

Turning Cold Calls into Warm Calls

By Marisa Pensa, Methods in Motion



There are two types of pipeline: a sales pipeline with pending orders and a prospecting pipeline.

Your prospecting pipeline represents prospects that did not agree to a first appointment on the first call, but that can be primed for an effective follow up call. We all need both of these pipelines to be stronger!

Although we all want to schedule meetings within a two-week window, we also know it's important to plant seeds for the future—for the third quarter, the fourth quarter and even for 2018.

All too often, we have goals to reach and only focus on what's right in front of us. Maybe the person you just called will turn out to be a goldmine of an opportunity six months from now...but it's more likely that you will end up cold calling the same lead all over again...unless you are well organized as you build your prospecting pipeline.

While I am a firm believer in cold calling as one of many effective prospecting strategies, none of us should cold call a prospect more than once if it can be avoided.

Here are some ideas for warming up your prospects and avoiding the pitfall of making that second or third cold call:

1. Gain express agreement from them that they will take your call again. On the first call, when you are asked to call back in three months (after you have attempted

to reposition a reason to meet sooner), gain agreement for them to take your call again at that time. Set yourself up for an effective follow up call. For example:

John, I completely understand you needing me to call you back in three months. How about we do this; I will call you back in three months, on September 1, (select a date for exactly three months later) and we will schedule a time then to get together. Does that work for you?

Note: I am not recommending you send an Outlook invite for a specific date and time. The goal is simply to gain a verbal agreement. This will help you prime your follow up call. Also consider sending a LinkedIn invitation to connect and/or adding the prospect's email to a marketing drip-campaign to make you and/or your company more memorable.

2. Make sure to call on the date you said you would. People are testing you. This is a great opportunity for you to prove how organized you are and demonstrate that you do exactly what you say you will do. Utilize your CRM, Outlook or whatever other tool you use for staying organized, but call on the day you said you would call.
3. Reference the date of your last conversation and the agreement they made to talk again today.

For example:

John, you and I spoke back on June 1 and we had agreed I should call back today, on September 1, to get together. How does your schedule look on Tuesday at 2pm?

4. Master following up on voicemail. If you get voicemail, leave a simple message. For example:

Hi John. This is Marisa Pensa with Methods in Motion. My callback number is 678-574-6072. I'm actually calling in reference to our conversation on June 1. Please call me back at 678-574-6072. Thank you.

Remember, the Number One reason most people do not return voicemail is that it sounds like a sales call! Keep it short, sweet and intriguing. The primary goal of your voicemail is simply to get a return call.

Cold calling, when done well, can yield excellent results and a steady flow of first appointments. Mastering a great follow up call will truly set you apart from the rest and give you the competitive advantage you need for sales now and in the future. Good selling out there!

Marisa Pensa is president of Methods in Motion, a sales training company whose focus is to help sales teams implement and sustain measurable improvements in the most critical aspects of sales. For more information, visit www.methodsinnotion.com.