



Essential Tips for Telemarketing Success.

10 Top Tips for Better Telemarketing Results.

About the Tips

These tips are a small part of our comprehensive guide to telemarketing skills which has been developed to help telemarketers and the companies that employ them. It is for companies large and small that routinely make outbound calls to generate new business opportunities.

The guide itself is invaluable for any individuals that 'cold call' prospects and operate in a business to business environment.

The aim is to help you to get the most from those calls. Whilst it is not specifically intended for b2c telephone sales, direct selling or direct product sales, much of the information and skills contained will be relevant to making calls within these areas.

The information and techniques contained can easily be adapted to suit other.

The guide starts with a look at the strategy behind the calls and then moves on to explore the skills that drive success before focusing on the dynamics of getting past gatekeepers and engaging with decision makers to achieve a desired outcome from the calls.

This shorter tips document is intended to highlight the main aspects of telemarketing that need to be in place to increase your chances of success.

We hope that you enjoy these tips.

About the Author

Jonathan Silverman worked for 16 years in senior marketing and business development roles within prestigious companies such as Cover Girl, Alfred Dunhill, Montblanc and latterly as Head of Marketing for Porsche Cars GB.

In 2000, Jonathan set up GSA Business Development (GSA). The business has undertaken countless successful telemarketing campaigns for companies as diverse as The National Housing Federation to The Chartered Institute of Bankers, The Major Energy Users Council, The Rugby Football Union and Swisspost through to many SME's wishing to target C-Suite directors within blue-chip organisations.



Jonathan Silverman

GSA has delivered significant revenue and ROI for its clients through new business appointments amongst many others with The Prime Ministers Press Office, Eurotunnel, Louis Vuitton, John Lewis, The Department of Health, GlaxoSmithkline, L'Oreal, Aviva, Bayer PLC, Toyota GB, Sony Europe, Royal Bank of Scotland, and Balfour Beatty.

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Telemarketing Strategy

There are a number of factors that have a positive impact on the outcome of telemarketing activities.

All too often, telemarketing is referred to as 'Cold Calling' and callers are perceived as fast talkers that can sell ice to an Eskimo. The reality is that good quality telemarketing is much more than that.

It is about **listening** and building **relationships** with carefully targeted individuals in companies that fit the profile of organisations that are likely to spend substantial sums of money with your company. With that in mind, it pays to prepare properly and to follow a process that will enhance the chance of success.

In the following pages, you will learn about our Top Ten Tips for enhanced telemarketing performance.

Tip 1. Set Realistic Objectives

They say:

'Fail to Plan and you Plan to Fail!'

That's very much the case with telemarketing. Be clear on the goals that you need to achieve.

Ideally telemarketing objectives should be SMART i.e...

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time Based

Is it reasonable to target 100 appointments with accountancy practices in London?

Is that a specific objective?

It is important to define your target and the parameters?

For example:
Yell.com suggests that there are 2007 accountants in London, so maybe 100 appointments might be viable.

However, are they all relevant in terms of size and profile?

(See Tip Number 3).

Perhaps there are only 500 that fit your profile. Does 1:5 seem achievable as a ratio of target companies to appointment? And over what time frame?

Let's say you represent a firm of office cleaners. Perhaps you offer something special;

For example:
Specialist computer cleaning as well as office cleaning for the same price as traditional office cleaners may be more compelling as a proposition and would improve your success rate. If you put 5 people onto the calls instead of one, would that make a difference to the speed of acquisition?

Being clear about your objectives is important. Setting the right goals can make or break a campaign not least in terms of caller motivation
(See Tip Number 6)

Tip 2. Take Action & Don't Procrastinate

How often have you heard someone say:

"We need to finish our brochure or website or (some other marketing collateral) before we do any marketing?"

Whilst these certainly add value to your new business strategy, prospects often don't care about brochures or your website. They are interested in one thing only...

What's in it for me?'

By all means make sure you have the requisite support for your outbound calling activity. However, don't delay the calls and allow analysis-paralysis to prevent you from **winning that big contract** with your prime target.

There is nothing more painful than waiting months to start a campaign to then make a call and learn that you missed the opportunity to get onto that big tender by a matter of weeks. So, plan ahead. Make sure you are ready but get on the phone and make those appointments and don't wait for that perfect time.

Tip 3. Define your Target Market

Where do you start?

Probably, the best place is with your current customers and by profiling them and asking yourself the following questions:

What kind of businesses have we targeted profitably in the past?

In what sectors can we most profitably trade given our business:

Reach?

Status?

Resources?

Credibility?

Products? etc...

Who is the decision-maker?

What is their job title?

Where are customers located?

What will prospects buy from our business?

Why will they buy from us?

When do prospective clients buy most?

For example: (Seasonality) Can we target key buying times?

Tip 4. Use and Maintain a Good List

Don't use old data, including your own!

"Data is King!"

Clean, accurate data is the lifeblood of every campaign. If the data is out of date, targets will not be achieved.

Successful call rates will reduce significantly and callers will soon become frustrated eventually becoming disheartened. Work really hard on list criteria (*see Tip Number 3*) and choose a good bona fide broker for the list purchase.

Consider compiling your own bespoke list and validate the data before you call to make sure you have the right contacts. That's especially important if a direct mail piece or email is going out before the call.

Keeping data clean is an ongoing and challenging task so make sure the data broker or owner you select to provide your list states how often the data is cleaned.

Ideally data should be no less recent than 6 months and more recent if at all possible.

Tip 5. Define a Compelling Proposition

It's all well and good putting in the miles to reach decision-makers but what you say when you get there is paramount.

Consider the following questions:

How attractive are your business services to prospective clients?

How is your business different from the previous or next company that calls this prospect?

Are your USP's (Unique Selling Points) well defined?

What does the customer want and respond to?

What problems does your business solve for the prospect? - Rather than the services that you offer.

On the phone, a caller has one or two sentences at the very most to grab a prospect's attention.

They need to count. So, decide what product or service to focus on then build a compelling proposition, hook or angle to get under their radar.

Tip 6. Motivate your Callers

“If you are the caller, you know that motivation is half the battle.”

If you think you can, you will.

If you think you can't, you most certainly won't.

“So, think positive”

They say “Smile when you Dial.”

If callers believe in themselves and the proposition, they will come across with more conviction and deliver better results.

Enthusiasm
Energy

Interest
Consistency

are crucial in calls. Those making the calls are the company brand and represent the business and its values. Attitude and passion will outperform technical knowledge any day. You can train skills and impart knowledge but you will struggle to train attitude!

Find the blend of financial and non-financial factors that work best for you and your business and your results will fly.

Tip 7. Brief Callers Well

Telemarketers need to understand the company's products and services and the genuine customer benefits as opposed to a list of their features.

Customers generally don't want to know that a product comes with rounded edges. However, they may want to know that a product with rounded edges reduces risk of injury and / or damage if the prospect is a care home, hospital, psychiatric unit or playgroup.

As suggested in Tip Number 5, knowledge of the marketplace and buyer challenges is also important.

If the goal is to make face to face appointments, consider the following questions before you make the call:

- Why should a prospect see you?
- Why they should see you now as opposed to some distant time in the future?
- What are their likely needs / pains that you can help with or alleviate?

A written and verbal brief for each calling campaign is good practice along with a strong call structure or script. The call structure should include details about likely objections (and answers for these) and industry buzz words if the caller doesn't already know them. It's important to sound competent and knowing the correct acronyms and terms (without overdoing it) is part of this process.

Tip 8. Record & Measure Performance

It is often said that you can't manage what you can't measure. Telemarketing is perfect for generating useful statistics whether you use a CRM system and sophisticated calling telephony, a spreadsheet or even a pen and paper. Make sure the things that are important are measured. Track and manage performance on a daily (and sometimes hourly) basis.

There are all manner of performance indicators that you can manage. For example:

Number of calls.

Calls per hour / day.
but take care not to measure in isolation. It is quality not quantity that counts

Decision-maker percentage and distinct decision-makers. (i.e. the number of individual decision-makers as opposed to the same person three times)

Gatekeepers and voicemail benchmarks.

(This may show that getting past the gatekeeper is an issue for a particular caller.)

Calls per decision-maker and per sale or appointment.

Level of incorrect data. (You may want to do a data cleaning exercise)

There are many more measures that can be put in place. Identify those that are relevant for your business, then measure and report against them regularly. Refine the approach based on the on-going learning.

Tip 9. Be Patient

“Rome wasn’t built in a day”

It is fair to say that some telemarketing campaigns go stunningly well from the outset. Generally, that’s when we have good callers calling into clearly defined target markets with specified decision makers and with a proposition that is relevant, compelling and timely. However, it isn’t always that way.

Sometimes, with poor data, commoditised propositions and audiences that are non-receptive or elusive and where it is a struggle to identify who makes decisions, it takes more time.

That’s where **persistence** and **patience** are required. It is, to some extent, a numbers game but that cannot be relied upon.

Using all the tools and skills available will ensure that a telemarketing campaign is less of a numbers game. However, without persistence and patience, no campaign will get far.

“This doesn’t mean carrying on blindly.”

The strategy needs to be refined if it isn’t working. That includes regular feedback, measurement and reporting to ensure the campaign is on the right track. If it isn’t, change it or move on to another campaign.

Tip 10. Follow-Up

Following up ensures that the sales pipeline is built and avoids missing big opportunities that are just around the corner.

There's nothing worse than calling to find you've missed the boat. That's where good systems come in. But they're only as good as the input. As they say:

"Garbage in Garbage out"

So, ensure callers take excellent notes and follow up with call backs. If the prospect asks for an email, (accepting that this can be purely to get the caller off the phone) make sure that the callers have relevant brochures or email information available. But take care not to use this as an excuse not to start. *(See Tip Number 2.)*

Taking good notes allows telemarketers to pick up on the points in the notes the next time they call and supports efforts to build rapport.

Ensure all information and meeting confirmations are sent promptly. Slow response is seen by prospects as a sign of how your service might be if they were to work with you.

Follow-up when you say you will and keep doing so until the lead either converts to business or it becomes clear that no business will be forthcoming.

Tip 10. Follow-Up

Finally, make sure the field sales team work with the telemarketers and brief them on the outcome of appointments so that the loop is closed.

It is about continuous improvement to refine the campaign for best results. That is a joint responsibility. If the sales team finds that a vital bit of information is missing from a face to face appointment that the caller has set up, they need to advise the caller to ask questions in future to gather that detail. Keeping the callers in the dark about the quality of a meeting is hardly likely to improve ratios.

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