

More Sales Through Telemarketing

Expert knowledge means success

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Note: This publication has not been updated since it was last published. Some of the hyperlinks may have changed and may need updating. In addition, some of the information in this publication may be out of date.

Introduction

One of the best ways to generate leads, set appointments and close more sales is through telemarketing. Except for sales over the Internet, most sales are made as the result of a personal sales presentation at some point of time. It makes sense that the more presentations that a salesperson makes, the more likely it is that the sales he or she will generate will increase. A telephone call is the equivalent of a "one-on-one" sales call, and considering that nearly all sales prospects have a telephone, they are only a call away.

The systematic use of the telephone is one of the fastest growing sales and marketing strategies used in today's fast moving and competitive world. This rapid growth of telemarketing, sometimes called "telephone selling" has meant that marketeers from businesses of all sizes have looked at the possible application of it in their organisation. For example, many products/services are regularly sold over the telephone, without previously having been seen – examples are pest-control services, magazine and other subscriptions, credit card memberships (particularly for a second account holder), energy switching (electricity and gas), health club memberships, double glazing and timeshare (linked with a "you've won a free holiday" message approach).

What is Telemarketing?

Telemarketing can be defined as "marketing by telephone". It means using the telephone as the primary way to communicate with prospective customers. One of the most inexpensive ways to do business when compared to direct mail and personal sales visits, it offers a significant advantage over these other two methods of marketing. The objectives of telemarketing may be boiled down to four main ones:

- Creating an awareness of a product or service.
- Order-taking via the telephone call – either at the time or shortly afterwards.
- Conducting research into new or existing products or services – via what

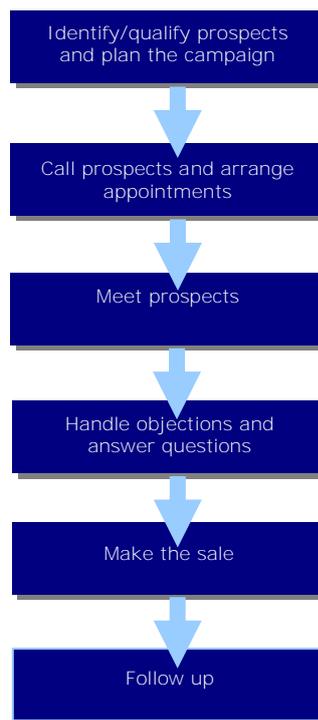
is called "marketing research".

- Setting up an appointment for a sales visit.

Telemarketing is a great way for your business to advertise your products and offer your services. It will involve professional telemarketers or call centres making telephone calls to potential customers on your behalf. Telemarketing allows you to talk with a prospect or customer without actually having to see them. With an expected rise in the use of video-conferencing in the next few years, "teleconferencing" (telemarketing via the use of video-conferencing) may mean the end of all face-to-face selling as we know it today.

Business-to-business and business-to-consumer telemarketing can be an important part of your marketing mix, but only if you realise it is a sophisticated technique that must be carefully planned and executed.

The telemarketing process involves six steps:



Telemarketing facilitates one-to-one relationship marketing on a scale unrivalled by any other medium. Computer systems and specific software programs which are available to support telemarketing initiatives, make the process of contacting prospective customers both fast and cost-effective. Advances in information technology in the last few years, means that research analyses that previously might have taken weeks to complete can now be achieved in a fraction

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of that time and usually provide a competitive advantage.

Telemarketing personnel are skilled and experienced professionals who employ planned time scheduling and tracking systems for outgoing telephone calls requiring callbacks from customers or prospects. Whilst each market will vary, in general the best time for making business-to-business telemarketing calls are after 10am and between 2 and 5pm except for Mondays and Friday afternoons which are regarded as bad times to try to make contact.

Remember that people do business with people they know, trust and like. One of the biggest challenges that a telemarketer faces is establishing a rapport with a prospect. This is much more difficult when you don't have the benefit of being face-to-face with your prospect.

Telemarketing firms charge a variety of different ways, per hour, per contact, flat fee, and sometimes even a percentage of sales.

Telemarketing has many uses and is a powerful tool in most successful businesses – for example, it can be used for:

- Customer surveys
- Product launch invitations
- New product announcements
- Consumer solutions
- Marketing research
- Sales campaigns
- Seminar promotion and reservations
- Database cleansing and updating
- Support for products and services
- Mailing and advertising
- Account management
- Customer care and retention
- Lead generation
- Appointment setting
- Increasing your Internet business
- Trade Show follow up
- Post Sale follow up
- Reader Response Card follow up

Although telemarketing is a terrific way to increase sales, very few salespeople have learned how to use it to their best advantage.

It is particularly appropriate for:

- Straightforward repeat order taking from existing customers.
- Accounts which are too small to justify

a personal sales visit.

- In situations where a business is unable to recruit and retain face-to-face sales personnel of sufficient calibre.

For any telemarketing/inside sales initiative to be successful, a number of ingredients are needed. The most successful programmes are those that incorporate a number of marketing tools – telemarketing works best when it is used with other media. Telemarketing, like direct mail, is most effective when used with a well-defined target list. Unlike direct mail, the script used over the telephone should be short.

Remember that your aim in using the telephone is to gain a commitment from your prospect or customer.

There is one downside - the reputation of telemarketing has been somewhat tarnished by the unethical sales practices of some companies – particularly those that misleadingly suggest a market survey is being conducted rather than selling anything.

Effective Telemarketing Scripts

Telemarketing can be an effective way to introduce new products, conduct market research, obtain appointments to make a presentation, and to sell products. When you plan these types of calls, consider using a written script. Use scripts to:

- Help callers plan and control the progress and contents of their calls
- Guarantee consistency of results and the delivery of a standard message
- Facilitate training and testing
- Encourage focus

Without a script, you risk repetition, omissions, inconsistencies and poor quality. In this article, we will present the types of scripts companies may want to develop and some basic guidelines for script writing. There are four basic types of scripts. The complexity of the sales message determines which type will best fit your needs: verbatim, outline, guided or call-plan.

For details visit the Incredible English website at www.incredibleenglish.com

Whatever script you use, be sure to clearly tell the customer up front who you are, what your product or service will do for them, and why they should buy from you and not your competitors.

Script-Writing Guidelines

- Think visually
- Encourage dialogue with the customer
- Listen to the caller's script suggestions
- Continue to test and revise your script
- Answer the first question in your customer's mind, "What's in it for me?"
- Use short sentences
- Build empathy. (Ask with sincerity, "How are you doing?")
- At the end of a call, always confirm the order, or repeat the customer commitment
- Show concern for the customer first, then position the sale
- Provide pauses in the script
- Use motivating language
- Script all warranties, payments, guarantees, liability and regulatory information
- Use the four Cs: clear, concise, conversational, convincing
- Verify the customer's name and address twice (at the beginning and end of the conversation)

Types of Telemarketing

Inbound

Inbound telemarketing is where you advertise your product or service and have a number for interested persons to call – for example, to place an order, to register an interest in a promotion or to obtain further information. Inbound telemarketing involves marketing your product or service in some other media. It offers the convenience of ordering or finding out more simply by telephoning a number published in that media – for example, in a newspaper advert or on screen in a TV commercial. Inbound telemarketing has four requirements:

- The publication of a telephone number for the customer to call.
- Ease of calling – 0800 or other freephone numbers.
- Availability of relevant and complete information for the caller.

- An expectation that you will be available when the customer calls – irrespective of the time of day or night. Often, inbound calls are taken by a call centre.

Outbound

Outbound telemarketing involves either you or someone from your company or a telemarketing firm calling the potential client, usually with a prepared script for the telemarketer to follow. Not all products or services can be sold over by telephone – some require a demonstration, or a personal sales call. Telemarketers can set appointments or qualify prospects for follow-up by the sales team.

Regulations

United Kingdom

In 1999, UK regulations came into force legally requiring companies not to call individuals whose numbers were listed on the UK Telephone Preference Service. Regulations for calling businesses followed. First, from 11 December 2003, businesses are given an enforceable right to opt-out of receiving unsolicited marketing calls - "cold calls" - which they can exercise by asking the caller to cease making further marketing calls to a particular number or numbers. Secondly, and with effect from 25 June 2004, businesses are extended the right to prevent unwanted marketing calls by registering with the corporate Telephone Preference Service (TPS). The procedure to register for the Telephone Preference Service is to call +44 (0) 845 070 0707. (All calls are charged at a local rate). Or visit www.tpsonline.org.uk to register online.

Following the adoption of the Telecommunications Data Protection Directive by the European Parliament in 1997, the Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) and the Office of Telecommunications (OFTEL) entered into a public consultation period resulting in The Telecommunications (Data Protection and Privacy) Regulations 1999 which affect all telemarketers in the UK and came into force in May 1999. The Directive and Regulations are wide-ranging in their scope and should be studied carefully, in their entirety, by UK telemarketers.

The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations that came into force on 11 December 2003 extended some of these regulations to businesses. For more details see our publication *IP679 – Cold Calling*.

The Regulations:

- Provide a ban on sending unwanted "junk" faxes to individuals;
- Enable people to opt-out of receiving unwanted direct marketing phone-calls by registering, free of charge, their name with a centralised list;
- Enable companies to sign up to a similar scheme to avoid receiving "junk" faxes;
- Require marketers to offer a contact address or freephone number so that people can contact them to ask to be removed from their databases.

Companies and individuals who do not wish to receive unsolicited direct marketing faxes, or unsolicited direct marketing phone calls, are able to register with opt-out schemes, run by the Direct Marketing Association ("DMA") appointed by OFTEL.

Stiff penalties may be levied against marketers who fail to comply with the regulations.

USA

There are several US state laws which vary depending on the state. The US has two major federal telemarketing laws:

- The Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 - This is enforced by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). This law allows consumers to sue telemarketers directly for up to \$1,500 per violation if the conditions of the law are met.

- The Telemarketing Sales Rule - This is enforced by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). This law deals mainly with fraud. Consumers must convince the FTC or their state attorney general. Consumers cannot take action themselves unless more than \$50,000 is lost due to fraud. Also see a list of consumer education pamphlets.

Telemarketing Contacts

- The Direct Marketing Association is the trade organisation for companies in direct marketing in the UK. www.dma.org.uk
- The Telephone Preference Service, set up by the Direct Marketing Association (UK) Limited (DMA), was originally formed in 1995 as a voluntary self-regulatory mechanism to enable consumers to opt-out of receiving unsolicited sales and marketing calls. OFTEL awarded the contract to the DMA to run the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) and Fax Preference Service (FPS). www.tpsonline.org.uk
- The Office of Fair Trading - a UK Government Department with responsibilities for consumer protection. www.of.gov.uk
- UK Data Protection Registrar - a UK Government Department with responsibilities for data protection. <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>
- The Call Centre Association (CCA) is the professional body for the call and contact centre industry in the UK. www.cca.org.uk

Recommended Reading



- Secrets of Successful Telephone Selling: How to Generate More Leads, Sales, Repeat Business, and Referrals by Phone, by Robert W. Bly, published by Owl Books; ISBN: 0805040986.
- Easy Step by Step Guide to Telemarketing, Cold Calling & Appointment Making, by Pauline Rowson, published by Summersdale Publishers; ISBN: 0953298752.
- Friendly Persuasion: Dynamic Telephone Sales Training and Techniques for the 21st Century, by Dan Coen, Dan H. Coen, Marie Burkenheim, published by DCD Publishing; ISBN: 0966043618.
- Successful Telemarketing, by Bob Stone, John Wyman, published by NTC/Contemporary Publishing Company; ISBN: 0844232963.
- Handbook of Telemarketing, by Michael Stevens, published by Kogan Page; ISBN: 0749418486.
- Teleselling: A Self-Teaching Guide, by James D. Porterfield, published by John Wiley & Sons; ISBN: 0471115673.
- Selling by Phone: How to Reach and Sell to Customers, by Linda Richardson, published by McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.; ISBN: 0070523762.
- Stephan Schiffman's Telemarketing, by Stephan Schiffman, published by Adams Publishing; ISBN: 1558501304.
- Better Business by Phone: A Guide to Effective Telebusiness, by Valerie O'Dea, published by Purdue University Press; ISBN: 1557531552.

Further Information

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues. We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.

If you would like to receive further information about this subject or other publications, please call us – see our contact details on the next page.

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