

"Do you have sales-call reluctance?" Connie Kadansky asks me point-blank.

1. "Um..." I trail off. She's a sales coach at [Sales Call Reluctance](#) with 20 years' experience. *I'm* supposed to be interviewing *her*. But somehow I've let slip that I'd rather have my teeth drilled than pitch total strangers over the phone.

If you feel the same way, you might take heart from Kadansky's tips for making effective sales calls, even if picking up the phone takes you outside your comfort zone. I plan on giving them a try. (If you do, too, let me know how it goes.)

1. Face it, you're a salesperson. Just like everyone else.

"So many people resist the fact that they are salespeople," Kadansky says. "They've had experience with salespeople who were less than professional." If you think about it, she says, a salesperson is someone who solves problems for a profit. Look at it that way, and just about everyone you know is in sales.

2. Believe in your own value.

You have value as an individual, and the product or service you're selling creates great value as well when matched with the right customer. "When people are convinced of their value, they're unstoppable," Kadansky says. "If someone on the other end is discourteous or not receptive, it doesn't faze them." (If you don't believe what you're selling has real value, you should be selling something else.)

3. Set a daily goal to contact new prospects.

"I encourage people to get a number in their head," Kadansky says. "Every day I'm going to reach out to two people I don't know. That can be over the phone, by email, or via LinkedIn, she says. "The point is to be proactive with new contacts on a daily basis, which is entirely possible if you make it a priority."

4. Use a client-focused script.

The script should focus on the client, not on you, Kadansky says. "*Many companies similar to yours count on me to... fill in the blank,*" she says.

5. Leave irresistible messages.

1. Learn to leave a really effective voice-mail message, and you'll get return calls more often than you might think. "You know what your business driver is," Kadansky says. "Try to have a metric in your value proposition, such as your clients increase their Web traffic by 25 percent." And make sure to actually ask the prospect to call you back. "Often people don't get a call back because they don't ask," she says.

6. Listen to yourself.

If the voice-mail system offers you the chance to review your message, do it, Kadansky advises. That will give you the chance to hear not only what you said but how you sound. "When people are on the phone, only 27 percent of communication is in their words, and 73 percent is in their tone," Kadansky says.

7. Follow up.

No response? Keep trying. Kadansky says she'll try to contact someone about three times in a week, then leave it for two to three weeks and then try again. And she'll continue trying at intervals after that. She makes sure to leave a message intended to inspire action, she says. "Does everybody respond? No. However, many people do."

14 Steps to Successful Cold-Calling

1.

[3 COMMENTS](#)

By Mark Hunter, "The Sales Hunter"

The vast majority of salespeople do not enjoy cold-calling. Yet, at the same time, it is an activity that most need to do on a regular basis if you want to sustain sales motivation.

The biggest reason sales professionals are not more successful in this necessary endeavor is because they fall back on the defense that they have "other things to do."

The truth is they will overcome this excuse quickly by being held accountable for making a set number of cold calls each day, each week or each month.

As much as people would like to believe there is a secret formula for being successful at cold-calling, the only valid one is being disciplined enough to do it. When people avoid cold-calling, they are generally telling themselves that either they don't know enough about what they're selling or they don't believe the outcome will be successful. For this simple reason, it is necessary to be confident in yourself and what you are selling.

The following may be beneficial as you begin to practice the critical discipline of cold-calling.

Have a dedicated time each day to prospect.

1. Know the reason for calling before you call: customer benefits, not product features.
2. Leave short voice mail messages.
3. Assume your voice mail messages will never be returned.

4. Always call one level higher in an organization than you believe is necessary.
5. Be confident and competent.
6. Phone calls placed before 8:30 a.m. are the most likely to be answered by the person you called.
7. Respect the gate-keeper by treating them in the same manner you would treat the prospect.
8. Prospecting calls on Monday mornings and Friday afternoons will have the worst results.
9. Prospecting on “semi-holidays” and inclement weather days will get a higher response.
10. Make it your goal to earn the right, privilege and honor to talk to the person again.
11. Believe in what you’re selling and the benefits that the prospect will receive from your products and services.
12. Believe in yourself and your professionalism.
13. Anytime is a good time to make a call; don’t wait for the “perfect” time.

Sure, you could try to convince yourself that cold-calling really isn’t necessary. The truth, however, is that the most successful salespeople consistently develop new leads using a variety of methods, including cold-calling. By practicing and persevering, both your skills and confidence will improve. Furthermore, making yourself accountable will help you turn your excuses into successful sales.

15 Tips to Surviving (and Thriving) with Voicemail

Voicemail is either our best friend or worst enemy (or possibly a little bit of both). Is it a convenience in sales and critical in our selling skills — or just one more layer sabotaging our sales success as we try to reach clients and prospects?

1. My suggestion is that instead of lamenting about how frustrating it is to reach people’s voicemail, why don’t you instead commit to improving your voicemail skills and phone skills so that you can strengthen your sales motivation and your bottom line?

Here are 15 tips to surviving (and thriving) with voicemail:

1. If your goal is to get the phone call returned, don’t leave information that would allow the person to make up their mind. Add a call-to-action to your message by providing a key date or something of interest that will encourage the person to return the call. You have to create a reason for them to call you back.
2. Repeat your phone number twice. If the person can’t quickly write your number down, you’ve given them a perfect reason to not call back.

3. Avoid asking the person to call you back at a certain time. This provides them with an excuse not to call you.
4. Never state in the message that you will plan to call them back. Again, this only gives the person an excuse to ignore your message.
5. Messages left on a Friday afternoon are the least likely to be returned. For most people, Monday mornings are very busy and, as a result, only high-priority activities will get their immediate attention.
6. Do not leave voicemail messages at odd hours of the night. Most voicemail systems offer a time stamp and the person hearing the message will immediately suspect you really did not want to talk to them.
7. The best hours to leave voicemail messages are from 6:45 to 8:00 a.m. and from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Driven people are usually working during these time periods, and the person receiving your message could potentially view you as one, which is good.
8. Wisely use time zone changes to make as many calls as possible during the optimal voicemail periods listed in the previous tip.
9. Voicemail messages are an excellent way to introduce yourself to a person. Be personable, yet professional, and link your message to something of interest to the person you are calling (such as another person or event). The recipient may view your message as a waste of time if you have no purpose other than getting your name in front of them.
10. When leaving a message with multiple points, be sure to immediately disclose how many you will be making. This will prevent the recipient from accidentally fast-forwarding or deleting it before it is completely heard.
11. If you can't say it briefly, don't say it at all. Voicemail is not "story time." Leaving a long message is an invitation to have the entire message skipped. The optimal voicemail message is between 8 and 14 seconds.
12. When leaving your phone number, do not leave your website address as well. This will give the person an opportunity to make a decision about you without calling you back.
13. Leave a "PS" at the end of your message. A "PS" is a very quick, additional piece of information that will connect with the person.
14. Mention the person's first name at least twice in the message, but don't use their last name (doing so comes across as very impersonal).
15. Refer to a mutual acquaintance in your message as a way of connecting with the recipient. (Caution: Make sure they think positively of that person!).

Voicemail doesn't have to be your nemesis. Instead, it can be a tool to keep your prospecting and sales motivation on track. Don't try to wing it. Be conscientious of the way you are using voicemail to its fullest so that you won't just survive it — you'll thrive with it!

Mark Hunter, The Sales Hunter, is author of “[High-Profit Selling: Win the Sale Without Compromising on Price](#).” He is a consultative selling expert committed to helping individuals and companies identify better prospects and close more profitable sales. To get a free weekly sales tip, visit www.TheSalesHunter.com. Read the first chapter of his instant-classic “High-Profit Selling” [here](#).