

# Dialing for Dollars

## Successful Telephone Technique

Before dialing the phone, savvy telemarketers ask themselves questions like:

- What do I know about the prospect?
- What do I *need to know* in order for the prospect to take the action desired?
- What information might be obtained from a database or screener?
- What do I say if voice-mail technology answers the call?
- What will my opening statement be?
- What questions will I ask?
- How will I end the call, (no matter what happens)?

Guerrilla Marketers ask themselves similar questions, and rehearse their telephone techniques.

### Voice training

No matter who does the calling, proper voice training is a good idea. Talk clearly. Use short sentences. Talk loud enough, but not directly into the mouthpiece; talking across the mouthpiece gives the most effective voice transmission. Your voice should project authority and warmth while instilling trust. Your message should be stated as concisely as possible.

### Script or not to script?

Whatever you do, don't read from a script. However, research shows that it's always a good idea to *memorize* a script, changing any words that feel awkward or uncomfortable. The script must be so well memorized that the words sound as though you know them by heart—as natural as the Pledge of Allegiance. Don't use words that feel strange to say. Find words and phrases that come naturally to you. Leave space for the person on the other end to respond. Guerrillas are in full control of their telemarketing and do not recite awkward speeches to their prospects. Doing so is bad business— more personal than a computer pitch—but still not worth doing if not done right.

### Scripts versus outlines

Studies in various industries consistently show that a memorized telemarketing presentation always produces better results than the same presentation from an outline.

You may think it's better to let the caller use his or her own words, but few callers have the ability to summon the right ones. Gone are the days when it was recommended that callers use an outline, or thought-flow. Still, the more naturally conversant you sound, the more sales you'll make—and that takes practice. Naturally, much of what you say will be in response to what the person being called says, but the best telemarketers are in full control of the call. They stay in control by asking questions, responding to the answers, then asking more questions, directing the conversation towards the customers getting what they need and a sale being made.

### Outline guidelines

If you are still more comfortable using an outline to structure your phone presentations, heed the following guidelines:

- If the outline is longer than one page, there is probably too much in it and you should try to streamline it.
- An outline does create a structure for your thoughts and ideas, and also helps keep the call on track when the person at the other end redirects it.
- Even if you do work from an outline, it's still a good idea to write a script of a phone call.

## Working with a script

Once you have written the script, you should do three things with it:

- *Record it.* See what it sounds like. After all, you'll be using "ear" words that are heard, rather than "eye" words that are seen. There's a big, big difference. Words that callers unconsciously love to hear are: profits, sales, dollars, revenues, income, cash flow, savings, time, productivity, morale, motivation, output, attitude, image, victories, market share, and competitive edge.
- *Conversational.* Make sure the recorded script sounds like a conversation and not like an ad. Leave room for the person being called to talk.
- *Rephrase not repeat.* Make it a point not to restate the script but to rephrase it. State the same selling points. Present them in the same order. But use words with which you are comfortable. Your telephone planning should be able to accommodate several situations. After all, if your prospect decides to buy just after you've started, you should be prepared to close the sale and end the conversation.

## Analyze yourself

Notice how your friends, and probably even you assume different voice personalities when speaking on the phone. This is subtle, but it's there.

Try to eliminate that telephone personality and bring out your most conversational qualities by actually practicing on the phone—talking to a tape recorder or to a friend.

## Role playing

If you're going to do a good amount of telephone marketing, engage in role-playing, with you as the customer and a friend or associate as you. Then switch roles. Role-playing gives you a lot of insight into your offering and your message. Keep doing this until you are completely satisfied with your presentation.