

Cold Calling Fun, Are You Serious?

By Lin Wilder

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When my business partner who also happens to be my husband suggested that I learn to do cold calling to become an expert in our home business, I can still remember the exact spot where I was standing in our kitchen; nor can I forget the feeling that gripped my insides.

Quite simply put, I was horrified at the prospect of talking with complete strangers about my business. The thought conjured up all of the stereotypes of the worst kind of salesman that I could think of; remember Jack Lemmon in the movie, "Glengarry Glen Rose"? Or the Arthur Miller character of Willy Lomax in "Death of a Salesman"?

If you remember these characters then you get the picture..... If you don't, think of the most aggressive and desperate car Salesman you have ever met and you have the image. It has been five years since that kitchen conversation and one of the things I love most about our business is talking with new potential customers or cold calling.

If the telephone still seems to weigh 400 pounds when you pick it up to call prospects or if you cannot talk with a sharp waitress about your business because the words stick in your throat, read on.

There are three essentials to learning how to love cold calling:
Support, lots of it;
Feedback, lots of it;
And leads, lots of them.

Let's begin with the support part. Support is imperative because when we begin to talk with strangers about our business, we will not do well at first. Trust me on this one. Here's an example; in the beginning, I used the "300 foot" rule.

Translated, that means that anyone who came within 300 feet of me and was breathing was fair game.

There were many times that I had no plan in mind when I prospected a stranger. Often, my husband and I were in a restaurant together when I awkwardly approached the waiter or another customer; I made the classic mistakes of talking, not asking, over and over, often knowing that I would never follow up with this person. But my business partner (husband) never made fun of me or gave me “constructive feedback”.

He knew how far outside my “comfort zone” I had wandered and consistently encouraged me to continue taking the risk of talking to strangers about my business. He called it practice and told me that I was learning.

So you know what happened?
I got better.

The more I did this, the more comfortable I felt and therefore acted. There is a reason that Chesterton’s advice is often quoted to anyone learning a new skill: “anything worth doing is worth doing poorly”. When we are learning, we’ll most likely act like it. Realize that in yourself and in others and you will start to attract people to you.

Feedback is a tougher issue. Once the newly acquired skill of “cold calling” or prospecting is more-or-less comfortable, we need to see the errors that we are making in order to correct them. This is where “constructive criticism” comes in. This is tough because most of us despise being criticized- I do and so does everyone else I know.

So what can we do? There are several alternatives that may be preferable at least in the beginning.

One is using a tape recorder to record live phone conversations; simulated role-plays can be useful as well and scripts may be helpful for some. But nothing beats someone listening and then giving us immediate and honest feedback.

Nothing - but it is unpleasant for those of us working hard to do the best we can do and that is most of us.

The three common pitfalls for many of us are
Talking too much,
Interrupting,
And not listening.

This last skill, listening, requires concentration and discipline but is powerful. You know when you are listening when you sense the appreciation of the person you’re listening to for they are almost always surprised and grateful to hear their thoughts and concerns return to them.

We can change our style and learn to listen but it requires focus and work.

An unlimited supply of leads is the last requirement for learning to love cold calling. Most of us really believe we only know 5 people to talk to about our business and when pressed we may be able to list 30. So what do we do when we reach the end of the list and we have no money to buy leads?

And for many of us, the idea of approaching friends and family, makes our insides crawl. But an insufficient supply of interested prospects is one of the most common causes for failure in network marketing.

Let's think a moment about why it is so important to have more people to call than you have time to dial. It isn't complicated, is it? The more detached we can be from the decision of each person we talk with the more confidence we feel and stimulate in those we talk with.

That Jack Lemmon stereotype of the aggressive, desperate salesman is a character we all look to escape, fast.

Where are the sources for unlimited leads?

They range from the PTA and other clubs you can join to the 10-20,000 new folks going on the Internet each day in hopes of finding a way to change their lives. There are a few excellent companies to buy names of interested prospects for relatively little money on the Internet.

In summary, cold calling is the heart and soul of any business because all of us reach the end of our contact list sooner or later.

The three essentials for learning to love talking to strangers are:

Support,

Feedback

And an unlimited supply of people to talk with about the business.

Happy prospecting!

Dr. Lin Wilder wrote this article.

Lin is a full-time net worker, consultant and writer.

She invites you to visit her site at <http://www.fastmlmleads.com>

"Adversity is.....a tonic to me"

Sir Walter Raleigh

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