

## Business-To-Business Cold Calling *Don't Be Afraid, It Works!*



### By Maureen Feeley Woods

All companies that sell to businesses need cold calling. Consistent cold calling ensures a steady flow of new business. The more calls you make, the more business you can expect. Here are some points to keep in mind for your calls:

### Target Your List

The more targeted the list, the better the results. The list should include companies that really need your product or service. You can get your list from Dunn and Bradstreet, Internet searches, trade organizations or your own private research. The list should be large enough that you won't be calling the same prospect repeatedly. Choose your own goal on the number of calls you want to make per week. The more calls you make, the better your results.

### Calling Time

Set aside a few hours per week to do your calls. Two hours a day a couple of times a week is ideal. Have a list of 30-40 prospects for each time you call. Make as many calls as you can in two hours without interruption. Once through that list, put your calls aside for the day. Resume calling two days later, always adding to the list to have 30 or 40 prospects you haven't reached.

### Confidence

Confidence is the key to successful calling. Set your mind to be positive and expect good results. It's not like going to the firing squad. You have a targeted list, so you know you're contacting the company/person who buys your product or service. Have a prepared script or bullet points. This will give you confidence and keep your message focused. You have about one minute to get your message out. To ensure that your presentation is smooth and confident - practice.

### The Gatekeeper

Getting through the gatekeeper is easier than most people think. Again, confidence is the key. Here's an example:

Caller: May I speak with the head of marketing please?

Gatekeeper: Just one minute please.

Caller: And their name is?

If you time this right you will catch the gatekeeper off guard and she will not be concentrating on screening you and will give you the name. Even if you don't get the name you'll probably get voice mail and be able to get their name. A key point here is to not give the receptionist so much information that she feels she can screen you. If she asks who is calling give them your name and company. No more. If she asks what is this regarding, give her a one-line description of what you do. Answer her questions pleasantly but briefly. Projecting confidence in your voice will make it less likely that you'll be screened.

### Voice Mail

Avoid leaving voice mail messages; it may actually work against you. After leaving several messages without a response, your assumption may be that the prospect is not interested when in fact they may be interested and just too busy to respond. Also, voice mail messages rely on your prospect returning the call. This leads to missed opportunities. Hang up and wait to make your best presentation when you have the prospect "live" on the phone.

### The Decision Maker

Once you've reached the decision maker, he or she will usually give you a little time to tell why your company is unique. Briefly tell your story and ask your qualifying questions. Ask for an in-person meeting to further discuss how your product or service could benefit their company. Be pleasant but brief. This is not the time to establish a friendly relationship. This will happen during your initial face-to-face meeting. The purpose of your call is to introduce your company.

For companies that are focused on increasing sales, cold calls are a must. It creates fabulous opportunities. Give it time and let it work for your company. Cold calling is a numbers game. You will talk to quite a few decision makers before you'll find one with an immediate need or interest. Persevere and keep dialing.

*Maureen Feeley Woods is president of A Better Call Inc. ([www.abettercall.com](http://www.abettercall.com)). She can be reached at (781) 438-5411 or [abettercall@aol.com](mailto:abettercall@aol.com).*

Reprinted with permission by New England Women Business Owners