



Developing your Script

Learning Outcomes

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

- ✓ Discuss how to create a script to maximize your efficiency on the phone.

Developing your Script

The Basic Script

Actors use scripts, and so do speakers, trainers, and sales professionals. We use them because they are so effective. We recommend scripts that have six elements. When delivered properly, they can produce astonishing results.

The key parts of a script are:

- An attention statement
- An identification statement
- A people-respond-in-kind attitude
- A reason-for-this-call statement
- A request for an appointment
- Your response to objections

At this point we aren't trying to turn the prospect into a customer. We're at the very first stage of the contact. We don't know anything about the person we are talking to yet. If they aren't interested, or this call doesn't get results, we will politely disengage and move on. Before we do that, however, we do want to make one good solid attempt to break through all the natural resistance any person feels when they talk to a sales person over the phone.

Having said that, "no" answers are a part of the sales process and we really must get over taking that "no" personally. Don't waste your time spinning your wheels or trying to change that "no" into a "yes."

Let's look at all six elements of the cold call and see what can be done to make them easier to make and more successful.

Test Your Knowledge

Warm Up the Cold Call

First of all, can you think of some ways we can help people be a bit more pre-disposed to talk with us?

The Attention Statement

This is your verbal handshake and we want to make it as professional yet as friendly as we can make it. This is a prospect's first impression of us and our company. Keep your attention statement short and simple: **"Hello, Mr. Jones,"** or **"Good morning, Ms. Hendrix."**

Most importantly, this statement is courteous, includes the person's name, and allows us to move on to the next part of the call. Most of us pay attention when somebody addresses us by name, so make sure you have done some research if need be to get it right. This can be difficult to do, especially if we are a bit nervous, so practice. Be sure to get their name right. It is hard to bounce back from mispronouncing their name.

You may want to add, "Is this a good time to talk for a few minutes?" Since you are calling and interrupting their day, this additional courtesy is important to preserve.

The Identification Statement

This is where you tell the person you've called who you are and where you are calling from. Practice speaking slowly, clearly, and confidently. This statement is another single sentence that gets the job done for you. The person on the other end of the line can tell that you are purposeful, poised, and goal-oriented.

Example: **"My name is Judy Thomson and I work for Thomson Printing."**

A People-Respond-In-Kind Attitude

Remember that the attitude you project is reciprocal in nature. If it sounds like what you are offering a prospective client has value and may be mutually beneficial to them as well as to you, they will be asking themselves, "What's this all about?"

Don't waste their time at this point with idle conversation. Tell them who you are, what company you work for and then move on to "The Reason-for-this-Call" statement.

The Reason-For-This-Call Statement

You don't have a lot of time to convince the prospect that you do have something of interest to offer them; you have two well-worded sentences and that's about it. You want to focus on the potential benefit of what you have to offer and point out how your product or service has worked out well for another company, preferably one your prospect will have heard of. (Make sure you speak of a benefit, not a feature.)

Examples:

- "We are offering a special deal on flyers this month, and I think our prices could save you a lot of money. Telmark, just down the street from you, are getting us to print the flyers for their new outlet in Bayer's Lake."

- “We are introducing a new one-day workshop on Selling by Telephone and I thought you might find this useful training for your sales staff. We’ve just completed a workshop for Thomson Printing, and they feel they can increase their sales by at least 20% in the next month.”

A Request for an Appointment

This is what the call is all about if you do face-to-face selling. You’ve got the other person’s attention. They know who you are and who you work for. Now you’d like to set up an appointment to talk with the person about the company, their challenges, and how you can help them. Don’t even think of trying to close the sale at this point. It’s way too soon.

Examples:

- “I’d really like to talk to you about what we are offering. Would you be free on Thursday morning at 10:00 a.m.?”
- “I’d like to tell you more about this workshop and how it can help your staff. Would Thursday morning at 9:00 a.m. work for you?”

Your Response to Objections

First of all, look at the objections you hear. Did any of your current clients say something similar before they began working with you?

Chances are they did. If that is so, then take the risk, step out onto the ledge and say something like, “You know, that is similar to what other companies said before they began doing business with us and had a chance to see the benefits of our [product or service].”

After you’ve made your single attempt to demonstrate that you’ve been able to overcome similar objections before, you can ask a question. One popular approach is to ask what the company is currently doing/using. That question often works best if you use the introductory phrase, “I’m just curious.”

Example: “I’m just curious, Ms. Jones, what type of printing services are you using right now?”

Focusing on what they are currently doing or plan to do is usually far more effective than reciting all the benefits of your product or service.

Summary

This type of script is short and it’s simple. It gets right to the point and it doesn’t require much tailoring. Perhaps that is why it works so well. It ensures that you haven’t wasted their time and you haven’t wasted your time.

Sample Script

Here's another possible draft of the basic cold calling script, with the various steps marked.

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| Attention Statement | Hello, Ms. Jones. |
| Identification Statement | This is Tom Taylor from Acme Company here in San Francisco. |
| Reason For the Call Statement | The reason I'm calling is that we've just put together an exciting, customized software design package for United Consumer Products that allowed them to decrease their average time to market by 17%. It seemed to me that you might be interested in taking a look at maximizing efficiency in your design work, too. |
| Request the Meeting | I'd like to get together so we could take a look at your organization's product design work and tell you about the success we've had with United Consumer Products. Is Monday at 1 p.m. good? |
| Assume the prospect offers an objection: "We handle all of that on our own," "The software we have is fine," "We're just not interested," or any of the other common roadblocks you run up against (and overcome) on a regular basis. | |
| Objection Response (Ledge) Statement | Can I tell you something? That's exactly what the people at United Consumer Products told us when we first approached them about taking a look at a new software program. I'm just curious, what kind of design system are you using right now? |
| Assume the prospect responds, either with information that directly relates to your question – a good sign – or a restatement of (or variation on) the previously stated objection. | |
| Second Request | You know, I have to tell you, Ms. Jones, from what I've been able to gather about your company, I really think we'd both have something to gain from trying this solution. You are not obligated to sign up beyond the thirty-day trial period, and our customer service staff are here to help you any time you have questions. |

That's the outline. Although there are a few minor variations on this telemarketing approach (and we'll look at those exceptions in just a minute), for the vast majority of selling situations you'll run into, the concise, step-by-step approach laid out above represents the single most efficient way for you to set up appointments with new prospects.

Making the Script Yours

As plainspoken as the script may seem, it really works. You don't need to turn it upside down or adapt only one aspect of it to your selling routine. Give it a try for a fair amount of time, in accordance with the personal target numbers that reflect your own goals. In other words, if your income objective results in a daily requirement of ten discussions with decision makers every day, use the script until you've talked with ten people who grant you the sale or booking you want. If you're like most salespeople, you'll need to make 20 calls to reach those ten decision makers. (If you decide to focus on total calls rather than contacts with decision makers, set a target based on your own numbers and objectives and keep calling until you hit the goal.)

A few other tips:

- **Practice** the whole script from beginning to end. Deliver it to a colleague and ask for a helpful critique afterward. Hone the script. Tighten it up. Make it direct. Make it confident. Make it yours.
- **Stick to the script.** Don't embellish it or expand on it. If you do, you will find yourself asking frivolous or irrelevant questions. Worse, you can be tricked into selling add-on items or rewriting the offer.
- **Ask directly for the sale**, no matter how difficult that might seem at first.

While we strongly recommend you don't make many changes to the script we have suggested, there are exceptions when you may want to customize a script to take advantage of the circumstances.

Referral Script

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| Attention Statement | Hello, Mr. Jenkins. |
| Identification Statement | This is Barb Miller from Zap Computer Company here in San Francisco. |
| Reason For the Call Statement | The reason I'm calling is that I've just spoken to Carl Hood, and he suggested that you and I talk about your upcoming computer system purchase. I'd like to get together with you to see how what we offer might fit into your plans. Is Monday at 1:30 p.m. good for you? |
| Prospect offers an objection. | |
| Response to Objection | Can I tell you something? That is exactly what the people at ABC Company said when we first approached them about taking a look at a new computer system. I'm just curious, what kind of system are you using right now? |

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| Prospect responds with a restatement of the objection and/or some new information. | |
| Second Response to Objection/Request for Sale | You know, I have to tell you, Mr. Jenkins, from what I've been able to gather about your company, I really think we can help you improve your (insert the improvement). I can set you up with a thirty-day free trial if you are interested, so you have nothing to lose. Would you like me to send you some information (or an Internet link) about the product so that you can have a closer look? |

Rarely/Never See the Potential Client

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| Attention Statement | Hello, Ms. Haines. |
| Identification Statement | This is Dave Stephens from Broadside Magazine here in New York. |
| Reason For the Call Statement and Request for Appointment | The reason I'm calling is that we have been able to deliver some great results for companies such as yours. Triple Diamond Cheeses had a 25% increase in their orders after a three-month advertising campaign in our magazine. I'd like to schedule a time where we could talk in detail about your advertising needs over the next six months. Is Friday at 1:30 p.m. a good time to call, or would you rather talk now? |
| Prospect offers an objection. | |
| Response to Objection and Second Request | Can I tell you something? That's exactly what the people at Triple D told us before they had a chance to talk with me about the programs we're offering. I'd like to schedule a time when we can talk in detail about your advertising needs for the next six months. |
| Prospect responds with a restatement of the objection and/or some new information. | |
| Third Request for Appointment | You know, I have to tell you, Mr. Jenkins, from what I've been able to gather about your company, I really think we can help you improve your (insert the improvement). I can set you up with a thirty-day free trial if you are interested, so you have nothing to lose. Would you like me to send you some |

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| | information (or an Internet link) about the product so that you can have a closer look? |
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Polishing the Script

Here are some tips on practicing:

- Find a tape recorder or use the voice recorder on your computer and record yourself in an imaginary call. Record each element of your call and either imagine or impersonate your prospect as well.
- Practice with a partner. Take turns playing the role of the prospective client. Throw each other some curve balls.
- Listen to the tone of your voice as you practice. Make sure you vary the sound of your voice. Nobody wants to listen to a monotone.
- Do you sound confident and professional? If you don't, practice until you do.
- Are you following your script? If you find yourself asking questions you never intended to ask or including more chatter than you planned, go back to more role playing until you feel comfortable with the recommended script format.
- Once you become comfortable with your script, try to practice a few imaginary calls each day before you get down to the serious business of calling, just to get yourself warmed up and in the mood.