did a little research online before I sat down to write this and I found just a ton of information on cold calling and sales (like I had suspected). I thought I would find a simple 10 step process that I could shoot back at you that would sum it all up, but no such luck. I found a lot of sites who claim to have the best cold calling secrets out there, some sites who claim cold calling just doesn't work anymore, some sites with numerous articles written on the subject and then some sites selling all kinds of books and CD's on how to improve your skills.



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You know I will always recommend reading books or listening to CD's about certain topics to make you better at what you do and in this case, it may not necessarily be books about cold calling but rather about SALES. Knowing good sales strategies and closing techniques can really help when cold calling because you learn to react quicker and respond better to objections or negative responses.

Is there anyone out there who really uses cold calling as their main lead generating avenue however? In this day of relationship selling, I can't even imagine cold calling in my business. In fact, all the telemarketing calls I get at home are either mortgage companies (#1 by far) trying to give me a free loan comparison analysis, phone companies trying to get me to switch or credit card companies trying to get me to sign up or transfer balances to their card.

There are of course certain ways this could be good, for example IF the mortgage company knew I had a high interest loan, say over 8% (glad I don't, but you get the point), getting my name from a list from their title company, they could possibly tempt me with a 4.5 or even 6% rate over the phone enough to warrant the free analysis.

However, every one of them that calls me can never beat the rate that I currently have which tells me they haven't done their HOMEWORK to narrow down their target list. In turn they are wasting hours of their time calling on people like me.

Why wouldn't they just get a list of prospects that REALLY have high rates, ones who would be easier prospects? I would.



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Then, using the mortgage company as an example. People these days don't have a lot of time and I would venture a guess that most don't like receiving telemarketing calls, especially those that don't get to the point of the call. You know the ones...they say hello Mrs. Saallla (can't pronounce my name of course and stumble over it a few times); I say “hello, it's Ms. Sawa”. Then they ask “How are you this evening?” and I say “Does it really matter, what do you want?” (Yes, I know, sometimes I am harsh). Then they say, well Mrs. Saallla (again), let me tell you why I am calling.... (By that time it's too late, I'm done with them). You know what I mean? They need to get to the point and fast.

If you really want to cold call then you'll want to make sure you take some time to develop a good script to grab their attention and get to the point in the first sentence or question. Practice your script on friends and colleagues, role play. When you do start to use it, try it out on the coldest leads you have not the hot ones, save them for when you have more practice or you may blow some big opportunities.

The question I ask you is who is your target market? Are they going to be receptive to cold calls? If not, you might want to find another way to reach them – more than likely there are numerous other ways to market to your target market.

Just know that if you are calling the consumer you will need a whole different script than if you are calling a business prospect – many factors come into play such as the “Gatekeeper” (receptionist) or kids, answering machines, etc. Do you leave a message or don't you? I say you do – you've already spent the time it took to make the call and wait for the machine you might as well leave a clear, short and well constructed message. Then when you call back a few days later, it's a WARM call. Don't leave pricing info or rates or anything that will give them the opportunity to decide a NO answer before you get a chance to call back.



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So, as far as when to cold call in your sales process, do you call first, mail a letter first or send an email? This will depend on your industry and your target market and what they would be most receptive to or how long your sales process is (the higher cost of your product or service may warrant a longer sales process).

I normally suggest mailing a letter or emailing if you have their email first and then when you call, it's not a cold call but a follow up call to the letter or email; hence eliminating the 'cold call'. Of course it isn't that simple, you might need to send 2 letters, a brochure, email 4 times with attachments or links to your website and you probably will have to call at least 6 times, leaving 3 or 4 messages before even considering giving up.

In an aggressive industry where there is a lot of competition you will want to be persistent. Many people value persistence as a good quality to have, you don't want to be annoying or a pest, but a confident salesperson being persistent with their prospect can be respected and it also makes you look more dependable, credible and reliable.

The following websites are ones I found (I am not familiar with them all) that you might find helpful, some have email newsletters that you can subscribe to. Anytime you can get constant reminders about a subject you are weaker in, suggestions, tips, etc. it can only make you stronger in that subject.

1. www.coldcalling.com – newsletter and book suggestions
2. www.briantracy.com – sales guru
3. www.nevercoldcall.com – another option?
4. www.gitomer.com – sales guru
5. www.eyesonsales.com – many articles on the subject
6. www.wendyweiss.com – a couple good free reports
7. www.leadsintogold.com – articles about why not to cold call



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To be honest, I think I would find other ways to promote your business and generate leads rather than wasting your time on the phone. If you are a good salesperson and a real expert in your field, you might come off a little desperate if you cold call. I don't mean to offend anyone out there who IS cold calling. I've done it; I've even done door-to-door sales before!

I find that I am more effective in front of people, in person and most of the time they need to see me quite a few times (building relationships) before they'll even consider talking to me about their marketing needs. You can't build that type of relationship over the phone, not with one call or twenty calls. Good luck and let me know what you think of what I said here; I'd be interested to know what works for you and what you've tried.

Furthermore, if you want help developing your cold call script or deciding if cold calling is even a good way to market your product or service, I would suggest signing up for one of my JumpStart Your Marketing 1-On-1 Planning Meetings! You can find out what those entail and how they will benefit you at <http://www.ksawamarketing.com/pages/1on1.html>!



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About the Author



Katrina Sawa, Small Biz Marketing Expert, helps entrepreneurs and small business owners build their database of clients and prospects, determine the best ways to market their business to their target market, teach them how to network, develop follow up systems, marketing and advertising plans and find ways to get free or low cost publicity which all lead to more customers and increased sales!

Katrina has been named "The Networking Queen" by her peers and clients ever since she founded her business in 2002. She was always found out mingling at chamber of commerce mixers, business networking events and expos and any event she could attend where her target market would be in attendance. Consistent networking and follow up is the primary reason Katrina has been so successful in her business.

An avid gardener, party planner and softball buff, Katrina enjoys the sunshine of Northern California. She grew up not too far from the Sacramento area and then received her B.S. in Business, Marketing Concentration, from California State University, Sacramento.

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Have a burning Marketing Question?

Sign up for our FREE Marketing Tips!

For more information on how to *JumpStart* your small business with creative ideas for marketing, publicity, networking, advertising or online, go to www.ksawamarketing.com or email us today to get started, katrina@ksawamarketing.com!

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