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Pros

By Leslie Buterin

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Sales pros frequently ask, "What's the #1 change I need to make, as I prospect by phone instead of face-to-face?"

Here's the emotional truth behind this seemingly innocent question ...

Most sales pros confess they'd rather have their toenails pulled out with pliers than cold call prospects by phone. Took me a couple of years to figure out for myself why my stomach knotted up into a queasy ball every time I glanced at that gray lump of plastic on my desk and thought about dialing-for-dollars.

How do you make sense of it? You're bigger than the phone, smarter than the phone. So, how can a talented sales professional be totally paralyzed by the thought of using the darned thing to prospect?

Here's what I finally figured out. When on the phone, you no longer see the whites of their eyes.

Before you roll your eyes, shake your head and say, "Duh!"...

Think about it. The phone keeps us from reading the prospect's body language. For folks like us who take pride in our ability to quickly glance at, assess a situation, overturn every objection, and close a sale on the spot ... the loss of visual input is quite frankly, unnerving.

This does not compute unless you know that ...

More than half of face-to-face conversation is communicated through the eyes. So, as funny as it sounds, during an in-person sales presentation you'll "quickly hear" your prospect with your ears AND your eyes—at the speed of light.

According to Roger Ailes, in his book "You Are the Message" 55% of an interpretation of face-to-face conversation is determined by nonverbal cues, 38% by our voice and 7% by the words themselves."

What's important to you about these statistics is ...

When you're prospecting by phone, you and your prospect "slowly hear" only with your ears—at the speed of sound. This is a very big deal.

Why? Because, a whopping 55% of the information you normally take in and process in the blink of an eye—is gone, unavailable, poof. Critical information vanishes the instant you transition from face-to-face to phone communication! And immediate loss of that much information my friend would disorient anyone.

So, how do you compensate for the loss of visual cues when you're on the phone talking "blind" to a "blind prospect" doing your best to sell-ice-to-an-Eskimo?

Let's start with what not to do ...

Don't do what most folks do when talking to unsighted people ... talk loud and fast as though the person was deaf instead of blind!

If you're like me, you'll function from one of two extremes. Your brain will freeze and leave you speechless or you'll spray hundreds of words at the prospect and pray that some comment will compel them to invite you in to see them.

This may come as a shock but, prospects on the receiving end of "spray and pray calls" report in focus groups—their incredible frustration and irritation with the assault of words coming through the phone, directly toward them in rapid-fire succession. They admit they never really "hear" the sales pro and generally hang-up rather than do the work to make sense of the call.

The worst cold calling mistake you'll make is to ...

Talk too fast and you shut down your prospect's ability to hear you. For a smooth transition from in-person to telephone prospecting you're going to have to do an unnatural act. You're gonna have to talk slowly ... excruciatingly slowly, so your prospect can hear, register, and process your words. Even though you'll feel awkward and uncomfortable if successful cold call prospecting is your goal, you must make this adjustment.

How can you get feedback on the tempo of your "prospecting phone presentation"? An inexpensive, private way to observe yourself is to dial your voice mail: leave your name, phone number, and state the purpose of your call. Then, listen to your message and ask yourself, "Based on your ability to clearly understand what you said, would you do business with you?"

For your FREE mini-course "7 Jealously Guarded Secrets to Cold Calling Presidents of Companies: Guaranteed to Bring in New Money!" click here:

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