



By S. Anthony Iannarino | The Sales Blog

# **HOW TO CRUSH IT, KILL IT AND MASTER COLD CALLING NOW!**

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Over the past year, I have written blog post after blog post at my site, <http://www.thesalesblog.com>. Most of what I have written was written to be published later as a book. That book is coming in the not too distant future.

Of all the topics I have written on, what I have written about cold calling has always struck a nerve, eliciting strong opinions—either for or against. Much of the email I receive is for advice and ideas about how to be more effective at cold calling, or it is to remind me that Sales 2.0 has replaced cold calling (an idea with which I am vehemently opposed with every fiber of my being).

I collected a few posts on cold calling here to serve as a guide for those who would endeavor to improve their cold calling skills. I hope you find it useful in improving your effectiveness and that you adopt these ideas into all of your prospecting activities.

Go Crush It. Go Kill It. Go and Master Cold Calling.

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## Introduction

## **The Anti Cold Calling Crowd Are Charlatans. Period.**

There are two reasons that cold calling takes a beating by so-called sales gurus.

The first reason is that most salespeople aren't very good at it (most people like to do work at which they are above average, especially when it is noticeable). These salespeople complain about cold calling.

The second reason cold calling gets bashed is the fact that a whole cottage industry has popped up to sell the idea that cold calling is dead to the group of salespeople who aren't very good at it and wish for an easier way to set appointments.

The anti-cold calling crowd preys on weak salespeople. These charlatans are no different than the charlatans that sell the idea that you can lose weight without exercise or diet, that you can get rich quickly without working, and that affiliate marketing creates millionaires (which it does, but the millionaires are the folks who sell the picks and shovels, not those that are standing in the stream panning for gold).

Cold calling has much in common with weight loss, fitness, and getting rich. Like all of these, cold calling is hard work. Cold calling is also a prerequisite for success in sales, just like diet and exercise are prerequisites for weight loss and fitness, and spending less and saving more are prerequisites for becoming wealthy.

To succeed at prospecting today, you need to use every weapon in your arsenal, cold calling, warm calling, networking, referrals, traditional marketing, social media and more. You cannot leave cold calling out of your arsenal; it is just too valuable a skill for a sales person.

If you don't like cold calling, consider that you might not like it simply because it is hard to be really good at cold calling. Treat cold calling like anything else that you want to be really good at and dedicate the time and resources necessary.

1. Read a book on cold calling. In fact, read two books.
2. Ask someone who is good at cold calling to listen to you make calls and offer suggestions.
3. Record all of your calls and listen back to them to hear how you sound to the prospect. Then do something to make your calls better, stronger. Rewrite your scripts to make them more compelling to the prospect.
4. Get a coach.
5. Buy a cold calling program on CD and listen to it on the way to and from work.

If you work at cold calling, you can and will get better. If you work especially hard at it, you can get better even faster.

Whatever you do, don't buy the snake-oil sold by charlatans and con-artists.

If you plan to do well in sales, plan to get good at cold calling

# **The Truth About Why Salespeople Don't Like Cold Calling**

There are two groups of people who cold call: telemarketing firms and professional salespeople. For telemarketing firms, cold calling is all that they do.

For professional salespeople, cold calling is one tool in an arsenal of many tools (or at least it had better be).

There are many reasons that salespeople don't like cold calling, but in professional salespeople, it is rarely a fear of rejection.

Instead, it is usually one of three reasons:

- 1. Lack of Preparedness**
- 2. Lack of Ability to Differentiate**
- 3. Inability to Create Value for their Dream Client**

### **Lack of Preparedness**

No one wants to do a job that they don't have the proper tools, technology and training they need to succeed.

The tools, the technology, and the training prepare you to succeed and build confidence. The opposite is also true; a lack of the proper tools, technology and training destroys confidence. For cold calling this boils down to a couple of key factors.

1. Do you have a written script?
2. Do you have a written script for objections?
3. Is the script something that you can be proud to use?
4. Does your script make you sound like a professional whose clear goal is to create value for the customer? Or does it make you sound like a credit card company?

### **Lack of Ability to Differentiate**

Professional salespeople need to differentiate themselves in a crowded field. This is difficult to do, and it is more difficult over the telephone—especially when the salesperson rattles off the same lines the prospect just heard from a competitor.

Salespeople don't like to make cold calls when they cannot differentiate themselves. There are a lot of gimmicks and tricks to differentiate that have been tried over the years, like fake polls and surveys, but all result in a lack of trust once the call turns into a sales call.

To differentiate yourself on the phone is difficult, but it has to be done and it has to be authentic. The best way to differentiate yourself is to create value for the prospect.

### **Inability to Create Value for the Prospect**

Professional salespeople succeed when they create value for their prospects and customers.

When cold calling doesn't provide you with the ability to create value for the prospect, it doesn't feel like a worthwhile use of your time.

There are sales organizations who have figured out how to deliver value before claiming value over the telephone. They still ask for appointments. But the calls are valuable for the prospect because they provide the prospect with something more than a request for an appointment.

The reason telemarketing is so offensive to the people receiving the call is because it is so one-sided; it isn't about creating value for them.

### **Conclusion: Poor Results and Call Reluctance**

All of the above factors lead to poor results, and poor results lead to less activity. Correcting and improving the three factors above can make cold calling a more valuable tool in a salesperson's arsenal.

Answer these questions:



## Questions

Here are some questions you can use to start thinking about how you can improve your cold calling activity.

1. Do I have a great script for making calls? Is it super professional?
2. Do I have written scripts for all of the potential objections I might receive on the call?
3. Does my script immediately make me different in the mind of my prospective customer? Does it make me sound like the last ten salespeople who called?
4. What could I say on a cold call that would differentiate me from my competitors? Who do I have to be to stand out from the crowd? How does the prospect know I am remarkable over the telephone?
5. How could I make a cold call a valuable use of my prospect's time? What does the prospect need that I could use the cold call as an opportunity to deliver?

**C-Level  
Executives  
Want to Hear  
From You.**

**Maybe.**

Could it be that some salespeople are simply more effective than others at calling and gaining appointments with C-level executives?

### **Cold Calling C-Level Executives**

There is no reason that you, as a professional salesperson, cannot pick up the phone and call C-level executives, providing you have great ideas (and you do have great ideas!). There is no reason you cannot pick up the phone and say:

“Hi Tom. This is Anthony with The Sales Blog. I just read an article about your new initiative, and I have some ideas that I believe will help to you and XYZ Company with this project. I’d like to invite you to grab a cup of coffee and a quick discussion on two of these ideas. I promise it will be 20 minutes that will be worth your while whether you use us or not. What does Thursday morning look like?”

Does this require that you have the ideas?  
Absolutely.

Do you have to be prepared to generate value on the appointment? Absolutely.

Are some of these executives still going to say no? Absolutely.

Which is why you never pursue a single approach and you instead use every prospecting method available.

### **Why Do C-level Executives Take Your Call**

Who do you think has the worst case of insomnia in your prospect’s company?

No one, and I mean no one, has bigger problems with more at stake than C-level executives. No one wants to make sure their initiatives succeed like C-level executives.

C-level executives are charged with achieving their company's strategic goals and objectives.

Where those goals and objectives rub up against market realities are where problems are found. Where problems are found is where there is an opening for you to create value.

### **What's Expected of You**

In order to provide value to C-level executives, you have to be able to either solve a problem for them or help them create a new competitive advantage (although I would argue that creating a competitive advantage is still solving a problem, it is just creating the problem of not having the competitive advantage first).

To get the opportunity you have to be a couple things.

You have to be supremely confident that you can solve their problem or help them with a competitive advantage.

You have to have the business acumen to be able to speak to them in their language, and the language of business is often financial or strategic.

This means you have to be able to read a financial statement, and that you are as good with Microsoft Excel as your nearest CFO. You need to be able to prove out your points, and this includes ROI. You also need to know how they compete and their strategic advantage in their market.

You need to forgo the simple rapport building. C-level executives are interested in business and they are interested in doing business with other people who are interested in business. (I am not suggesting rapport isn't important, but you Damn well better not start with the trivial).

C-level executives need you to be their go-to-expert in your field. They know they are not subject matters on everything, and they know they cannot afford to not understand the parts of their business where your business can make a difference.

They will expect you to be a subject matter expert par excellence, filling a gap that they have in their knowledge and experience.

You will need be the kind of person that is going to own the initiative and the results of what it is you sell. You will need to be the kind of person who can achieve the outcomes you promise, engage with your team and their team throughout the entire process.

## **Conclusion**

Let's not forget that C-level executives are human (well, I have met a few that may not be). They usually have more experience and greater competencies which has led them to a position of responsibility.

This responsibility includes achieving results for their company, their clients and customers, their stakeholders, and their shareholders. They build teams to achieve those results, and their partners are part of that team.

If you can differentiate yourself, you can get their attention. If you can solve problems and/or create a competitive advantage (owning the outcome), you can be part of that team. Having the necessary skills is up to you. And so is having the confidence to do so.

## Questions

1. What do you believe about C-level executives that prevents you from being able to pick up the phone and call them
2. What do you believe about yourself that prevents you from being able to pick up the phone and call a C-level executive?
3. What are you missing that, if you had it, would make it easier for you to make the calls higher up your prospect's organizational chart? What do you have to do to get it?
4. What is your best language for calling a C-level executive?

# The Best Way to Lose a Prospect's Interest While Cold Calling

A few weeks ago I received an email from a first time salesperson struggling to make appointments.

Her problems were many, starting with the fact that she has had no sales training and no sales manager. Her question was on how to get better, and I recommended two of my favorite sales books. She had read one, and she bought the other.

She sent me a follow up email to better describe the real problem she was confronting, which she described as having trouble **“introducing herself”** and her company’s **“consulting services.”**

There is no doubt that making the statement “I’d like to come by and introduce myself and my company’s service to you,” is sometimes effective.

But that sometimes is very, very rare.

Here is why that opening’s call to action isn’t effective and what to do about it.

### **Your Call to Action Is Self Centered**

If you were on the other side of this salesperson’s request for an appointment, what might you suspect you would spend your time talking about on a sales call should one be given?

This statement makes the prospect absolutely certain that you are going to spend your time talking about you and what you do.

“But wait,” you say. “That isn’t at all what I hoped to accomplish on the first call” But that is what you said, and that is what your dream client now believes.

### **Your Call is Undifferentiated**

Truth is, there are a lot of people using this very same opening (it works sometimes, especially with smaller, transactional clients).

Your prospects and dream clients are subjected to this request over and over again. In the past, they have agreed to meet with some nice-sounding salespeople and they have found them all to be pretty much the same—not value creators!

By using the exact same approach with the exact same language choices, you have confirmed that you are no different than those who have come before you—and the many who will call using the same line in the future.

### **Your Call Provides No Value and Confirms No Future Value**

By making your request both about yourself and undifferentiated, you confirm for your prospect or dream client that you lack the ability to be valuable to them—this is true, even when you really can be of value.

By making even your request about you, you demonstrate that the focus of this call is about creating value for you and not your dream client.

By not making your call different, the dream client has no choice but to believe that you have no new value-creating ideas worth her time and her attention.

The first assessment that your dream client makes is whether or not you are someone worth spending time with—what are they going to get out of the call. The best they can hope for, based on your request, is that they might get to visit with a really nice salesperson with nothing very valuable to offer.

### **Your Call Confirms That You Lack Business Acumen**

Your dream clients have business issues, business problems, business challenges, and business opportunities for which they require outside help.

Your call does nothing to indicate that you have the business acumen, the experience, or the resourcefulness to help them overcome their problems or to take advantage of their opportunities.

## How to Remedy This Problem

The way to remedy this problem is to write better scripts, scripts that don't violate the above principles.

Better language will be customer-focused, it will differentiate you from your competitors, it will demonstrate that your intention is to create value, and it will confirm that you have the business acumen and the resourcefulness to really help them with their business.

## Conclusion

The first step in gaining appointments when cold calling is to capture your dream client's interest. In 9 out of 10 cases, offering to talk about yourself isn't interesting and it isn't compelling.

Effectiveness in cold calling and appointment setting is built on differentiating yourself and your offering and by proving you can and will help your dream clients produce better business results.

## Questions

1. What does your script suggest about your intentions for the first appointment with your dream client?
2. How does your script differentiate you in a crowded marketplace? Does it confirm that you are no different and that you have nothing new to say?
3. Do your scripts and your language choices suggest that you are a professional in your field and that you possess the business acumen to make a difference for your clients?
4. Do your scripts and your language choices confirm your ability to create value for your dream client, even on the very first call? Why would they believe that meeting with you would benefit them now and in the future?



# Six Principles for Cold Calling

## 1. You Are Going to Hear No. Don't Believe It Means Anything.

Your dream clients and prospects get hundreds of calls from salespeople. Your dream client has no way to know who is worth spending time with and who is not worth spending their time with. When faced with this dilemma, they make the easiest choice: they say no.

They don't just tell you no. They don't just give you an objection. They give almost everyone the same no and the same objection because it works. The objection prevents them from having to spend their time with salespeople who are wholly unprepared to create any value for them.

Those that are great at cold calling and telemarketing do not attach any meaning to the word no or to the objection that they receive.

They do not feel as if they have been rejected.

They don't believe that the word no or the dream client's objection is some insurmountable obstacle to making an appointment. They don't believe that it means that they have failed. They attach no meaning to it at all.

To succeed at cold calling you have to know that your first answer to a request is going to be no and that it doesn't mean anything about you, about their need for you or your service, or about your prospect of gaining an appointment.

It is simply part of the dance.

## **2. Your Dream Client Receives Lots of Calls. You Have to Differentiate Yourself.**

Your dream client cannot tell from a telemarketing cold call who is worth seeing and who isn't worth seeing.

In order to gain their attention, you have to differentiate yourself from your many competitors.

A lot of companies treat all of their providers and partners as commodities, which means one of us is as good as the next—even when this is not true!

During your call, you only have two tools that you can use to differentiate yourself from your competitors:

1. the language choices that you make, and
2. what you personally bring to the call.

If your language choices are the same as all of your competitors, you are not going to be perceived as being different. If the way you say what you say makes you sound like you are not passionate, like you are not excited, like you are not interesting, and like you do not have the ability to make a difference, you will not differentiate yourself.

Your competitors are trying to sound professional. You need to sound different. Being real, being conversational, and being authentic will help you differentiate yourself.

If you do not sound like you are passionate about meeting with them and helping them, how do you expect them to be passionate about meeting with you and giving you their time?

You still need to have the business acumen to talk about your dream client's challenges in a meaningful way, but authenticity and professionalism are not mutually exclusive.

Authenticity is enabled by confidence. Be yourself (and be a confident you).

### **3. You Have to Prove You Are a Value Creator. Not a Time Waster.**

Your dream client has allowed her time to be wasted by salespeople in the past. Your call is already suspect; your dream client believes that you will waste their time and that you are not a value creator.

You have one chance to make a first impression, and you have to say something that proves that you know that it is your job to help them achieve a better outcome than they are presently getting. You have to say something that indicates that you know that you own that better outcome.

If you say: “I’d like to stop by and introduce myself and my service,” you have said nothing that indicates that you intend to create value. If instead you say: “I’d like to sit down with you for fifteen minutes to see how we might be able to help reduce your overall cost of \_\_\_\_\_ and improve your \_\_\_\_\_ results,” you sound like a value creator.

#### **4. You Are Already Using a Script. Write a Better One.**

Even if you don’t use a written script, chances are, you are saying about the same thing on every call that you make.

Improving your script improves your results.

It is tremendously helpful to go through the act of writing down what you intend to say before you say it. It helps build the language into your nervous system; it makes the language part of you.

Writing down what you intend to say also prevents you from having to read it from a piece of paper. By writing your script, utilizing it in practice, discerning what works and what doesn’t, and then re-writing your script, you build greater confidence and competency.

You should also write down all of the common objections and concerns you hear from your dream clients so that you can have prepared, effective language choices.

#### **5. Your Goal Is an Appointment. Nothing Else.**

Your goal is not a conversation. Your goal is not a needs-analysis. Your goal is not a presentation. Your goal is simply an appointment, nothing else.

All questions that would lead to a conversation need to be responded to in a way that instead leads to an appointment.

You hear: “What makes you different?”

You say: “We have six fundamental things that make us different and that make a difference for our clients, including a couple of proprietary service offerings that only we have. I’ll make sure I am prepared to show you how we put these six ideas to work for our clients. What does next Thursday afternoon at 2:00 PM look like?”

If you answer the questions without leading the conversation towards committing to an appointment, you are arming your dream client with the information they need to say no. You are giving them enough to say that your answer isn’t enough for them to want to change right now.

You cannot sell without first understanding your client’s needs and their dissatisfaction. However, the cold call is not the place to conduct that needs analysis. The more questions you ask, and the deeper you get into a conversation, the less it becomes necessary for your dream client to meet with you.

In B2B sales, always be closing is problematic; especially when not enough time, trust, or value has been created to deserve the close. But when it comes to cold calling, always be closing is the rule. In order to create an opportunity, you have to first get in.

## **6. You Are Going to Have to Push if You Want an Appointment**

It will not be often that you reach the contact you need on your first call.

It will not be often that you get an appointment the first time you reach your decision-maker or decision-influencer. It will not be often that you get an appointment the first time you ask for one.

If you really want the appointment, you are going to have to push. You are going to have to call more frequently than feels comfortable to you. You are going to have to ask for the appointment more times than feels comfortable to you.

You are going to have to be persistent and resilient. Persistence means that you don't accept no for an answer and you keep trying. Resilient means that you bounce back from the no to try again, without allowing the answer no to discourage you in any way.

You are going to have to push. You are going to have to ask for the appointment more than once each time you connect with your decision-maker or decision-influencer. If you really want the appointment, you have to behave as if you really want the appointment.

### **Conclusion**

Lots of salespeople are challenged by having to make cold calls. But there are some principles that, if taken to heart and adopted into your practice, can make your cold calling a lot more effective.

1. What meaning do you attach to the word no? What could it mean instead?
2. How do you differentiate your call from the hundreds or more calls your dream client receives every year?
3. What do you say to ensure that the recipient of your call knows for certain that you are a value creator and not a time waster?
4. Could your cold calling be improved by taking the time to choose more effective language? Could it made more effective if you spent, say, two hours writing out what you really want to convey?
5. Are you trying to create the value of a needs analysis on the telephone instead of scheduling an appointment?
6. Are you willing to push in order to get the appointment that you need? Is a quarterly phone message really indicative of your strong desire to perform for your dream client?



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