

Dialing for Dollars

Most people fly by the seat of their pants when prospecting for new business by telephone. One of the most common mistakes they make is to dial a number and launch into an unfocused discussion when the person answers. The other mistake is to leave a long rambling voice mail message. To prevent this from happening, you need to use prepared scripts.

I know! I know! You are probably thinking that you will sound like a telemarketer who interrupts your dinner. Don't worry. The approach I am going to share with you in this article is different.

First of all, recognize that scripts are the most important aspect of telephone prospecting. I have tried prospecting both with and without scripts and have consistently experienced better results when I used scripts. They keep me focused. They also ensure my message is clear. Here are some guidelines to follow when creating a script for your business.

Your script should state who you are, what you do, and why you are calling. Keep it brief. In fact, I believe the shorter it is, the better. Today's business people are busier than ever before and do not have time to listen to a message that takes last forever to make a point. Here is an example, "Hi, Mr. Smith. This is Kelley Robertson of the Robertson Training Group. We're retail training specialists and we pride ourselves on helping our clients add sales to their top line and dollars to their bottom line. I'm calling to see if this is something you'd like to explore for your company."

Prepare response for objections. Your objective is not to necessarily overcome their objection but rather to keep the dialogue open. Here is an example, "We already use someone else." Respond with, "That's good to hear. You obviously see the value in this type of service. If you don't mind me asking, who do you currently use?"

Develop scripts for voice mail. Determine beforehand exactly what you want to say when reach someone's voice mail box. I have developed a series of scripts with each one stating a different benefit or aspect of my business. In fact, I have created fifteen unique messages and I track them so I don't repeat myself with each prospect. Here is an example, "Good morning, Mrs. Smith. It's Kelley Robertson of the Robertson Training Group calling again. A client recently told me that she increased her add-on sales by thirty percent after working with one of our programs. I'd love to share with you how we helped her achieve these results so call me at 905-633-7750. I look forward to hearing from you, Mrs. Smith."

A word of caution. Avoid saying the same thing each time you call. A few years I received several voice mail messages from a sales person and each time she said the exact same thing – word for word!

Do not expect people to call you back. Business people will not return calls unless there is an excellent reason for them to do so. They are just too busy. The average buyer or executive in today's corporate world receives dozens of calls a day plus a hundred or more emails. However, you can increase your call back ratio by making your message unique. Here is an approach that has me increase the number of call backs. "Hi Mr. Jones, this is Kelley Robertson from the Robertson Training Group. We're retail training specialists and I recently had a client tell me that one of our programs helped her increase her sales by twenty percent. I know you're busy so would you be willing to schedule a 9 minute telephone meeting to discuss how we could help you achieve similar results. Our number is 905-633-7750. I look forward to hearing from you soon, Mr. Jones. "

Finally, you must practise! My first experience with scripts was a disaster because I didn't fully practise beforehand. I read through the script a few times, picked up the telephone and dialed a number. I reached my contact and proceeded to stumble my way through my lines. Needless to say, I did not make a very good impression. But, I did learn a valuable lesson.

To avoid sounding like a telemarketer, you must verbally recite your script, aloud, many times until it becomes natural. Listen to your tone of voice. You should sound relaxed. Your delivery must sound natural, unrehearsed and conversational.

As you progress, tweak, fine-tune and adapt your scripts. Expect challenges when you first begin. But stick with it and before long you will notice an improvement in your approach and an increase in appointments.

Kelley Robertson, President of the Robertson Training Group, works with businesses to help them increase their sales and motivate their employees. He is also the author of "Stop, Ask & Listen – How to welcome your customers and increase your sales." For information on his programs, visit his website at www.RobertsonTrainingGroup.com. Receive a FREE copy of "100 Ways to Increase Your Sales" by subscribing to his 59-Second Tip, a free weekly e-zine .