

COLD CALLING TIPS & TECHNIQUES FOR SELLING IT PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

A Menemsha Group White Paper

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To be successful in selling IT professional services one will always have to cold call for new business. The industry is simply too competitive and the internal political landscape of organizations today is constantly shifting. Your top revenue producing accounts today will not be there forever. To counter those challenges we have to develop the skills and confidence to efficiently and effectively cold call. Included are proven tips and suggestions that will help your cold calling be more productive.

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by Dan Fisher, Founder

ABSTRACT

Unless you were born into royalty or you are a former president of a country or CEO of a Fortune 500 organization, you are going to have to make cold calls in order to be successful in the field of sales. It's fascinating with the marketers who promote "cold calling is dead," "cold calling doesn't work," and "stop cold calling."

What sales professional doesn't wish that their network so robust that they could always generate new business off of referrals? The reality is everyone's network "runs out" at some point. When that happens, what do you do? You either stop prospecting for new business or you cold call new prospects in order to develop new business.

To be successful in selling IT professional services one will always have to cold call for new business. The industry is simply too competitive and the internal political landscape of organizations today is constantly shifting for you to not cold call. Your top revenue producing accounts today will not be there forever.

To counter those challenges we have to develop the skills and confidence to efficiently and effectively cold call. Below are some proven tips and suggestions that will both help your cold calling be more productive and remove any fear that you may have about cold calling.

ADJUST YOUR MINDSET

The first thing you need to do is change your mind set and mental approach to cold calling. Don't approach cold calling with the goal of *making a sale* or *landing a meeting*. Those are certainly goals you want to achieve with every prospect but if that is your goal on the cold call, you are destined to put yourself in constant objection handling mode which will mostly likely lead to failure. When engaged in a cold call you have to recognize when *making a sale* or *landing a meeting* is even possible. Besides, you don't want to be a transactional vendor. Selling IT professional services requires relationship building and unless you get lucky, chances are you're not going to going to make a sale on the initial cold call no matter how good of a sales person you are. If your goal of the cold call is *not* to make a sale than how can you get rejected? Eliminating the goal of "making a sale" or "landing a meeting" on a cold call will free you from the fear of rejection. Lower your expectations and take the pressure off yourself. Share with your prospects that you are in it for the long haul.

STOP SELLING

We all know how competitive the IT professional services industry is. Your customers and prospects are getting dozens of calls from your competitors each week. Furthermore, your customers and prospects cannot distinguish one vendor from the next because they all sound alike. They all lead with their product and/or service offering. This is a very salesy approach and a turn-off to just about any buyer. To be successful with cold calling you must first learn to sound different than your competition. Don't talk about your product or service. The focus of the call should be on the customer and what is important to them. Stop selling. Tell the prospect the opposite of what they expect you to say.

THE GOAL OF THE COLD CALL

The goal of the cold call is real simple. Your mission is simply to make the prospect feel comfortable in talking with you. You must disarm the prospect. Imagine an invisible wall between you and the prospect as you're talking with them on the telephone. Your goal of that call (and every cold call) is to remove that invisible wall so that they feel comfortable in opening up and sharing information with you. The key to long-term success in sales is building trust and this is the first step in building trust.

DISARMING YOUR PROSPECT

How do you disarm your prospect? You start by displaying a lot of respect for their time and making them feel as if they are in control of the phone call. Put out the disclaimer that you are O.K. and understand that if they feel the discussion is a waste of their time, you will happily end the phone call. You must offer the

prospect *multiple* opportunities to tell you to get lost or end the call. Think of it as reverse psychology. They expect you to be a walking brochure for your organization selling them all of the wonderful features and benefits of your service offerings. This is what we have conditioned prospects to hear for hundreds of years. Instead make the prospect feel like they control the call.

STOP MAKING ASSUMPTIONS

One of the biggest mistakes sales people make (especially in selling IT professional services) is that they always assume that every prospect is a good prospect. This is simply not true. There are plenty of prospects out there that you don't want to do business with for a variety of reasons. So before you start selling, determine *with the prospect* if your two organizations are even a good fit for one another. You need to qualify the prospect to determine if you even want to do business with them. And don't assume you can help them until you have had a detailed conversation with them. There is no bigger turnoff to buyers than sales professionals who impose their product or service on them and know nothing about their business.

ASK FOR PERMISSION

Ask the prospect for permission to conduct the phone call. And throughout the phone call check in with the prospect by asking them, "is it ok if we continue?" Doing this makes the prospect feel in control of the call and your demonstrating respect for them as a professional.

SUMMARY

It's common that on an initial cold call you will often not have as long or as detailed of a conversation as you would like. That is O.K. and expected. Remember, the goal is to disarm the prospect and start building trust. If you can accomplish that then you will have great success in setting up a specific date and time for a follow up call or meeting with your prospects to talk in further detail. And that follow up call is now a warm call. Additionally, you will have differentiated yourself from the competition because you didn't go for the sale or impose your product or service on the prospect. In short, you didn't sound like a sales person.

If you execute this philosophy correctly you will no longer run into the common and numerous sales objections most sales professionals hear on a cold call. This paper does not discuss those objections or how to overcome them for the simple fact if you are not selling the prospect has nothing to object to. It's only when you start talking about your service and capabilities that you begin to hear objections from your prospects.

Lastly, when applying this approach to cold calling, the worse case outcome is that you will differentiate yourself from competition. Prospects will remember you. How many of your competitors do you think are applying this approach?

ABOUT THE MENEMSHA GROUP

The Menemsha Group was founded to empower sales professionals in the IT staffing and consulting industry with the tools and knowledge to sell more effectively, differentiate from the competition and increase gross profit margins. In addition to offering sales coaching and training services, Menemsha Group has also authored a proprietary sales methodology-Menemsha Methodology-which is designed exclusively for professionals in the IT staffing and consulting industry. You can purchase our sales tools online at www.menemshagroup.com, hire us to train your sales team or both. Menemsha Group has the flexibility to meet your specific sales training goals and objectives.

To learn more about the Menemsha Group contact us today at (888) 553-3083 or email us at info@menemshagroup.com.

ABOUT DAN FISHER

Dan Fisher is a thirteen year sales veteran and thought leader of the IT Staffing and Consulting industry who has built his reputation on transforming underperforming sales teams into market leaders. Prior to authoring Menemsha Methodology-the only proprietary sales methodology designed exclusively for the IT professional services industry- Dan gained industry specific experience in doing everything from recruiting, sales & business development, service, operations and branch management to building and leading a \$40M region where he managed eight different markets. Recognized as a sales leader, Dan has been a top producer with a track record of consistently exceeding sales quota and delivering multi million-dollar revenues. He's won numerous awards for his leadership, revenue and gross profit attainment. Dan has also designed & delivered local, regional and national sales training programs.

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