

Most of us dread making cold calls. And why not? We all know what it's like to be on the receiving end of unexpected, unwanted, and intrusive "telemarketing" calls". Surely, we don't want to be perceived as they are. Yet from time to time we need to pick up the phone and stir up some business. This is particularly true in the current tepid economic climate, when referrals are slowing to a trickle, and our phones aren't ringing off the hook.

To make your calls less cold, try sending a written "approach" letter or email. As the name implies, this written correspondence becomes your initial contact with your prospective client. The benefits of this are (1) you won't feel as if you are intruding (the recipient can read it whenever he or she wants), (2) you don't have to deal with customer indifference or with objections - yet (3) you increase the odds of making a great first impression. Writing allows you take your time and convey the exact message you want, without stumbling and tripping over your words.

So how do we construct such a letter or email? First, you must have some idea of your target customers' needs, problems, hopes, aspirations, goals, or dreams. What are they looking for in their businesses or their lives that they don't have but want, and which you can provide? What is your unique selling proposition - how are you best qualified to give them what they want. And third, what objections and other resistance you can expect when they read your letter. Once you have a good fix on these items, you can begin composing your letter. Start with an ATTENTION-grabbing opening (or subject line, if it's an email). Then, since your goal is to stimulate INTEREST, present the benefits of your offering. Then turn that interest into DESIRE by using power words such as "Save", "Proven", "Results", and "Reliable". If there are any objections you're sure most customers will raise, consider addressing them pre-emptively in your letter. Lastly, include a call to ACTION, or indicate that you will follow up in a day/3 days/next week.

ACTION ITEM Write a letter. Send an email. Do something to warm up your prospect so that on your follow up call, you are not a total stranger. He or she will know of you, perhaps something about you, and even something about your company. Let me know how this works for you - and with your permission I'll spotlight your creation in a future issue of The Sales Solution. And if you need help crafting an effective letter or email, let me know - I have just the person to help you. Because that person has helped me too!
Good Selling! Craig