



The Wit2S Pocket Guide to Prospecting

Surveys repeatedly demonstrate that the most successful salespeople are those who combine reactive selling (responding to incoming leads) with proactive selling (conducting their own prospecting). Prospecting helps us speak to more people and keeps new leads being generated. A constant flow of new opportunities is the only way to make more sales and be consistently successful.

Whilst it sounds obvious that we should prospect continuously, many salespeople fall into the trap we can call 'the rollercoaster effect'.

The Rollercoaster Effect

Have you ever known or are you one of those salespeople that commits themselves totally to the current ongoing project? If so you will know the rollercoaster effect first-hand. Whilst committing yourself totally is a great thing regarding that particular project, it is common to find that when you do this you don't have time, or rather you don't make time to look around for what is coming next. You can then find that once you have completed the project, won the order, etc... you have nothing or little left in the pipeline, meaning your results come in a series of peaks and troughs, hence 'the rollercoaster effect'. Each time this happens you have to start from square-one and develop a group of prospects again. I have done this myself and this is hard work (you probably already know this!).

Few of us can rely solely on leads coming to us. In very few industries are there a crowd of prospects banging on our door, wanting to buy our products/services. Most of us have to go and work hard, find the prospects, interest them in our products and services and then sell to them. This isn't only time consuming for many of us but it is also daunting as we know a high percentage of our approaches will be rejected. We have to accept that is the case though (it always is), just do it and we should discipline ourselves so we can avoid having to start at 'square-one' each time.

Under Pressure

The issue with starting from 'square-one' is that it induces pressure. There is pressure on you to perform, pressure on you to gain interest, pressure on you to generate something to fill your sales pipeline to prove that you are working hard (as well as you having the opportunity to make more sales and make more money). An important key to prospecting therefore is to make it easy. When you make it easy you won't mind doing it, you'll do it more often and so generate a stream of leads which relieves the pressure.

You can also avoid the pressure of having to be successful with everybody you speak to which is a natural result from low levels of prospecting. To do this you need to look at your records and work out how many people you usually need to speak to in order to gain interest. Then you need to understand how many interested prospects you need to speak to in order to make a presentation/quote and how many presentations/quotes you have to make to get a sale. To do this you need to refer to your records which will reveal your averages so you can

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determine how much prospecting you need to do.

When you decide you are going to do your prospecting you need to talk to/contact a number of prospects per day / week / month, etc... You need to do it and more importantly, you need to do it on a regular basis. Once you make it a habit, once you do it regularly you take the pressure off it and you will make it a more comfortable activity, something you will feel better about doing. Only by making this a regular activity will you increase your volume of prospecting and your sales; selling is absolutely a numbers game.

How to Prospect Like a Winner

You need to be prepared that you will get more "No"s than "Yes"s. Most salespeople know this and it is why prospecting is daunting – salespeople don't like getting „No"s. This will happen though ... and the great news is that being rejected isn't unique to you, it happens to the most successful salespeople; in fact they will get the highest numbers of rejections! Like them though don't worry about the „No"s you will get, just do it! As the most successful salespeople know, you will find that when you prospect regularly you'll find "Yes"s in amongst the "No"s and from the "No"s there are things to learn and improvements to be made; you can learn from your experiences.

When you get a "No", you need to find out why. Understanding who will say „No" to you and why they have said it will help you better qualify leads/prospects earlier and will help you spend more of your time speaking to the right type of prospect; those with a higher probability of saying „Yes". And the more of the right type of prospects you speak to in a day, the more „Yes"s you will get, the more sales you will get and your averages will improve to confirm that.

You also need to make prospecting fun, make it interesting so you want to do the numbers and by doing this it will reward you accordingly. I entitled the prospecting module of our Wit2S sales development program **"Prospecting - a Necessary Evil?"** because I know that is how most salespeople will see it. It isn't evil but it is necessary. When you do it well, you will make more sales and make more money ... you will be more successful. What can be evil about that?

How Can Prospecting Be Fun?

To make prospecting enjoyable you can play a game where your objective is to speak with /contact the highest number of people in a day, with an absolute set minimum having to be achieved each session. You can make it a game about the number of "No"s you get (as I already said we will all get more "No"s than "Yes"s so you can target the „No"s instead!). With your targets set you can reward yourself once you have reached that number. Where your target is multiples of 'your average' (the amount of „No"s it takes to get a „Yes"), as you work through and collect your „No"s then all things being equal you'll also get your share of „Yes"s too.

Whether your reward is a short rest, a walk in the park, a drink or lunch is up to you individually, it's your game. *(The idea of lunch is a good one for me as I am usually hungry!*

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If I have started early then by lunchtime I want to eat! If I have set my goal that I can't have lunch until I have made my target of prospecting calls that target makes me focus on getting the calls done so I can finally eat. Also, I feel better about this as the task has once again been completed successfully. From my averages I know that it does not matter if from those particular calls I achieved a certain number of appointments, it only matters that I did what my averages prove I must do to be successful – you can do the same.) Also, doing the prospecting before lunch is a good idea because it allows you to contact people before the middle of the day. If you leave it late the chances are that you may not get to speak to people in the time you have set aside for prospecting. By doing it early you can leave messages and call again later if necessary so your chances of success in speaking to them are much higher.

Remember that if you make it hard you will never want to do it. If however, you make it easy and you make it fun you will do it without issue; results are the product of activity.

A Better Chance of Success

You can't guarantee specific results where there are so many anomalies (for prospecting the anomalies are; the individual prospects and their situations, the benefits of your product/service and relevance of them to your prospects at a given moment, your competition, your prospect's ability to afford what you're offering, etc...) What you can do though is guarantee yourself the best chance of success and that is what proactively prospecting does.

By understanding who buys from you now (your typical customer profile), then picking prospects like them / with similar needs / in a similar situation will mean that your chances of a successful outcome are greater. These are much higher than dealing with incoming enquiries where enquirers may not know so much about your products/services and only 'think' you may be able to help them. By 'hand-picking' your prospects you can be sure you can deliver value and that generates a confidence which will spread to your prospects. You can refer to similar customers who are like them where you can tell the story of how those customers benefitted, quantify that benefit and grow their interest to keep the sales conversation going. You'll even find that many prospects will be happy you contacted them and will thank you for doing so! (Not the reaction many salespeople picture getting in their minds when thinking of the 'feared' prospecting!) That change switches mind-sets from 'I'm dreading it' to 'I'm really looking forward to prospecting'.

Methods of Prospecting

You can also employ a range of prospecting methods today, more than ever before due to developments in communications and how we work and interact with each other on social media. This reduces potential monotony for you and, as different people respond to different approaches it is good to have a mix of activity to choose from. Where one approach doesn't work, yet you really believe a prospect can benefit from your product/service, you can use another method to see if you can get a better response.

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Prospecting methods you can use on an ongoing basis (personally and via your marketing support colleagues where available) include:

- **cold calling (door knocking)**
- cold calling (telephoning)
- **mail shots**
- advertising / P.R. including whitepapers
- **flyer posting**
- referrals
- **e-mail prospecting**
- Social media posts / chat groups
- **networking meetings**
- exhibiting

... and there's a lot more!

I trust you'll find this pocket guide useful and invite you to compile your own list of prospecting methods to enable you to realise your fullest potential. More on prospecting can be found in my **How to Prospect Like A Winner** eBook including:

- **The psychology of rejection and why we fear it**
- Why prospects say „No“ to salespeople
- **Descriptions of the various prospecting methods and how you can use them**
- Understanding what the Pillars of Success are and how you can use them
- **Understanding what makes a good prospect target**
- How winning salespeople excel using target lists
- **The golden rules to apply in your prospecting messages so your targets want to talk to you**

Get the **How to Prospect Like A Winner** eBook now on our website at: www.wit2s.com

I wish you every success,

Steve Lewis-Brammer

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