

Hot Cold Calls - Steps to Turning Cold Calls into Hot Appointments

When you hear the term "cold-calling," a number of thoughts may come up for you. You're calling people you don't know, you may not get through to them, and if you do, they may not want to talk to you. Doesn't sound like much fun, does it?

Having been a salesperson for many years, I've made my share of cold calls. Recently I decided I wanted to offer our water cooler with purifier to a company located in the area where I live. I developed a list of their branches, created a letter, e-mailed the letter to the appropriate contact person at each branch, and started making calls. Lo and behold, I was able to get a meeting. I met with the prospect, learned about the company's water requirements, and submitted a proposal. The outcome is that the company is interested and I'll be meeting with the decision-maker shortly. This happened because I created a step-by-step process and followed it.

With a clear plan in place, cold-calling leads to appointments that lead to sales. Let's take a look at the cold-calling process and how to make it work for you.

Cold Calling Businesses (for water or air purifiers)

Set a strong foundation for making calls. Begin by targeting an industry. Then make a list of companies, names of people to reach, phone numbers, and people's e-mail addresses. Visit websites to learn more about each company. Is a particular company growing or launching a new product? Did it have a great year? Write a letter introducing your company and your services. Mention early in the letter a success story based on what you found on their website. Talk about how you've successfully helped similar companies and you can do the same for them. Send the letter by e-mail or "snail" mail.

Send several letters at a time and begin making calls 2-3 days later.

The goal of your initial telephone call is to set the appointment and only to set the appointment. Every business has its own sales cycle. Getting in the door is step one. On a cold call or introductory call you are not selling your product or service, you are getting a meeting. You want your prospect to give you 15-20 minutes so you can introduce yourself, your company, your product and your service. That is it!

Call when you have the best chance to reach the prospect. The best time to reach a prospect often is early in the morning before his or her assistant is in and before the prospect gets caught up in the day. Lunchtime or after 5 are two other good times to reach the prospect directly.

Grab their attention in 10 seconds. A prospect is not expecting your call, so you must get his or her attention instantly. A 10-second introduction is what you say when you shake someone's hand, call someone on the phone, or stand up in front of a group. It describes what you do and whom you do it for in a clear and memorable way. After you have a prospect's attention, mention you're following up on the letter you sent.

The purpose of your call is twofold:

(1) To find out if this lead is actually a good prospect for you and, if so, **(2)** to get an appointment to make a presentation. After your 10-second introduction, move immediately to ask a question, such as, "Do you have a moment to talk about how I can help your company get better quality water for your employees?" Or, "I understand your company is buying bottled water. Would you be interested in knowing how I can help you cut your costs in half?" If the need is there, ask for a meeting on the spot.

When asking for the appointment, state you'll only need about 15 minutes of their time. Once the meeting actually takes place, you'll almost always get more time, but it's a good idea to be sensitive to time constraints. Give a few choices. Example: "I'll be seeing clients in your area early next week.

Would Monday or Tuesday work for you?" Then, "Which is better, morning or afternoon?" People will choose when they have choices.

Get on the phone like a winner! Your success in cold-calling depends on how you project your voice on the phone. A prospect can't see you so it's all in the way you speak. Project enthusiasm, confidence, and energy. SMILE! Have a mirror in front of you, and smile into the mirror as you speak.

The prospect will sense your energy and enthusiasm.

ASSIGNMENT

Make a list of five companies you would like to get into to make a presentation, the people you want to reach, their phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Visit the company's website to learn more.

Write your introductory letter and send them out.

Schedule time on your calendar to start making calls.

Get on the phone with confidence, enthusiasm and a big SMILE!

Write a 10-second introduction describing what you do and whom you do it for in a clear, concise and memorable way.

Prepare and ask 2-3 probing questions that qualify the prospect.

Then ask for the meeting.

An example would be;

Hello, my name is Ron Geyer and I'm with CanAm Wellness. Ring any bells? We specialize in water and air treatment and my job is to find a way to save your company some money in providing quality drinking water to your staff and or clients. Is your office currently using bottled water or do you have a treatment system?

Who would be the person to speak to regarding that? Would it be possible to email you some information about us and what we offer?

Cold Calling Referrals and Show Leads

If you have a lead from a show:

Hello may I speak with Mary?

Hello Mary, my name is Ron Geyer and we may have met at the (...) show that you attended last ...?

We were the booth with the waterless cookware and water purifiers, do you remember us?

The reason for my call Mary is that we are following up with some of the people who entered into our draw. Unfortunately you did not win the main prize or I would have called you a lot sooner, but you have been selected to receive a lovely gift from us for allowing us to introduce our health line of product to you. (if she asks what, say; it's a surprise but we have a couple of prizes to choose from)

Since we advertise strictly by word of mouth Mary, my job is to give you enough info about our products and services **so that** if you are ever in the market for some of these things, we hope you will consider shopping with us instead of going to a store. Fair enough?

The reason I'm calling you now Mary is because I am working in your area both tonight and tomorrow night and I was wondering which night would suit you best?

Would 6:30 or 8:30 be better for you?

OK, I'll drop by at 6:30. Don't forget. See you then. Bye.

Phone Talk without door opener

Hello, may I speak with Mary please?

Hello Mary, this is Ron from CanAm Wellness calling.

I don't know if you remember me. We met at the (mall, show, etc....)

Mary the reason for my call is that I represent a company that promotes better health through products such as water and air purifiers, waterless cookware and juicers and my job Mary is to familiarize people with our products and services so that is you ever were in the market for anything like this we hope you will consider shopping with us instead of going to a store. Fair enough?

Mary, I'm calling you now because I'm working in you area both tonight and tomorrow night and I was wondering which night you could spare me a few minutes of your time.

Would 6:30 or 8:30 be better for you?

OK, I'll drop by at 6:30. Don't forget. See you then. Bye.

DINNER PHONE SCRIPT

Hello is this (name)? Hi, (name) this is _____ from CanAm Wellness. The reason for my call is I believe that you or someone has entered your name in one of our home show draws, or at the *FREE DINNER DRAW* we hold each month at our office and you won, isn't that great!

(What did I win?) (name) you won a CanAm Wellness dinner consisting of fat free chicken thighs, vegetables, 7 item health salad and a fresh baked cake. How does that sound? Even better news is that you get it made in the privacy of your own home. The chef brings the food and does all the cooking. Isn't that wonderful!?

Do you have any questions?

Great! By the way there's nothing for sale at the dinner, we'll have our chef drop by and go over the details with you. Should he drop by during the day or would the evening be better for you (name)?

Good, the chef will answer any questions you have then, and it will be either Ron or Billy dropping by.

Congratulations again and have a good day. (Confirm address and time for chef to drop by and go over details)

If this is for a mini dinner change the menu.