

## How NOT To Handle a Cold Call

Like most business people, I receive my fair share of cold calls. During a more recent call, the person calling said that she worked for one of North America's largest website developer. She then asked me two questions;

"Was I the person in charge of web design for my company?"

"Did I currently have a website?"

After I responded positively, she began blabbering on for a several minutes and it was evident that she was reading a script. Of course, there came a point in time when she asked me if I was interested in learning more about their company. I agreed simply to see how she would handle this next phase of the conversation.

She then told me she was going to "conference in" a web technician so we could have a three-way conversation and that I would hear a few rings until he picked up. Thirty to forty seconds later the technician finally came on the line and he started the conversation by saying, "So, you're interested in our services" to which I replied, "I can't answer that yet. All I know is that you develop and host websites and help businesses drive traffic to their site. I already have a webmaster and a domain host so I don't know what you can do for me." There was a long pause before he said, "I'm sorry to have wasted your time." Click.

I don't consider myself an expert at cold calling but even I can spot the mistakes that were made during this call. I counted at least six mistakes; let's take a closer look at them.

**Mistake #1.** The person who called me did absolutely no preparation before she dialed my number. A quick Internet search would have shown her that I have a website up and running so it's unlikely that I'm looking for a designer or a domain host. Too many people who make cold calls do little or no research or preparation. However, the time invested up front can help you position your solution more effectively to your prospect.

**Mistake #2.** She spent too much time talking about her company when she should have been asking me questions to find out more about my business. To me, the obvious questions should have been,

"What I was doing to drive traffic to my site?"

"What results was I achieving?"

"How many visitors was I expecting to attract each month?" or "What results would I like to achieve?"

However, she did ask not any high-quality questions. Instead, she made the common mistake of trying to pitch her company. The shotgun approach of discussing

everything your company has to offer with the hope of talking about one that appeals to your prospect is really a waste of your time and theirs. Plus, you cannot effectively position your goods or services without first knowing a thing or two about the company you are presenting to.

**Mistakes #3.** Conferencing in the web technician. The person who makes the call should have sufficient knowledge and expertise to move the call forward. In this case, the initial caller did not have any information about the products or solutions and it was clear that her job was to simply make the connection. While this may seem like a great approach to the company making the calls, it leads to the next mistake.

**Mistake #4.** The delay in waiting for the web technician to connect into the call really irritated me and showed a complete lack of respect for the prospect. Had I been the average business person with work stacked up to my eyeballs, I would have disconnected the call. However, by this stage I was really curious to see what would happen next so I stayed on the line.

**Mistake #5.** No introduction. When the web technician came on the line, I had no idea who I was actually speaking to. He did state his name but he mentioned it so quickly that I did not hear it clearly. If you plan to use multiple people in a cold call, the person who makes initial contact should introduce additional parties who join the call.

**Mistake #6.** Lack of communication. Once the web technician was connected to the call, it appeared that the person who contacted me disconnected. She should have stayed on the line and summarized her understanding of our conversation even though it was really a one-sided monologue. This approach would have brought the technician up to speed which would enable him to present an appropriate solution.

Cold calling is one of the most challenging ways to prospect for new business. And, if you don't do it correctly, it won't work at all. Avoid these mistakes and improve your results.

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