Telephone

Prospecting Skills

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Key principles of telephone sales prospecting

Planning your prospecting

What prospects methods are you planning to use (list as many as you plan to use)

How many appointments, visits or online calls do you need a week/month?

Notes

Organised Persistence

Work though a target contact or prospect systemically and **repeatedly** on a 30, 60, or 90 cycle.

"Every day for the next ten weeks, make _____ (insert number) of connected calls to new suspects every day. "

At the end of ten/twelve weeks, call them all again.

The keys to organised persistence:

1. Define a suspect and prospect base of around 50-500 contacts and call each one on a 30 (A), 60 (B) or 90 (C) day cycle. These can be multiple contacts in the same organisation so long as they buy independently.
2. Decide the criteria for allocating as A, B, C based on a combination of size or potential and ease/ability of generating sales.
3. You need to speak or meet with each contact a minimum of 30 days for A, 60 for B and 90 for C.
4. Over a 10/12-week period, this calculates out as around a typical number connected calls, quality calls or meetings/webinars/conference calls per working day (on average). However, be ready to do Whatever It Takes – WIT!
5. If you take someone off the list, add a new name back on.
6. Keep good notes and record key information to use next time – in salesforce – this is very important.
7. Set a 'next action' and call back date after every call. Remember, the greatest success will most likely come after the third contact.
8. Every evening, list your calls for the next day you can and start with calling straight away.
9. Create two or three 'power hours' in your average day. The first one should be first thing in the morning or thereabouts. Do not do anything else, especially emails, during a Golden Hour

Background knowledge: Telephone Prospecting

Your company has a strong advantage and a compelling story, however YOU must make the first approach.

Therefore, here are a collection of vital principles that can make the difference between success and failure when gaining appointments by the telephone with target prospects in your area.

Any one of these on their own can make a difference to your results in converting cold calls into new clients. When combined together, they become a powerful sales approach.

Only sell the appointment.

When we are on the telephone talking to a potential prospect, it is very easy to become distracted and begin talking about our products, services, their costs and their features and benefits. However this is a great mistake. Selling actual goods and services over the telephone is a real skill and takes a very different approach than selling an appointment. As soon as we begin to get distracted, or the prospect begins to ask us about what Your company do, or details such as your rates or terms, we need to turn these into reasons to meet. Simply suggest that you can cover these fully when you get together and a meeting will allow us the time to do this. Instead we simply have to acknowledge them and emphasise our reasons for meeting.

Don't put things in the post or email.

The two reasons why people put things in the post to prospects, is one because it is easy, and two because it is low rejection. It is an easy way for prospects to get you off the phone. They know from experience that if they ask for us to put something in the post, then most salespeople because they are helpful, friendly and obliging will of course agree to this, the conversation then soon ends, the information is put in the post, it turns up in the prospect's in-tray, is usually glanced at and then put in the bin and the sales person then neglects to ever call them back again.

It is expensive for your company; it can increase the customers problems with gaining appointments by telephone and managing their mail and it moves us further away from gaining a possible appointment with that prospect. The only two reasons you ever put anything in the post is: one, to prove we are reliable and that we keep our word and two, to confirm our appointment or build agreement.

Consider for a moment if you stopped putting things in the mail, if you had no PDF’s, videos, brochures, leaflets, or letters to send out, would the number of appointments that you are currently getting increase or decrease?

Follow up every lead.

A few years ago, we had the luxury of not being too worried about whether we followed up every single prospect and every single sales opportunity. The chances are the door was continually swinging open with a new stream of potential business. Over the last few years this has changed just slightly! Today every sales opportunity, every prospect, every telephone number and contact is a vital one.

We need to manage every prospect as if they were our most important prospect. Take every lead as our most serious one. So if you have a bottom drawer full of old leads taken from an exhibition or half used mailing lists, or card index systems that you haven't touched for months, then make your number one priority to get those sorted and get following them up.

Stay in touch.

One of the simplest, and perhaps easiest things that you can do to increase your success rate in gaining new prospects (and developing business) by telephone, is to simply call every prospect, prospect and even contact every 3 to 4 months. By building an systematic 90 day cycle into your prospecting, you can over time build a substantial contact base and a regular stream of new business leads.

Consider for a moment how much easier it is both psychologically and also in terms of managing the conversation to speak to somebody you have spoken to before no matter how briefly. Not only do you have a reference to talk about when you speak to them, but also the level of resistance may be much lower. For instance consider how much easier it is to get past the receptionist when we know the company and we want to speak to the individual.

There is something in our tone of voice that lets the receptionist know that we know them, and we have the confidence and the right to speak to them. Remember that when we get a "no" on the telephone, it simply means "not now", "not today", "not this month". If you are targeting your market correctly the prospect will buy at some time from somebody. If you don't contact them then somebody else will.

Make enough calls every day or week.

The actual activity level that you choose will obviously depend on how many appointments you need and your type of business. However, one of the effective habits of a successful and professional sales person is that they schedule time, usually every day, for prospecting. Make sure you develop a habit and a routine for spending at least **one hour** <u>every day</u> in an intensive telephoning campaign. Call it your golden hour, and take one intensive hour of solid telephone calling.

In that one hour, telephoning should be all that you do, you may make as many as 25 to 30 phone calls. This will over time generate several appointments a day. Do not use “lack of time” as an excuse MAKE time.

Keep good records.

Information on prospects and what you have discussed with them does not need to be in depth. A few key words, a few notes to jog your memory is usually all that is required. It is also important to make a note of when you have called people and they have not been available, this will allow you to judge the time to call them back and whether or not it is appropriate.

Get a tracking system.

One of the things that increases call reluctance, or the fear and reluctance and resistance to making telephone cold calls is a lack or organisation. By not having clear lists of people to telephone, or by not having enough people to telephone, we actually allow ourselves to procrastinate and put off making those telephone calls.

By not having an accurate record card system that allows us to track call backs and monitor information , we can also give ourselves excuses as to why we shouldn't make calls. The importance of a tracking system is twofold, one is to make sure that we do follow up every lead, and two is that we give ourselves no excuses not to make the calls.

Be persistent.

Persistence works when nothing else does. When prospecting by telephone you will need to be persistent, professional, and patient. There are no quick fixes, there are no easy answers, there are simply more effective ways and less effective ways, and both take a good degree of persistence. However be reassured that persistence does work.

By simply making the right number of calls on a persistent basis, regardless of your current skill level you will be successful in making appointments. The statistics work for you as well as against you. Whilst if you phone 100 people, you may only find 50 of them in, and of those 50 you may only get to speak to 25 or 30, and of those 25 you may only get 2 or 3 appointments (and this is a bad example), you at least have got 2 or 3 more appointments than you would have got if you hadn't made the 100 calls. The 2 or 3 appointments might be in the first 10 calls that you make or the last 10 calls that you make, you will never know until you make them.

Setting objectives

It is said the starting point of achieving anything is knowing what it is that you want to achieve. Before you pick up the telephone or before you begin your telephoning prospecting hour, take time to define your objectives for each call.

One of the ways that we can also deal with failure and rejection, or sometimes how it is called when we fail to get an appointment on the phone, is to think of it slightly differently by setting ourselves realistic objectives. Consider for a moment these three types of objective.

Ideal objective

Obviously if you are telephoning to gain an appointment, your ideal objective is to get an appointment. Whilst this is our total focus for the telephone call, and should remain a clear goal at all times, we also know that not every call will achieve an ideal objective. This does not mean that we should easily settle for a second best, instead we should also recognise that there are other objectives that we can achieve which can allow us to feel that the call has been a success.

Secondary objective

A secondary objective is the next best thing that we could achieve from a telephone call. It is an objective that is perhaps more realistic, and allows us to have a sense of satisfaction and achievement on completion of the telephone call. For example, if we were on a telephone call and realised after one or two closing questions that we weren't going to be able to get an appointment with this prospect, our secondary objective would then be to find a time in the future when we could agree to call them back to perhaps check their needs at that time.

So if this is our objective and we agree this with the prospect on the telephone we can then end the call on a note of achievement. We then of course need to make sure that we have a tracking system that will allow us not to forget to do this, or otherwise the objective is worthless.

A fall-back objective

Even if we fail to get our appointment, and the prospect reassures us that there is no future need that we may want from them, then we can at least say that we have achieved a fall back objective of eliminating a prospect from our list at this time. This in itself can be a sense of achievement. By eliminating and sifting through our prospect base, we are getting closer to finding the nuggets of gold that exist.

Making relationships ahead of opportunities

How you sell is as or more important than what you sell.

However, your first and major challenge is to create and keep a relationship with key decision influencers in your target accounts.

So, how can you convince someone to give you thirty minutes of their time without a need or requirement to satisfy?

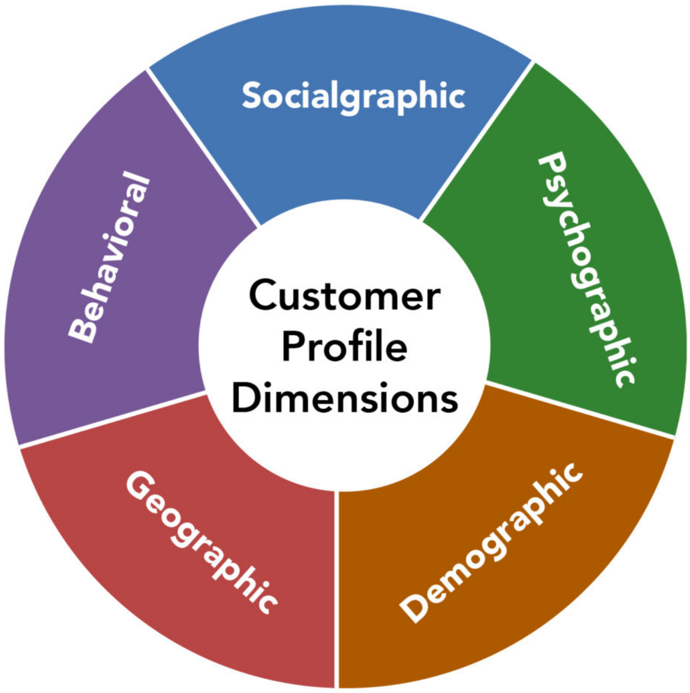
How to make your CRM work for you

Notes

Appointments by telephone

- Creating a call prompt sheet
    - Opening a call and taking control
    - Giving a reason to meet
    - Key questions to ask
- Voice tone, power words, phrasing

Target marketing



Task

1. List three target sectors or types of companies.
2. Consider demographics, location, and psychographics
3. Now decide the job roles to approach
4. What is your market proposition and target products?

Connecting by telephone – getting started

Complete the following worksheet. It will be useful to use as content for a telephone phone call.

Spend at least one hour a day, every day, prospecting for new business. Warm-up the call with a letter or email and then follow through.

Remember, the three main objectives of any first contact is

1. Make a good impression and leave to door open
2. Secure an appointment or a second phone call
3. Gain more information or sow a seed for future opportunity

Five Telephone tactics

People like to deal with people who have a certain 'attitude', or charisma about them.

- Friendly, Helpful and Cheerful
- Knowledgeable, Confident, In control and Professional

Speech rate

By speaking slower, we make it easier for people to understand us. We also give our words more impact and allow ourselves slightly more time to think. The best way to change your voice is to slow it down by about 20%. Use a lower pitch at the same time for extra impact.

Pitch

The emotional state of a person has the most effect on the pitch of the voice. If we are in a state of fear the muscles around our voice box tighten, so try to relax.

Volume

The telephone sometimes reduces the volume of our voice, so it is very useful to slightly increase the speaking volume when we talk. This aids comprehension and ensures that our words are heard correctly.

Pronunciation

How we pronounce a word becomes much more important over the telephone. This is partly because of the lack of visual communication and also because people will read into our voice tones the meaning of the word.

Emphasis

We will normally use our eyes, facial expression, and body gestures in order to emphasize our words and meaning. Because the telephone doesn't allow us this visual communication, the emphasis comes through a combination of the above three factors and also our emphasis on certain words and phrases. Either by repeating them, or by leaving significant pauses, we can add greater emphasis to what we say.

Connecting by telephone – preparation worksheet

Key point	**Notes**
Customer type	
Job title to contact	
What problems does this individual face in their job that you can help with	1. 2. 3.
What makes you unique, different or what specialisms do you have over and above your competitors	1. 2. 3.
What is new, interesting, or different about you or what you offer	1. 2. 3.
Three reasons this person will give you time for a meeting or a second phone call	1. 2. 3.
One thing, a hook, that a meeting will achieve that cannot be done by email or website.	

Information you can send them to keep the door open after the call	1. 2. 3.
Questions you can ask whilst on the call	1. 2. 3.

Now make a list of things to research and prepare about each prospect or person you call.

How to change your voice to improve your success

We must all have two voices – normal and customer.

There are six things that we can about our voice:

1. Volume	For most people, speak slightly louder
2. Speed and rate of talking	Speak much slower, leaving pauses every 7-10 words
3. Pitch – how monotone?	More variation, slight highs and lows
4. Key word emphasis – see below	Vocally 'underline' key words that create meaning and pause before or after a key word or phrase
5. Tone – happy, bored, sad, etc	Sound like you are awake, useful and knowledge
6. Match the customer	Change the first three to match the customer.

Task

Read out this sentence out loud, emphasising the words underlined. Decide which is best, first with no emphasis:

"The best thing is to leave it with me, and I will get back to you before 5pm today."

"The best thing… is to leave it with me and I will get back to you before 5pm today."

"The best thing… is to leave it with me… and I will get back to you before 5pm today."

"The best thing… is to leave it with me… and I will …get back to you before 5pm today."

"The best thing …is to leave it with me… and I will get back to you …before 5pm today."

Resources

Time Blocking is Transformational for Salespeople

https://youtu.be/P1msbYalQFY

https://youtu.be/S8yFUyD_JXU

Benjamin Live Prospecting Call

Making telephone – planning guide

You will need to make regular calls on a weekly or daily to create the new appointments or leads you need.

Each call needs to be prepared and planned, using proven statements and techniques.

Task

First read the notes in this handout – ten tips

Next, complete the following tasks ready for the role-play - telephone prospecting call.

Phone call – phase 1

1. How will you introduce yourself?

2. What is the reason you are calling?

Other points

3. Initial qualifying questions?

4. Describe your voice tone and speech rate?

5. Write down a short description of your company or product / services

“But first, can I ask you a few quick questions?”

Phase two: questions

Now make a list of a few targeted questions to uncover possible reasons to meet or qualify and build interest.

Make sure you are asking probing or confirming questions for each one before moving to the next question.

“Tell me, example, describe...”

It is important it is a conversation not simply a prospecting phone call for sales pitch.

Be ready for questions they might ask you… (make a note of these here)

Tip: Try and turn them into a reason to meet

Phase three: Presenting information

Features, benefits, other customers you have worked with, problems you solve, what you can do for them, etc.

Questions to be ready for – what will they ask you?

Others you might get, including questions

1

2

3

Phase four: Asking for the appointment or next step

Make notes here on the summarising the benefits of the appointment and closing for a meeting / next stage.

Create a reason to meet summary, like the text below.

"From your answers - I feel a meeting could be of interest and benefit to you. I would very much welcome the opportunity to meet with you to share some ideas and find out more about your business priorities

Plus. I can show you how we are helping companies similar to improve their value for money"

Other points

Phase five: Dealing with put-offs

Be ready for “yes, but’s…”

Put offs	What would you say
Too busy for meeting	
Not a priority now – too busy with other projects	
You need to talk to procurement / someone else	
Can you send me something	
We already do this	
I don’t think we did this	.

Ideas for telephone effectiveness

Many people would rather spend an entire day in a dentist's chair than go spend time phone calling. These phone calling tips won't eliminate your fear, but they will help you make calling a more successful experience.

1. Focus on the goal when phone calling

Beginners tend to think that phone calling is about making the sale. It's not. Specifically, the purpose of a call is to set an appointment to progress the sale.

2. Research your markets and prospects

You need to target your calls to the right audience. Use market research to focus on your target market. Then find out as much as you possibly can about the company or individual you are going to call in advance. This gives you the huge advantage of being able to talk about their business and their needs when you call them.

3. Prepare an opening statement for your call

This lets you organize your thoughts before calling and helps you avoid common mistakes in the opening of the call that would give the person you are calling the chance to terminate the conversation. For instance, you should never ask, "Is this a good time to talk?" or "How are you today?" Do not read your opening statement into the phone but use it as a framework to get the call and conversation off to a good start.

4. What should be in the opening statement of your call?

This organizational scheme for phone calling works well: Include a greeting and introduction, a reference point (something about the prospect), the benefits of your product or service and a transition to a question or dialogue.

5. Prepare a phone call outline for the rest of your call

Lay out the benefits of your product or service and the reasons your prospect should buy. Write out possible objections and your answer to them. Without a phone calling outline, it's too easy to leave something out or meander. Once again, it's not that you'll be reading your outline word for word when you call, but that you've prepared the framework of the call-in advance.

6. Ask for an appointment at a specific time when phone calling

Say "Would Wednesday at 11.30 a.m. be a good time to meet?" instead of saying "Can I meet with you to discuss this next week?"

7. Remember that gatekeepers are your allies not your foes

Be pleasant to whoever picks up the phone or is guarding the inner sanctum when phone calling. Develop strategies to get the gatekeeper on your side. Sometimes asking, "I wonder if you could help me?" will help you get the information you need, such as the name of the right person to talk to or when the best time to contact the prospect is. Learning the names of gatekeepers and being friendly when calling helps too.

8.Smooth the way for your cold call by sending a promotional item, an email or letter

This helps break the ice and gives you a reason to call. Pat Cavanaugh, sales guru of Inc.com says, "It's amazing. A crazy little item we've sent out has helped us get new accounts. When we call, they say, oh yeah......you were the one that sent me that...."

9. Do our phone calling early in the morning if possible

That's the best time to reach the decision maker directly, and for most people, the time that they're most energized.

10. Be persistent when phone calling

"Eighty percent of new sales are made after the fifth contact, yet the majority of salespeople give up after the second call" And above all, practice, practice, practice. While phone calling may never be much fun for you, you can get better at it, and the more you practice, the more effective a sales tactic it will be. The people who want to do business with you are out there – but you must let them know about you first.

Notes

Telephone calling – some guidance tips

Failures will always out-number successes but don’t take this personally.

1. Always show a deep interest in your customers.
2. Treat each call as new and individual.
3. Prepare objectives but don’t expect too much from your first call.
4. Go at the pace of the customer.
5. When you hear something positive – ask for some form of commitment.
6. Close on small steps – in selling if you don’t ask you won’t get!!
7. Let the customer guide the topic of conversation.
8. Prepare the call; gather all the information you have about the customer before you ring.
9. Work out your opening statement. It will do more than get you started.
10. Do not ask for commitment in your opening statement. Too much too soon.

The reason I am calling is …(select)

- to make an initial contact and find out more about your approach to
- because we have not spoken before
- to follow up my email from yesterday
- I liked your online post
- I was given your name by…
- To follow up our meeting at the networking event last week
- I noticed your recent post/press release
- I have an idea that I think you might find of interest
- I love cold calling
- I have recently been working with a business very similar to yours

Summary of some more key points

1. Only sell the appointment
2. Remember “no’s” are “not now”
3. Make a “big fat claim” to justify the customer giving you their time.
4. You might ask if they can spare a couple of minutes for you. If they cannot, arrange to ring back. Make an “appointment” to ring back. It’s not a cold call then, is it?

Checklists

Personal organisation

1. Utilise the essential organisation tools diary/personal organiser, prospect and prospect 'records', maps, territory plan and all appropriate sales aids.
2. Plan your sales territory based on achieving optimum use of selling time, maximum coverage, and greatest penetration of potential.
3. Plan your day by starting at the same or earlier time every day, avoiding unnecessary disruptions and by a disciplined operation of your journey plan.
4. Make a daily list and prioritise - must be done should be done or could be done.
5. Schedule the 'musts' for the time when you know you are mentally at your most capable (usually a.m.).
6. Allocate time for each priority and include 'time to think' and plan.
7. Research and qualify your prospects.
8. Make appointments and keep all records and reports up to date.
9. Organise and prepare yourself fully before every call, never ever resorting to playing it “off the cuff”.
10. Keep up to date with all changes and developments relative to your industry, competitors and your prospects.

Prospecting - Finding new prospects or opportunities

1. First ensure that your *attitude* to prospecting is right. Be positive - it will produce additional business!
2. Utilise existing prospect records for potential “leads”.
3. Generate *referrals* from as many sources as appropriate.
4. Study your market-place and 'list' where you will find potential *new* prospects for your product or service.
5. Use prospecting material that will provide the right information.
6. Prospect as an 'additional' activity during a day of firm appointments. And as a 'main' activity when firm appointments are scarce.

Lead generation

1. Know your universe of prospects in your target area.
2. Keep up to date lists, records and reports.
3. Always categorise into A/B/C prospects to target - it is best to have a balance of each.

Telephone skills

1. Find and 'qualify' the prospect; discover, through research, as much as possible prior to phoning. At the very least telephone to make sure you will be calling the right person. Obtain a “best person to speak to initially”.
2. Make the appointment call confidently, asking to speak with John Smith (not Mr Smith), responding similarly if asked. Follow the structure.
3. Introduce yourself with courtesy and politeness. Mention and use the company name.
4. Always a give valid reason why you are calling and state the reason for your call early.
5. Use the words “new” “interesting” and/or “different” to describe Your company or in your reason to meet.
6. Prompt for diary availability in 2 - 3 weeks time.
7. Ask only for 20 minutes to “introduce” yourself and discuss if there might be opportunities to work together.
8. Ask for the appointment confidently suggesting an alternative time or date.
9. Record all the details, noting particularly any special 'new' points revealed during the call.
10. Mention not looking to replace - simply share ideas, discuss their approach and keep up to date.

Background knowledge: Getting past gatekeepers

The term “gatekeeper” is a polite and respectful definition of anybody whose job is to direct or screen calls around an organisation. These might be receptionists, secretaries, administration assistants, or personal assistants.

Gatekeepers have a very important and essential job to do in any organisation, your role as a salesperson is to help them achieve that job and also to achieve yours. Here are some keys to consider when trying to get past secretaries and receptionists.

Indirect questioning

By using a slightly more amenable form of questioning, being slightly more indirect, we can actually increase our approachability and chances of getting through to our decision maker. For example, instead of asking "Could I speak to Mr Johnson?" we might try asking "Could you tell me if Mr Johnson is in today?", or "Is Mr Johnson the right person to talk to regarding exhibitions?". The receptionist or secretary will hear your question and very often put you through anyway.

Treating with respect

It is vital that you treat every receptionist, secretary, assistant or otherwise that you meet with the utmost respect, friendliness, helpfulness and sense of importance. There is absolutely nothing to be gained by being rude, assertive or in any way speaking down to gatekeepers. Their whole job is geared around helping people. You need to get them on your side and helping you.

One of the simplest ways, and also perhaps it sounds too obvious to be true, is to simply ask "I wonder if you can help me?". This wonderful expression, when asked sincerely and with a friendly tone of voice, is almost irresistible to most receptionist, secretaries or personal assistants. They are after all in the business of helping their managers to do their job.

We need to relate what we are doing to helping their manager do their job better. Get them on your side by understanding their role and helping them to help you. Be clear with who you are and why you are calling, and do not under any circumstances try any clever techniques to disguise why you are calling or who you are calling from. In the end this will be self-defeating.

Using the backdoor

If you are trying to contact senior managers, or people higher up an organisation, you will find them increasingly harder to get to the further up you go. This is not just simply because they have better or more rigid gatekeepers, it is also perhaps because they are generally less able to talk to you or less willing to talk to you. Sometimes it can be much more useful to take time to use the backdoor approach.

This normally means making contacts lower down the organisation, perhaps on a more operational basis gaining a foothold, gaining information and rapport and then using these contacts to take you steadily up the organisation and through to other people. For example it is much easier to talk to a administration manager, than it is a Managing Director.

Persistent without being a pest.

When phoning up companies to try and gain an appointment, because we know the chances are very high that we won't be able to actually speak to the person that we are telephoning, there are a few simples rules that we need to adopt in terms of leaving messages and being on hold. These are:

1. Only go on hold once, and then for only 30 seconds. To go on hold any longer will actually be self defeating. We could actually be getting on with another call and also our attitude and motivation is diminishing by the second. So simply agree to go on hold for a short while, 20 to 30 seconds and then if the secretary comes back to you ask to call back and find out what time might be a good time to phone back.
2. Never ask people to call you back. Not only will only one in a hundred actually bother to do so, but when they do you may well be on the phone, or probably can't remember why you called them in the first place.
3. Do not leave a message. Unless it is a prospect that you have spoken to before that knows you, do not leave any message as to who you are, the fact that you have called, or why you are calling. This can alert the person that you are trying to speak to them and they may then leave specific instructions on how you should be dealt with.
4. **Do not call the same company more than three times in a day.** More than this is definitely being a pest. You may call in the morning and find the person in a meeting, you ask what time they will be available and discover they would be free in the afternoon. You then call back in the afternoon and find them to be engaged on the phone. You then have one more chance later on that day to call them back. Unless they are particularly keen to talk to you, always follow this rule and you will never be accused of being pushy or pestering.

Using LinkedIn

A few ways to pass the time on LinkedIn

1. Search for contacts by job title, and other filters
2. Search for a company, follow, research contacts, invite to connect
3. Invite a connection, at random or for a reason
4. Comment, share on a post
5. Write a post, include a link
6. Send a Calendly invite, extract an email or phone number
7. Save a people search
8. Job search and save (to locate growing prospect companies)
9. Join a group
10. Find an event, host an event

LinkedIn profile optimisation

Checklist

1. Post a good picture - headshot
2. Headline (job title) – use as sales message opportunity
3. Background (top of the page)
4. About (summary of current role)
5. Contact information – including email and mobile
6. Add or update all previous work experience, education, and employment
7. Add five or more skills to your profile

Task

1. Review the list of LinkedIn functions and choose three that are new, and you will try.
2. Conduct a search to create a possible company
3. Choose one target company and research contacts to find a good person to approach.
4. Send an InMail or invite to connect.

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Networking Online: LinkedIn for Sales Prospecting

Based on an article by Anna Bratton, Salesforce Account Manager in the UK. These will typically have a few decision makers who will affect a sale.

Tip 1: Never miss a chance to connect

Contacts are the currency of LinkedIn. If your contacts are predominantly family, friends and old school pals, you've got some work to do. Connections breed connections. Your first level contacts open up a route to a wide range of second and third level connections. This is how you scale your network. Strike while the iron's hot – whenever you meet anyone (online or off) always follow up quickly with a connection request while you are still fresh in their mind.

Tip 2: Discover a better way to map your prospects

One of the main things I use LinkedIn for is mapping out the decision makers within my target prospects. I deal with some very large multinational companies, so there can be numerous people involved in making and influencing a purchase. But even for smaller B2B sales, you'll often need to influence a number of individuals. Plus, with a little detective work, you can quickly build up a picture of who you should be talking to, what they're like (check out their recommendations) and what they've done before.

You can also build up a map of who reports to who and gain a clearer picture of the people you'll need to influence to make the sale. (For a start, take a look at the "Viewers of this profile also viewed..." box on their profile.)

Tip 3: Never make a cold call again

With LinkedIn, you can almost always learn enough about someone to make your call, or sales pitch (if you're further into the process), more relevant and useful to them. And it's not simply a case of digital stalking. Personally, I'm always open with the people I call about having looked at their LinkedIn profiles. I find it helps break the ice. Plus, it shows I've gone to more trouble than 90% of the other salespeople who call them every day.

I pay particular attention to changes in profile, status updates, connections we have in common and anything they've posted to a group (which can be reason enough to call them in the first place). Also, with a paid account, you can see expanded profiles of everyone on LinkedIn (not just those of your immediate contacts). This provides even more useful insights you can use to make a real-life connection.

Tip 4: Get past the gatekeeper with InMail

Ask anyone in sales – senior decision makers are a tough group to get through to. It's not surprising when you think of it: they get besieged with calls and emails every single day. So, to protect their time they screen calls, ignore most of their mail and have gatekeepers to prevent unwanted sales approaches from getting through.

While you might try everything you can think of to get through to senior execs using traditional channels, sometimes they are simply too well guarded. That's where InMail comes in.

InMail is LinkedIn's internal email system and allows you to send an email to any LinkedIn user without requiring an introduction. Basically, it ensures your email gets through to their inbox. LinkedIn claims that an InMail is 30 times more likely to get a response than a cold call (which, if anything, sounds conservative from my experience).

Tip 5: Unlock a smarter way to search

LinkedIn has a fabulous search facility. With their advanced search you can find people by title, company, location or keyword. Grab a paid account and you can add company size and seniority level too. By intelligently mixing the different filters you can get deep and identify key individuals quickly and easily.

You can also save your search criteria and get a weekly report listing anyone new who matches the customers you're looking for. So, for example, I could save a search for IT Security Managers in the pharmaceutical industry within 50 miles. Then, each week, I'll get an email with anyone new who matches my search (and who deserves a closer look). This is a powerful feature that you can use every day.

Tip 6: Learn what's happening in your prospect companies – follow them

As any salesperson will know, change creates opportunity. People join, people leave, companies make important announcements – any change can present a good reason to get in touch and offer to help.

LinkedIn makes discovering these changes easy. You can follow any company that has a LinkedIn page. That way you'll see anything that changes directly in your updates. It's an easy way to stay up to date and spot new opportunities.

Tip 7: Use groups for more than simply keeping up to date

Like most people on LinkedIn, I use groups to learn more about the industries I focus on, but they can also be a great source of new sales prospects. Member questions are great for telling you about frustrations and unmet needs. They can also give you the perfect reason for contacting a prospect.

Tip 8: Make your profile work harder for you

While a lot of what I've said so far concerns outbound activity where you are going out to discover information and make contact, it's important not to ignore inbound too. If they're interested, your prospects will invariably look at your profile. So, it makes sense to ensure it is 100% complete and delivers a professional impression of both you and your company.

Finally, always add a photo. It makes you more tangibly real and creates a good impression. Make sure it's a good quality shot (nothing wacky or from a recent party) and remember to smile!

Tip 9: The 'look and look back' trick

It always amazes me how few people know that you can see who's looked at your profile. Unless visitors have set their profiles to anonymous, you can click on the "Who's viewed your profile?" link and see a list of them. The free account limits how many you can see while paid accounts give you the whole list. Of course, once you know this, it can become quite a compulsive activity. This can work for you in two ways:

1. The fact that someone looked at your profile is a good excuse to reach out with a connection request
2. If you look at other people's profiles, a certain proportion will always look back (see 1 above)

Even when you get visitors described as "Procurement Professional from the Pharmaceutical Industry" you can still click on them. LinkedIn will then give you a list which will include the actual visitor. It then takes just minutes to quickly visit each profile to show you've looked back.

Advanced online marketing tools

- Video email messaging – how it works
- Using your sales materials and tools effectively
- Researching and following companies on LinkedIn

Video messaging

Video for LinkedIn or email

A few useful links and websites

1. **Missinglettr – auto posting**
2. **Medium – content curation**
3. **Calendly.com**
4. **Youtube – video channel**
5. **Dux-soup – and LinkedIn auto messaging**
6. **Lusha – online prospecting**
7. **Expandi – auto messaging on LinkedIn**
8. **Getprospect.io / hunter – data extraction**
9. **Vidyard and personalised video emails – marketing tool**
10. **Hubspot CRM / email marketing**
11. **Google alerts – content**

https://share.vidyard.com/watch/x9ZJ9EXSz1WPT7fpUEAYu5

Email writing with AIDA

AIDA as a framework describes the engagement stages a prospect goes through when he/she comes across an advertisement.

Attention	This is the subject or headline or flashy image that makes you pause. The pattern interrupts in the middle of your page-flipping that makes you look closer. In the case of email, the subject line plays this role.
Interest	The next stage of engagement is to transition this attention into interest. Often this is the trickiest part of the ad or email copy. Later in this post, we outline a few tactics to help you make this crucial shift and convert the initial attention into interest.
Desire	This is the promised land where you tilt the engagement level from Interest to Desire in what you offer. Useful constructs that you can deploy here are social proof, scarcity, showing how a prospect's life will change by using your product, etc.
Action	While not a big component of B2C print ads, when it comes to direct response/email marketing, this is an important stage in your prospect engagement and an effective CTA is the finisher that gets the ball rolling.

Attention:

The subject line and a snippet are all they see before deciding whether to open.

1. **Write multiple subject lines.** Try subject lines for every email and then choose the best.
2. **Keep it under 50 characters**. Imposing a 50-character limit forces you to make it crisp.
3. **Know your audience.** Your best bet for creating good email subject lines will be understanding your audience intimately and catering to their likes.
4. **Choose your tone**. Most good email subject lines rely on a conversational and casual tone to attract the audience. Write as you would speak
5. **Be Honest.** Users want to see that you are a trusted source. Your email body needs to deliver on any promises you make in your subject line.
6. **Test, test, test.** The best way to find what works for your audience is to **A/B test** your email subject lines.

Interest:

The first 2-3 sentences of your email play a big role in making this transition.

1. **Make it all about the prospect.** Rather than starting the email with "I am the sales manager at xx…", put the spotlight on the prospect. *E.g.: I noticed that you are using Mailchimp...*
2. **Ask them a question (while keeping it still about them)** E.g.: Are you looking for ways to scale your customer support?
3. **Tell them what made you write to them.** I came across your company when I was looking into XX
4. **Start with their pain point.** E.g.: As a fast-growing company, it must be challenging to find the right tools.
5. **Start with fear.** E.g.: Have you thought about what would be the impact on your business if you forgot to renew your domain?
6. **Lead with a compliment.** E.g.: Congratulations on the recent media coverage on {{company}} or I enjoyed reading your post on LinkedIn…

Once you have opened, a quick FAB **(Feature Advantage Benefit)** statement is a good way to introduce your product or offering.

- Eg1: We offer lead generation services that guarantee a steady flow of leads every month to your business. So, you can focus on closing more sales.
- Eg2: Trello is a project management software that your team will love to use. So, you can get more work done and have fun while you are at it.

Desire:

Now it's time to move things up a notch by creating desire. The fundamental construct behind this stage of engagement is that people buy what they want and not what they need. To put it in context, people need a car. But what they want is a Porsche.

When creating desire, you are trying to move beyond basic needs and make them "want" your product.

Various ways you can use to your advantage are:

1. 1. The Bandwagon effect.	2. Use the #1 Marketing automation software or Best-selling product
3. 2. Scarcity effect	4. Only 15 slots left this month
5. 3. Social Proof	6. Join companies like Uber and Airbnb, who use us to grow their social media presence
7. 4. Paint a picture of life after purchase	8. Never lose another customer again
9. 5. How it makes them feel	10. Be an influencer not a follower
11. 6. Exclusivity	12. Be among the first to use this cutting-edge technology

Action:

This is the final step in your cold email copy. Now that you have gained prospect's attention, retained their interest, and stirred up their desire for your product, it is time to get them to perform a specific action that you want them to do.

- Simple and easy call to action
- Make it as low friction as possible
- Be specific and say exactly what you want them to do
- Don't add multiple options. Having one single call to action works better

Eg1: Can we schedule a call later this week to discuss how we can help improve conversions?

Eg2: Would you mind letting me know if this is a focus area/key priority for your company?

How to write effective subject lines

1: KISS – keep it short and simple

Simple subject lines need to be **direct, succinct, and straightforward**. People will appreciate a little simplicity in their inbox from time to time. Here are some examples:

- Sending You an Offer
- An Idea for You
- Mission Achieved
- Goaaaaal!!

Tip: Write the subject line last

As a practice, it is recommended that you write your subject line after composing the email body and not the other way round. That way, you can read through your email and try to sum it down to a few crisp words.

2: Ask a question

Not only do **questions inspire the desire to answer**, but they can also be a way to wiggle yourself into your prospect's shoes. For example, "Need some extra admin help?" will make the average overworked person think, "Yes!" and that feeling of "You know me, and you get me". This can translate to an opened email.

- Too many leads to follow up?
- Need more sales leads?
- Losing sleep over legal compliance?
- Taking too long to hire rockstar engineers?

3: Make it personal

A personalized email subject line would tell your prospect that this is not a template.

You can use their name or company name. Or you can personalize around geography by talking about events, ideas, conferences etc., that are taking place in the prospect's local area. Or things you know about them, recent news posts, etc.

- Janice Morgan, your next trip is on us
- A Stock Portfolio for Justin Carver
- Bernie Madoff, Happy with your Stockbroker?
- Coming to Dreamforce? Drop by our stall

4: Make them smile or laugh

A humorous subject line can really stand out among the mundane and dull emails surrounding it. But **humour is very subjective, it thrives on exclusivity**, which isn't always great if you're trying to appeal to the masses. However, if you know your audience well and your emails are targeted, a well-placed humour can work.

- There are no deals in this email (Groupon)
- Impress Your Cranky CEO
- We Like Being Used (The Muse)
- Papa's in the House (a Papa John's email promoting an offer)

5: Make them curious

Using a curious subject line can get people's attention without giving too much away information.

- I might just an old fool having a rant, but…
- Here is a way to crush your top competitor
- Hidden Truths: 17 Ways to Get More Leads
- Have you seen this, unbelievable?
- Your customers are waiting

6: Sense of urgency - #FOMO

Most of us have a deep, inherent terror of being left behind or missing out. Many people respond better to the threat of losing than to the promise of gaining.

Time-sensitive offers, releases, pre-releases, launches, etc., can be a very effective means of getting your readers to respond and act.

- Only 3 weeks left to crush this quarter's targets
- 5 Slots Left in this Webinar
- Last chance to grab this offer

7: Use numbers or lists

Using numbers into your subject line attracts attention, as our brains are naturally drawn to digits. This tends to be why top 10 lists are so successful. Lists are easier for our brains to process and make us hungry to find out more.

- 5 Steps to turn around your SEO
- 3 Ways we can help you
- 4 Reasons Why You Need to Use a Sales Emailer
- 3 Ways to improve your page loading speed

Summary

There isn't a one-size-fits-all answer to crafting the best email subject line. The best thing is to put yourself in the shoes of your reader. Giving value is the simple way to achieve the highest open and click-through rates.

As easy as ABC

ABC model

Our aim is to be understood and gain some sort of action, result or feedback. However, many people do not think like that. Their aim is to sound important, to impress their readers.

Business writing is based on clear and concise vocabulary. We cannot skip on accuracy – be it grammar, spellings, punctuation, or facts. We should always be brief and clear.

The **A B C** of business writing.

A good writer will always be specific and precise. They avoid long words in rambling sentences where the message is lost.

There is no special language for business writing. You should write as you speak, as if you were delivering the message to a person sitting at the other side of your desk. Avoid business clichés. These are often used because we can't think of a suitable alternative.

Business writing is best when it is Accurate, Brief and Clear (from vagueness and cliché).

Accurate

Lack of accuracy will give the impression that the writer is slapdash or unsure of the facts or ignorant. So:

- Facts should be correct, complete, and relevant.
- The reader should end up with the same picture in their mind as we have in ours
- Be specific about dates, times etc.
- Avoid ambiguous phrases.
- Watch out for words which get confused through similar spellings – homophones.

Brief

Keep it short because this saves the reader's time and makes understanding easier.

- 4% of readers will understand a 27-word sentence at first reading.
- 75% of readers will understand a 17-word sentence at first reading.
- 95% of readers will understand an 8-word sentence at first reading.

If we aim to keep most sentences below 15 words their impact will be much greater. If a sentence is to have a strong impact, it should be less than 10 words long. This means using:

- Shorter words when they convey the same meaning as longer words.
- Avoiding words we would not normally use.
- Shorter phrases to simplify the structure of sentences.

Clear

Clear writing results in quick, efficient reading without having to stop, check and re-read the communication. To make yourself clear:

- Start by making the subject and purpose of the communication clear with a proper introduction.
- Focus on the purpose of the communication and keep to the point.
- Avoid vague phrases and be precise wherever possible.
- Use headings and consistent numbering.
- Use jargon or technical language only when you are sure it will be understood.
- Imagine explaining the facts by speaking to the reader.
- Use the active, not the passive voice.
- State things in the positive, not negative.

e.g. Passive: The contents of the flat were examined

Active: The police examined the contents of the flat

Passive: It was decided at the meeting that ...

Active: The meeting decided

Email marketing activity

Task

Write an email to a prospect or possible new contact.

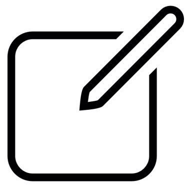
The goal is to **get a first meeting** and warm-up a phone call that you will make to them in the few days.

Remember, only ‘sell’ to the next stage; promote the benefits of a meeting as much (or more than) as the benefits of what you offer.

Key points

It might be easier to:

- Target on one company or industry sector.
- Write to a company or person you know already.
- Follow the AIDA model to create one or more emails you use immediately.
- Write as you would talk.
- Use short words, short sentences, and short paragraphs.



Be ready to present back at the end of this exercise.

Action plan and learning summary

Most important learning points from today.

1.

2.

3,

Action plan to increase your sales prospecting skills and activity

Action	How, who, when, what