



51 Telemarketing for leads

What is telemarketing?

Telemarketing is a term given to any form of telephone communication with customers that is designed to generate new business.

Telemarketing can be used to:

- follow through on any sales campaign
- follow up on leads generated at networking events or conferences
- follow up leads or contacts made at talks
- survey or research your market and identify potential prospects
- build and progress relationships
- follow up sales letters sent to your customers and prospects providing a likely 20%–50% increase in sales and results
- make preferred offers on your products and services to your best customers
- research or test new ideas.

Telemarketing is anything that is done on the telephone to communicate with existing and potential prospects to generate or progress sales leads.

Why is it important?

Telemarketing is the most direct way of communicating with your potential prospects. Providing you are able to get through to the decision maker you will have an opportunity there and then to move your business marketing forward.

There are some fascinating statistics on telemarketing follow-up calls: 92% of people will have given up after four negative responses, and only 8% of people ask for the order a fifth time. Yet Market Research studies show that 80% of all significant sales result from people who followed up at least five different times after the initial sales contact, before getting a positive response. When you consider that 80% of customers say 'no' four times before they say 'yes', the inference is that 8% of people are getting 80% of the sales!

Consider how long it takes to convert a completely cold prospect for your product or service. How many follow up calls does it take before you finally get the deal or even the first appointment? If you had not followed up religiously would you have

been successful? Probably not. So, disciplined telephone follow-up is not just important, it is vital.

We are all busy and your customers are no different. They may well be very interested in a lot of the offers and propositions you have made but they get diverted. They lose things. They forget to respond. They don't get around to acting on it.

You actually do them a fabulous service if you or someone in your business picks up the phone and follows up. The call doesn't have to be pushy; it just needs to be respectfully timed, with the outcome of re-alerting or informing.

If the person who makes these calls always asks if it is convenient to talk and reminds the customer of the last contact with them you cannot fail to increase your chances of doing business with this customer.

It's exciting to know that telephone follow-up can increase the effectiveness of any letter or email contact you send out by up to twenty times.

Your challenge

Telemarketing takes time, the right person to do it, focus and discipline. If you are going to make this part of your marketing strategy you will need to plan it well. It may be that you need someone in your business specifically focused on this one job. It is pointless to make this a haphazard activity. Details of all the calls made and outcome of those calls will need to be recorded religiously. A good customer contact system is vital. Your challenge will be to set up the system, operate it and measure the return on your investment.

What makes telemarketing successful?

- When it is delivered in a non-scripted manner, with a clear outcome and confident approach.
- Treat each person and each call as if it was the first.
- Understand the person you have called may be in the middle of something, driving or just about to go into a meeting. Always ask if it is convenient to speak.
- Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the call.

- Have something to say that is likely to grab the person's attention and make it worth giving you some time.
- If you are using the telephone to make direct contact with prospective clients make sure you qualify the person against your own prospect criteria.
- Follow up.
- As you probably have already experienced, there is usually a right time for your prospects to buy and you need to find out exactly when that is and make sure that your follow-up coincides with that.
- Keep the calls short.

Small businesses that use this successfully

A business coaching company successfully filled the evening seminars they ran every quarter with a disciplined sales letter and follow up phone call approach. The phone call converted the people who were thinking about it, but needed a gentle nudge to take the step and book a place.

A monthly business club successfully recruits new members in the same way.

A fitness club follows up enquiries with a letter of introduction and a telephone call and finds that this method increases membership up-take by anything up to 50%.

A company selling plastic identity cards to universities find a letter of introduction along with a sample card and a follow up telephone call gets them successfully through to the appointment stage.

A training company uses telemarketing successfully to research prospects and book appointments. The telemarketing calls are followed up with an email introduction and, if appropriate, confirmation of an appointment.

MAKING TELEMARKETING WORK FOR YOU – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

- ▶ What are you going to use telemarketing for?
- ▶ Who is going to do it?
- ▶ Get your target prospect list.
- ▶ Set up your customer relationship management system.
- ▶ Decide on the purpose of the calls.
- ▶ Decide on how you are going to open the call and get the listener's attention.
- ▶ Prepare a list of relevant questions to ask.
- ▶ Set yourself some targets.

Example prospect research questions

The following questions could be applied or adapted to suit your business when using telemarketing to research for leads.

- Do you currently use for x and y ?
- When do you tend to make your decisions about the suppliers you are going to use?
- How do you evaluate providers – what is the process you go through?
- What would we need to do to create the opportunity for you to see what we could do for you?
- What kind of problems do you have in the x and y area?
- What kind of solutions are you exploring?
- Are you interested in finding out more about how we could help?

How to use this information

Take an element of your business where you consider telemarketing may help boost results and test it out. You will need to fine tune your approach until you get it absolutely right. Telemarketing is worth working at as it could give you the edge over others in your market.

***Think telemarketing and get the
business when others give up***