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Why Cold Calling Is Dead

By Frank J. Rumbauskas, Jr.

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Our world of selling is closed off from other areas of business that continue to adopt and embrace new, efficient ideas. I was reminded of this recently while re-reading Seth Godin's "Permission Marketing." Here's a book that was intended for business owners and marketing executives, yet it provides a much-needed dose of common sense that would be of great benefit to sales organizations, especially sales managers, who continue to cling to very old, and, in their minds, very right, ideas. Unfortunately, our brave new world has made these old ideas very wrong.

Seth Godin talks about Interruption Marketing versus Permission Marketing. Interruption Marketing is traditional advertising that interrupts your day in an attempt to get your attention and sell you something. In other words, it is the marketing equivalent of Cold Calling. Permission Marketing is systematically getting prospects to give you permission to present to them. In other words, it is marketing's equivalent of what I teach salespeople to do. In the book, Seth uses the metaphor of someone trying to get married to describe the flaw in Interruption Marketing, or Cold Calling. The bachelor goes into a singles bar and asks every woman in the place to marry him. When they all say no, he blames his clothes, buys a new suit, and tries again at another bar, only to fail again and again, just like a cold caller.

Are you getting the point he tries to make in that story? Think about it. A salesperson spends weeks cold calling with dismal results. The salesperson goes to the sales manager for advice on what to do differently to start getting results. A conversation ensues about what the salesperson is doing. A lot of old ideas begin to surface. Ideas such as "Initial Benefit Statement," "Elevator Speech," and other concepts that once upon a time were the right answers, but have since become very wrong answers. Working on these things is the equivalent of the man in the story blaming his failure on the suit, changing into a new suit, then going to a different singles bar to do it all over again.

With the business world in its present state, I really don't see how salespeople can afford to keep fooling away their time on old ideas that were once right but are now fatally wrong. It is this very feature of capitalism that is causing salespeople, managers and organizations to fail in record numbers. Capitalism is essentially "creative destruction." In other words, capitalism is a perpetual cycle of

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destroying old, less-efficient businesses and ideas and replacing them with new, more efficient ones. People and companies are clinging to old, obsolete ideas and are being dragged down to failure by them. Yet they still won't let go. I think the reason they can't let go is simply because it wasn't all that long ago that they really did have the right answers. It reminds me of a story I once heard about Albert Einstein when he was a professor. One of his student assistants who was preparing for an incoming class said, "Professor Einstein, what test are we giving them?" To which Einstein replied, "The same test we gave them last week." Bewildered, the student assistant replied, "But Professor Einstein, we already gave that test." Einstein simply said, "Yes, but the answers are different this week."

The bottom line is that the answers are different. The rules have changed. Time is running out for those who do not adapt to the new rules. As Napoleon Hill put it so well, "Whenever a nation, a business institution, or an individual ceases to change and settles into a rut of routine habits, some

mysterious power enters and smashes the setup, breaks up the old habits, and lays the foundation for new and better habits."

If you're not achieving the sales success you desire, perhaps it is time for you to lay the foundation for new and better habits.

Frank Rumbauskas is the author of *Cold Calling Is A Waste Of Time: Sales Success In The Information Age*. He is the founder of FJR Advisors, LLC, which publishes training materials that educate salespeople on how to generate business without cold calling. For more information, please visit <http://www.nevercoldcall.com>

Too Cold Call Or Not To Cold Call For Your Small Business

By Brandt Stohr

I hate cold-calling. In fact, there are a lot of horrible pains I would suffer before cold-calling someone. And I think that many small business owners feel the way I do.

It's true that there are a number of means of small business marketing - direct mail, personal letters, advertising, networking, public relations, internet marketing - and alas, cold calling is one of them. When it comes to small business marketing - any business activity, really - at some point you just have to buckle down and do what you gotta' do if you want to succeed. But is cold-calling one of those small business marketing activities that small business owners simply have to suffer through in order to succeed in business?

Some experts say, loudly and with vigor: "Yes!" Others say, "Absolutely not."

The truth about the value of cold-calling as part of your small business marketing strategy is that it's somewhere in between, and it depends on your particular business. If, for example, you retail small-dollar items through a catalog and on the Internet, cold-calling your potential customers probably isn't cost-effective: if each customer might spend \$10 with you, spending 20 minutes or more on the

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phone with that prospect doesn't make sense. If, on the other hand, you're a manufacturer of small-dollar items that you sell to retailers who may spend \$1,000 or more buying your products in bulk, then picking up the phone and making a call may well be worth your while.

If you decide to make cold-calling a part of your small business marketing strategy, there are a few things you can do to maximize the chances that your cold call will turn into a new client:

Cold-calling small business marketing tip #1: Take initiative. When you ask the potential client at the other end of the line "When would be a good time to meet?" you open the door for them to say "Never!" Instead, ask "How would next Tuesday at 11:00 work for you to meet?"

Cold-calling small business marketing tip #2: Approach the call with the idea that your goal is to help your prospective customer. Resist the urge to make the call about you - what you do, what you want. Instead, make the call about the prospect at the other end of the line. Ask the prospect about his needs and wants. Then suggest that you can help - and if he meets you next Tuesday at 11:00 you'll tell him how.

Cold-calling small business marketing tip #3: Get to the point. The prospect at the other end of the line is going to feel, right off the bat, that you're wasting her time. So, by all means, be brief. Be clear and concise. Avoid saying "um."

Cold-calling small business marketing tip #4: Ask questions. This tip reflects back to small business marketing tip #2, making the call about the prospect, not about you. Asking questions also helps steer you to the right information and will help you tailor your sales pitch - for you to deliver at the appointment.

Cold-calling small business marketing tip #5: Save the sales pitch. Effective cold-calling isn't about selling your product or service. It's about getting an appointment so that you can sell your product or

service in person.

As with any small business marketing strategy, the best way to figure out if it works is to try it. Make enough cold calls so that you can accurately measure their effectiveness. Then compare that measurement to your other small business marketing tools.

Brandt Stohr, The Small Business Marketing Genius has brought startup one man operations to billion dollar corporations by using creative marketing techniques rather than investors and capital. Brandt Stohr has helped hundreds of entrepreneurs to get their small businesses exploding with sales without the use of expensive traditional marketing techniques. For more information and a free report on the ten deadly mistakes most small businesses are still making visit Brandt Stohr's site at

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