



Sales by Phone

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Explore benefits of telemarketing
- ✓ Explore effective ways to negotiate.
- ✓ Outline the importance of creating and delivering meaningful messages.

Sales by Phone

Benefits of Telemarketing

Many CCAs are responsible for direct sales, but even if you do not directly sell over the phone, **you are still selling something**. You are in a role where you share information and, perhaps, the virtues of your company with a caller. These factors are all related to selling. When you have a relationship that is built on trust, your clients and customers will buy from you, even if you are simply asking permission to mail them information.

Telemarketing, or selling by the phone, has developed a very negative aura. People have added their names and telephone numbers to “do not call” lists to get away from the supertime phone calls of, “You have been selected for...” or, “We have a special offer on...”

There are benefits to selling by phone. For example, you may be able to speak to someone effectively in ten minutes instead of having to travel to meet him or her in person. In addition, when you are in touch by phone, you can have all of your notes and information spread out on your desk without distracting your customer.

When you are selling by phone, it is also important that you depersonalize from the outcome. **No one has a 100% closure** (successful sale) **rate**, and you need to allow yourself time and space to learn the industry and develop your skills.

Rapport Building

A large component of your communication and sales success comes with your ability to build important relationships and to connect with people. One excellent technique for creating high levels of rapport relates to the way you address people.

Draw your seating chart here.

Guidelines for Remembering Names

- Concentrate. Hard.
- Repeat the name out loud right after you hear it. Then, try to find other opportunities to use it. One guideline to try is to use the person’s name three times in your conversation.
- Get some kind of visual reference. (Example: Matt has thick hair like a mat.) These are not things you are ever expected to share with the person, so be as creative as you must be to remember visually.
- Group associate. Know where you met the person. Write it on their business card if you get one.
- Write the name down as soon as you can.
- Pay attention. That’s most important.
- After a phone call, note anything important, such as, “Son’s birthday tomorrow.” Then, the next time you contact that client, you can ask how the birthday celebrations went.

Taking Messages

Pen in Hand

Call centers are not simple places with simple technologies. Once the phone call is complete (and sometimes before it is finished), the CCA may be busy recording a message for someone else to act on. If you have taken an order, for example, you may not be finished with your task until you have recorded the order in an inventory tracking system.

In some cases, there may also be messages that are an important component of the call – a note for someone in the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) area, marketing, or complaints, for example.

Test Your Knowledge

What is the best way to manage that message, whether it is on paper or in an electronic format?

Effective Messages

In order to keep messages well organized and make sure they get addressed, here are a couple of points to consider:

- CCAs need to have the authority to do as much as possible within their roles. They cannot be effective if, every time they speak to someone, they have to pass an additional message within the organization. If CCAs are problem solvers, sales people, and company ambassadors, make sure they have the ability to fully act within those roles, to the furthest extent possible.
- For example, if staff are calling customers on a follow-up call to see how their newly tuned up car is working, those same staff need the ability to resolve straightforward problems, up to and including offering an existing customer some kind of incentive to do business again. CCAs without authority can drive a sales or marketing team to distraction if they are unable to resolve basic issues.

Create your own cheat sheet for ideal messages in the space below.

1.

2.

3.

Staying Out of Voice Mail Jail

Almost everyone has experienced the frustration of being sent into the **voice mail ether**. Although is often perceived as a runaround, voice mail can actually be a helpful way to share messages or connect people. Applying proper voice mail techniques ensures customer satisfaction.

Some people prefer listening to a voice mail rather than reading a note or e-mail because it allows them to hear nuances in the caller's voice that they obviously could not hear in a written message. Are they agitated or anxious? Does this person need to be called back immediately, or can the return call wait until the next day?

Just like writing notes, **voice mail has certain etiquette attached to it** that can help you deliver the message more effectively. Etiquette is not something we may think of automatically; sometimes we need to work on it.

Here are some tips for leaving effective messages:

- Each message needs to be short and complete. Don't leave out important matters, and don't say, "Call me for details." If you want someone to respond to your message, make it complete.
- Make sure the message gets to the correct person.

- Inhale, taking in your usual amount of air.
- Exhale slowly, saying the word “hum” at your normal volume.
- Exhale evenly to maintain the volume and quality of the hum.
- Take note of any extra notes with your hum – such as a flutter sound – if you relax the tension or lose control as you exhale.
- Repeat the humming and be sure to keep the extra notes out of your voice.

Sighing

This exercise will help you both relax and strengthen your voice. Follow the steps in the order given to reach maximum benefit. Allow yourself about five minutes of uninterrupted time, and repeat the steps three times throughout the day.

- Inhale, taking in your usual amount of air.
- Exhale slowly, sighing softly with the sound of the word “sigh” stretched out as “s-i-g-h.”
- Keep the volume level the same as you exhale, and then make it softer and softer as you exhale.

The Diaphragmatic Breath

This exercise is crucial for increasing control of your vocal strength and quality. This is a type of breathing that is mastered by singers, musicians, dancers, and actors, and it is equally useful for speaking on the telephone. Set aside five minutes for this exercise, three times a day.

- Stand in front of a mirror or a partner so that you can see or get feedback on what you are doing.
- Place your fingers lightly on your diaphragm, just beneath your rib cage above your waistband. Feel the movement as you breathe.
- Inhale slowly through your nose or mouth, directing the air to your diaphragm. You will feel the diaphragm move forward; your shoulders and upper chest should not move at all.
- Hold the inhaled air for three seconds.
- Exhale slowly, counting to twenty by saying “one one thousand, two one thousand, three one thousand...” until you reach “twenty one thousand.”
- Stop when your exhale becomes a strain.
- If this is the first time you’ve tried this exercise, you probably won’t reach twenty in one breath. Repeat the exercise three times a day until you can reach twenty comfortably.

Cold and Warm Calls

The Cold Call

From a sales perspective, **no prospecting strategy is as good as picking up the telephone** and calling to ask people whether or not you can get together with them to talk about what you do. While networking or delivering speeches are both good supplementary measures, prospecting by telephone is the telephone sales person’s primary method of finding new contacts.

If you make as few as **six calls a day** that result in someone from your target company picking up the phone and saying, “Hello,” you can make a significant difference in your total income picture.

These six calls do not necessarily all result in setting up an appointment. Nor do they even mean that you always get through to the decision maker. But, if you pick up the telephone and make those six calls regularly, five out of five days of every business week, without fail, you minimize stress, frustration, and wasted effort. **You also take control of the front end of your own sales cycle.**

A Cure for Call Reluctance

A lot of sales people are plagued by call reluctance, even though the vast majority of prospects are unfailingly polite, even if they don’t want to talk with you further.

One technique for overcoming call reluctance is to write, “Don’t worry about it, just do it,” on the front of your planner, to remind you that you are calling people and asking questions not just to help you, but to help them as well.

A second technique is to have your list of prospective clients in front of you so you can begin at the beginning, and work down through the list without trying to cherry pick the clients who are apt to say yes.

Here are some other tips to make cold calls work for you:

- Create a comfortable call center that works well for you. Some people prefer headsets so they can make notes as they talk. Others prefer to stand. Most people have a script they use as a guideline to keep them on track. At any rate, have the information you need right in front of you. Choose what works best for you.
- Make your notes immediately after the phone call, including any follow-up required.
- Reward yourself after making a certain number of phone calls. The number of calls made can dictate the reward.

Connecting with Decision-Makers

One problem you may encounter is reaching a gatekeeper. Gatekeepers are people responsible for keeping you away from the person you would like to speak with. They may be front desk receptionists or they may be administrative assistants, but their mandate is to filter out non-essential callers and salespeople.

There are some proven strategies for getting to your target decision-maker without offending them. One idea is to **make calls at times when support staff are normally not at work**, such as early in the morning, at lunch hour, or at the end of the day. Not everyone likes to be caught answering the phone, but if you can say with sincerity, “I see you are working late (or early) like me,” you may find they will relax and spend some time talking with you. If not, quickly ask if you might call them back at a more convenient time, or if you can set up an appointment to talk with them in person.

Try the answer/ask strategy. This is a technique that involves turning the tables on receptionists, assistants, and other gatekeepers by asking them questions in return. For example:

- Receptionist: “Acme Holdings.”
- You: “Ms. Roberts, please.”
- Receptionist: “May I tell her who is calling?”
- You: “Please tell her Ralph Jones is holding.”
- Receptionist: “And what is your company, Mr. Jones?”
- You: “Would you tell her that I am calling from Jones and Jones Associates, please?”

Always treat people right. Get that gatekeeper on your side by acknowledging their role and enlisting their help to find a good time to reach your prospect.

Take advantage of voice mail. Despite all its disadvantages, there are at least a few advantages we should keep in mind when we are faced with whether to leave a message or not. We should take this opportunity to get the most we can out of our calling time.

- Voice mail can be useful since we don’t get interrupted and the person we want to reach will at least get to listen to the first part of our message.
- Prepare and practice what you want to say, put a pleasant smile in your voice, speak slower than you normally would, and go for it.

Openers

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, you just can’t seem to get a prospect’s attention. Get beyond saying, “I’m so-and-so,” and “I’m glad to reach you.” If you and your competitors all use the same words, how will you stand out from the rest? You need to have a good opening statement. This includes telling them who you are and what you are calling about. Prospects get annoyed with people who try to be coy or too cutesy.

Come up with a new way to greet prospects that will set you apart from the crowd, like:

- “I don’t want any money.”
- “These five minutes could make a difference in your bottom line.”
- “Help me solve a mystery.”
- “I learned something really interesting about your business the other day.”

Test Your Knowledge

Do you have any other suggestions?

The Warm Call

A warm call is a sales call that is made to someone that you already have some kind of connection with. Here are some tips for warming up cold calls:

- Send a preliminary mailing in a business envelope with the person's name spelled correctly, a tailored letter with information directly relating to the prospect, and a small brochure.
- If somebody you met during your networking or someone you have dealt with successfully has referred you to this person, you can use the referral as an excellent way to warm up a cold call. However, you can only use this technique when it is indeed a referral.

Test Your Knowledge

How would you handle these responses from a prospect?

"I'm not sure what I think about that idea."

"You know what I'm trying to say."

"I expected more than this."

"I don't think I can make a decision today."
