



## Phone Calls – Your Line to Great Marketing!

By Lori Colborne

The telephone can be an effective tool assist in expanding your market. Used poorly; however, it can have exactly the opposite effect. I don't recommend cold calling. Most of the people I surveyed said they hate receiving cold calls.

First impressions are very important. Creating initial resentment in a potential client is destructive as far as relationship building is concerned. Relationship building marketing is ensuring you are sensitive to the comfort of your prospective client.

So you ask, "*How do I find new customers if I can't cold call?*" New clients can be gained through networking, attending charity events, association meetings and trade shows, asking your clients, cross-promoters or peers for leads.

The type of call you want to make is a **warm** call – *a call that is generated from a lead*. The greater volume of information you have on a prospective client, the warmer the call will be. Using the name of your referral source also increases the warmth of the call. The purpose of a warm call is to gain permission to send your information. This is a very soft sell approach. Don't expect or even try to sell your prospect during this first phone call. Remember, building relationships takes time – go slowly and do not be aggressive.

To make your calls go more smoothly:

- Do your homework! Know as much as you can about the company and/or potential customer and their needs & wants. When all else fails, a phone call or visit to the receptionist can point you in the right direction.
- Write down what you are planning to say before you pick up the phone.
- Introduce yourself (first and last name) – tell them how you got their name.
- Be concise and give an outline or reason for your call.
- Ask permission to send a letter with more details.
- Follow through by mailing or faxing your letter the same day.
- To maintain control of the call, avoid leaving messages. If you are having to call numerous times and can't get a hold of your prospect you may want to block your number on a call display phone by pressing \*67. If you feel you must leave a message, you should say, "*I'm sorry I missed you. I will try to reach you later today, this week, next week, etc.*" Try to do this only once to avoid sounding desperate or annoying.

Using your phone effectively will save you valuable time and increase your productivity!

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