

DISSECTING THE FEAR OF TELEPHONE PROSPECTING

I was giving a seminar, and I'd just got to the section on cold calling. An attendee raised her hand and said, very earnestly, "I just hate cold calling because I don't appreciate telemarketing calls, and I think everyone else feels pretty much the same."

Whoa. When cold calling other business people, you're a professional marketer a valuable service to other professionals, NOT a telemarketer. Period. Internalizing this is often the difference between prospecting success and failure.

Regardless of whether the people you call have a need for your services (and most probably won't), or even take the time to talk to you, I promise you that they will *not* view you as an irritating telemarketer.

Dissection time. We could liken the cold calling process to a battle. And the enemy is the prospect, right? WRONG.



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We will always be our own worst enemy in every aspect of our lives. It is never circumstances, or other people, or the government, or the economy. It is ourselves—along with our perceptions of the circumstances that affect us—that interfere with our abilities to get what we want.

You care, they don't. The root of our fear of phone prospecting is the fear of what other people think.

Here's a news flash for you: Other people spend an amazingly infinitesimal amount of time thinking about you. You'd be stunned at how little. Oh sure, your friends and family care. But when it comes to your business and the services it offers, it is best to assume that others don't care at all—and that it is your job to make them care.

The fact that people don't care can work in your favor. Let's image a worst-case scenario: You cold-call someone and proceed to absolutely implode on the phone. We're talking main-core meltdown here, culminating in a stream of incoherent babble.

I promise you that the recipient of your call will spend no more than five seconds thinking about you after you hang up.

Here's the truth: For all intents and purposes, you are a non-issue in the minds of other human beings. And the day you get this will be your own independence day.

Grim expectations.

So what makes cold-calling so tough in the beginning? Perhaps because you've never done it before. Or you've done it, but with limited success. Add these to the misguided expectations of the process, which are:

It will be hard... it will be unproductive... my feelings will be hurt... I won't have fun... I can't sell anything... I'm inexperienced.

But the *real* reason is that at some fundamental level you don't really believe it will work. I can tell you all day long that it does, but until you prove it yourself you won't believe it.

A funny thing happens, though, when you do it long enough to discover—lo and behold—that cold calling *does* work. It ceases to be an unpleasant garden-variety exercise in futility and morphs into a proven vehicle for success. You may never love it—not required—but even that might change when you see the impact on your bank account. Would you approach the process differently if you knew going in that you couldn't fail?

The reality. Let me throw in a piece of good news here. If your initial marketing push is big enough and thorough enough, you will only have to do through it once.

When I started my business I made probably a thousand calls in the first few months. After that, I never—repeat,

never—put together a cold calling campaign of that magnitude. Sure, from time to time, over the years, I'd do a couple dozen calls here or there when things slowed down. But the machine was cranked enough that even those few calls were enough to get something going.

Action or results? In my seminars, I ask, "When starting a cold-calling campaign should you focus on action or results?" Many yell out "results." After all, we're judged on results, right? Maybe. But think about it. What's true of action that isn't true of results? If you answered that you can control action, but can't control results, go to the head of the class.

You can't wake up in the morning and realistically say, "I'm going to land three new projects today" (results). But you can say, "I'm going to make twenty calls today" (action), and have total control over that.

Focus on the action and the results will come. Minus the anxiety.

The law of averages is foolproof. I don't care how those calls turn out. The number you make is not the same as the number of conversations you'll have (that's results again). Just make the calls, regardless of the outcome (i.e., live contact... voice mail... message left with a secretary... hang up... an appointment... dinner date... whatever).

Trust me, it isn't all that hard, and it will pay off—big time.