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Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	The Golden Rules of Telesales	4
3	Essential Communication Skills	5
4	Having the Right Attitude	7
5	Preparation and Record Keeping	8
6	Getting Through to the Decision Maker	9
7	Positive Opening Statements	10
8	Presenting Your Case	11
9	Dealing With Objections	12
10	Closing the Sale	14
11	Complaint Handling	15
12	The Thirteen Do's!	16
13	The Thirteen Don'ts!	17
14	Conclusion	18



1 - Introduction

The telephone is a very powerful method of communication and is becoming one of the most widely used tools for increasing business. More and more companies are beginning to realise that it is possible to develop long term relationships and generate customer loyalty without face to face meetings.

In the world of selling, the telephone enables people to communicate with many more people than was ever possible using the old foot slogging methods. However, the incorrect use of the telephone can not only prevent good communications, but may also leave people with a totally wrong impression of the caller and their company.

It is worthwhile remembering that the image that you project on the phone influences the way in which people think of your entire company.

You are the company - good or bad! So make sure that your telephone manner is a company asset - not a liability.



2 - The Golden Rules of Telesales

- 1 Always be prepared
- 2 Answer promptly
- 3 Sound friendly and interested
- 4 Listen carefully
- 5 Ascertain exact requirements
- 6 Sell products/service
- 7 Overcome objections
- 8 Close
- 9 Leave a good impression
- 10 Check notes - complete administration



3 - Essential Communication Skills

As with any form of communication, there are certain elements which will effect the ease with which you communicate and also the understanding of the message that you are trying to get across.

Comparing the use of the telephone to such methods as letter writing or face to face meetings, it is easy to see that the telephone has a lot of limitations. There is no written word to read, therefore retention of what you have said is difficult. There is no body language, just your **voice** to make that important impression.

Using the voice correctly involves paying special attention to three areas. These are:

A - Speed

B - Clarity

C - Tone

A - Speed

Speaking too fast automatically creates barriers. It is better to slow down and get one idea across than to try and cram three or four ideas into the same time scale, and miss out on all of them. You have prepared this call and [hopefully] know what it is all about. The person at the other end of the line was probably not expecting the call and almost certainly involved in something completely unrelated at the time. Slow down. Give each idea and suggestion time to sink in. And only then move on to the next one.

B - Clarity

Avoid mumbling. Speak clearly and distinctly but avoid compensating for this by shouting. While customers, or potential customers, may claim not to be able to hear you, this does not necessarily mean that there is anything wrong with their hearing!



C - Tone

Speed and Clarity may be fine but this means nothing without a positive tone. No matter how bad your mood is, don't let it show in your voice. Sound friendly and cheerful, even if it is killing you. Be brief and to the point, but also passionate about your product or service - it's great - that's why they should buy it!

Listen!

Another important communication skill used while on the telephone is **Listening**.

Listening to potential customers and existing customers alike, is perhaps one of the most important things that any salesperson can do. If you don't know what they want - how can you sell it to them?

Ask questions and then step back. Try not to prompt too much. Allow them to have their say. Take in all the information, digest it and then return with the exact solution to their problem.

People will buy quicker if they think that it was their idea in the first place



4 - Having the Right Attitude

Before you make any call, take a moment to shrug off any bad humour. Your telephone voice must sound friendly no matter how foul a mood you're really in!

Sound friendly and cheerful - even if it's killing you! Cheerfulness is contagious, even when you have to fake it. In making the effort to sound cheerful, very often you get to feel cheerful and your prospect will enjoy talking to you.

Part of the secret of having a good telephone manner is being enjoyable to talk to - there's more to it, of course, but that's where it all starts. A good telephone manner could be described as relaxed, friendly, positive and helpful.

Treat every call as if it were the first of the day. If the last call was negative, forget it. It's a numbers game. The more calls you make, the more successful you will become.

Don't let anyone get you down - smile before lifting the receiver - EVERY TIME.

On the telephone, always remember:

- You are aiming to make the caller pleased that they are dealing with you
- You are aiming to impress them with your courtesy and helpfulness
- You and your immediate problems -noise, overwork, lack of staff etc, are of absolutely no importance to them
- Answer each call promptly and with identification



5 - Preparation and Record Keeping

Before you pick up the telephone, make sure that you're totally prepared; get all source documents, records, diaries etc around you.

Being prepared offers you the chance to feel and sound more confident. Know your product. Hesitation of any kind removes the control of the conversation from you to the potential customer. And considering that they probably didn't want to speak to you in the first place, this would mean a rather quick end to any conversation!

Keeping records may seem pointless when the main objective is to make sales, or appointments. However, much as we hate paperwork the bad news is that you've got to get the paperwork right if you're going to be consistently good at selling on the telephone.

Qualifying prospects, putting up with stalls and carrying out follow up calls requires a good paperwork system.

It is some comfort to know that once you have set out your initial system, it will simply require topping up on a week to week basis.

You are going to need some form of record card, some sort of telephone control system and of course, a good diary. Even if you have these resources available to you in computer form, it is necessary to use them to their full potential.

Check list and scripts are not just tools that should be used by someone starting a job. Have a list beside you at all times identifying key words that you want to use in every call. Tick each one off as you use it - even if it was just a reminder to smile!

Scripts are a good way of ensuring that you say all the right things. However - don't just read from a generic one. Customise the existing script to sound more like yourself.

Don't just sound like a recording - be individual and interesting.



6 - Getting Through to the Decision Maker

In general, how do you feel about **receptionists**? Dragons? Brick walls? Dreaded people that need bulldozers to remove them from the path to the person that you wish to speak to?

Probably all of the above. And yet what they are, are ordinary people doing their job to the best of their ability. Stop thinking of them, and treating them as dragons! They are really nice people - **whose help you need!** They are someone who can help you on your way, rather than someone to step over. Think before you call. The receptionist is encouraged by the boss to block calls from people such as:

- those who waste time
- those who want money
- those who are unproductive

Therefore, it is up to you to persuade the receptionist that you are none of the above. You are someone who the boss would like to speak to - you are interesting.

Try using an opening statement such as:

"Good morning, can you help me please? I'd like a quiet word with X.."

Instead of the traditional,

"I'd like to speak to X please.."

Naturally with the second opening statement you will be cross questioned,

"What is it about?"

"Who are you?"

"Is X expecting your call?"

Take the initiative. When asked your name suggest that X won't recognise it. It might not always work, but as long as you establish a rapport with the receptionist, things should become easier. Only give enough information that will encourage them to put you through to your contact.

And remember - persistence pays off in the end!



7 - Positive Opening Statements

The first fifteen seconds of any call are the most important. It's a very short time - so make sure that you have your ideas prepared.

Your aim is to make your contact willing to listen to everything that you've got to say.

Make sure that the tone and contents match your own personality and your own contents style; if they don't, it just won't work.

Choose " **a carrot** " and dangle it properly.

Know the kind of business the contact is in. The problems associated with that business and how your product could help to solve some of them. Know some third party names who have had similar problems and whom you have helped.

Leave little or nothing to chance. You must collect all the information that is possible, before making a call, and know exactly what you're going to say in those first few seconds.

If you're contacting a wide variety of business' then you are likely to need not one, but several versions of your " carrot ". Each must be tailored to the type of prospect you're calling. It is more preparation and more paperwork, but the results will make up for this in the end.



8 - Presenting Your Case

The "**carrot**" has been dangled and you have successfully managed to create some interest in your product or service. Well done.

It is now time to find out what the potential customer might need.

Ask questions

Listen to the answers.

Take notes.

Turn the call into a conversation.

People love to moan. Encourage the customer if they start to tell you about problems that they may have.

Everyone loves a good **listener**. And this is a good way of establishing exactly what their requirements are, and then of course, you can offer them the perfect solution.

Remember the points for good communication skills.

Be precise and clear. Don't ramble. Be enthusiastic - not pushy.
Keep smiling.

Promote the benefits rather than features and reassure them of the exact benefits to their company.

Give examples of previous success stories. Keep the carrot dangling!



9 - Dealing With Objections

Depending on your attitude, objections can be seen as problems, or **opportunities**.

Take the initiative. If someone says that they are not interested, try and find out why?

Ask open ended questions. In every phone conversation somebody talks and somebody listens and it is the listener who is getting the information.

You need it - let them give it to you!

Here are some objections and the suggested responses:

- 1. Not interested** I can understand you not being interested in something you have not had the chance to see, but so you can judge this idea for yourself, would you.....
- 2. Too busy** I appreciate that you are very busy, that is why I am calling you for an appointment, rather than calling on the off chance of seeing you. Would you.....
- 3. What's the idea** The reason why this idea has such value to other people is that it can be explained clearly and quickly, provided it can be demonstrated on a personal basis. Would you.....
- 4. Send me details** Certainly, but they may be worthless unless they relate to a particular situation, which is why I would like to speak to you about it first. Do you.....



- 5. No money** I can understand you trying to avoid unnecessary expenses, however, there is no obligation on your part. All I'm asking you to do is to look at the idea to see whether or not it will be of value to you. Would you.....
- 6. Wasting your time** Since this idea might be of value to you, I certainly don't mind spending the time. And I do think you'll find this an interesting idea. Would you.....
- 7. No need** Of course, you would be the sole judge of whether this idea would be of value to you. Would you.....
- 8. Go away** I understand that at this time you are not in the market and I would have been very surprised if you were, the purpose of my call is just to inform you of what is available, so at a time when you are thinking about it, you will have all the information to hand.



10 - Closing the Sale

The closing of any sale should be done at the earliest opportunity. Assume success during every call.

Closing can take many forms but invariably takes the form of some kind of question.

These can be **assumptive questions**:

"So, you'd want to get this up and running very quickly? "

They can be **alternative questions**:

"Can I arrange for someone to go and see you?, Would Monday morning or afternoon suit you best? "

They may be **direct closes**:

"I'll arrange for that to be sent out along with an invoice "

Whatever format your closing takes, always remember the golden rule - having asked the question, shut up!

Under no circumstances be tempted to fill that vacuum of silence that is bound to follow.

Avoid over - compensating by adding in another little bit. Sit back. Your case is being considered. Don't ruin it. And don't sound rushed. Thank the customer for the order and let them hang up first. Always leave the customer on a happy note.



11 - Complaint Handling

There are five steps to successful complaint handling. These are:

- 1 - Listen carefully and apologise
- 2 - While the customer is talking, take a note of the details and promise to investigate
- 3 - Investigate immediately and establish if the company is liable.
Call back
- 4 - Explain to the customer what action the company will take, if it is the company's fault, or diplomatically point out the customer's error.
- 5 - Thank them for being so understanding.

REMEMBER that the customer is not necessarily complaining about you, or your work.

- Do not take it personally.
- To the customer, who ever speaks to them, is the company. They don't care whose fault it is, or why it happened, they just want to see the problem resolved.
- Always remain calm. Never argue.
- No matter how wrong they may be, the customer is always right!



12 - The Thirteen Do's!

1. Let your opening greeting identify you and your department.
2. Get your caller, or prospect's name, and use it. Try to recognise the voices of regular callers and other people in the company.
3. Let your tone be warm, friendly and interested - smile.
4. If you ask the caller to hold, explain why.
5. Service your call every 30 seconds - thank the caller for calling.
6. Make the caller feel that you are anxious and willing to help.
7. If you agree to call back at a specific time, call - even if you have been unable to attend to the query or request.
8. Attend to any query NOW or you will forget - human nature! If there are other priorities - write down the query.
9. Let your caller hang up first and always thank them for calling.
10. Let your closing conversation be positive. Leave your caller feeling confident with your service.
11. Write messages clearly and leave them where they will be readily seen.
12. Remember, smoking and eating impede speech.
13. Establish if the caller is calling from a phone box - if they are get their number and call them back.



13 - The Thirteen Don'ts!

1. Don't just say "Hello" when answering your phone.
2. Don't be familiar or let personalities intrude.
3. Don't sound bored or impatient or lose your temper.
4. Don't say "hold on" and leave the customer holding.
5. Don't contradict or argue.
6. Don't say "I don't know".
7. Don't forget to phone someone back.
8. Don't make the caller feel that they are in the wrong.
9. Don't bang the telephone down whilst the caller is still speaking.
10. Don't carry on a conversation with someone else while on the telephone to a client, especially if there is a chance of being overheard.
11. Don't shout across the room to someone wanted on the telephone.
12. Don't answer the telephone with something in your mouth.
13. Don't wait for the customer to call you back if you get disconnected - take the initiative yourself.



14 - Conclusion

These notes are the bare bones, the techniques of putting together an approach, developing a "carrot", and closing for sales and appointments.

It's up to you to put the meat on the bones and to adapt these techniques to suit your own particular style of presentation and your own personally.

A positive attitude, a clear approach and the desire to succeed is all you need to get out there and make those sales.

You know **how** to do it, and more importantly, you know you **can** do it, so all that's left is to prove to everyone else, that it's done!

