

“Call Me Next Week”

You finally connect with a prospect and the end of your conversation goes something like this, “I’ll get that information to you by tomorrow and I’ll call you early next week to discuss it with you.” But when you call the following week, you get your prospect’s voice mail. After repeated failed attempts to connect with your contact, you move on to another opportunity.

Sound familiar?

Here’s how you can prevent this situation from happening. Pinpoint and nail down a specific day and time before you end your call. Here is an example of how you can do that easily and without sounding aggressive or rude.

“I’ll get that information to you by tomorrow and I’ll call you next week to discuss it with you. How does Tuesday morning work for you? Great, what time works best for you? Any time in the morning? Is your calendar open at 10:15? Terrific; I will send you an email invitation this morning so we can both confirm next Tuesday at 10:15 AM.”

This assertive approach is extremely effective for getting your prospect to schedule a specific time to speak with you which means that you increase the likelihood that you will actually connect with your prospect especially if you have the courage to ask them to mark the call in their calendar. Not only does it demonstrate your expertise and professionalism, it differentiates you from your competition, and in today’s crowded marketplace, it is essential to find little, yet meaningful ways to stand out from the crowd.

Sometimes, however, it is easy to get misled by an unfocused prospect who simply says, “Call me next week.” The key here is to use the same approach and narrow down a specific day and time. Here is how you handle that conversation and the questions you need to ask:

“What day usually works best for you?” If they say, “Any day is fine” narrow it down with, “How does next Tuesday look?”

Follow this with, “Do mornings or afternoons work best?” or “Is there a particular time of day that works better?” The word ‘particular’ is key because it encourages your prospect to consider their typical day and think of the best time to call.

In some cases, they may still respond with a vague answer like, “mornings” so take a deep breath and ask one more question: “Does 10:15 work for you?” or “What’s your schedule like at 10:15?” I have found that scheduling an appointment on a quarter hour is more effective than a standard time like 10:00 or 10:30. Some other sales trainers even suggest that you request a time like 10:20 or 10:40. I haven’t tried that so I can’t comment on its effectiveness.

This approach requires a bit of gentle persistence and practise but it is not aggressive or offensive and people respond well to it because it shows that you respect your prospect’s time. One key to remember is to keep your voice evenly modulate and your tone conversational. Avoid allowing any type of frustration to creep into your tone because you will automatically be perceived as aggressive instead assertive.

Finally, when you do make your follow-up call, start the conversation by saying something like, “Mr Contact, I’m calling you as promised.” If you happen to get their voice mail, hang up and call three- to-five minutes later. If you get bumped to VM again, leave the above message. More often than not, you will get a return call. At least that has been my experience.

Resist the temptation to leave the next call or meeting unscheduled and you will dramatically improve your results. By the way, this approach works equally as well for face-to-face meetings.

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