

Oh no, what have I done to outbound call centres?

 By [Sid Peimer](#)

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I get at least one call centre phoning me per day...



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The conversation starts with a few seconds delay (I assume that's the software) followed by "May I speak with Mr Sidney Peimer" (pronounced in various creative ways). Once I confirm that it is indeed the esteemed I, the next question is "How are you?". I answer with a curt "Fine". To that, I get a reply that "I'm fine too, thank you for asking." I'm not sure if that is sarcasm or strategy (are two people who are fine better than just one?).

Somehow I feel this is all my fault.

I have lectured to thousands of students and delegates on the topics of consumer behaviour, strategy and new business pitching since the turn of the century (however you can view my latest passion <https://youtu.be/tTOqLgrlAsw> here). In my lectures, I would refer to the research conducted by Robert Cialdini where he cites the results of the following two options of content for cold calling to sell cookies for a good cause:

Option 1

Caller: Will you allow a representative of the Hunger Relief Committee to come to your home to sell you cookies?

Option 2

Caller: How are you?

Your response: Fine

Caller: Will you allow a representative of the Hunger Relief Committee to come to your home?

These two strategies would not be remarkable other than for the fact that 18% answered yes in the first instance and 32% said yes in the second instance. Why? Well according to Cialdini, this is all about consistency – in other words, fine people would be more likely to allow a representative of the Hunger Relief Committee to come to their home than people who were not necessarily fine.

Look, I'm not sure it's my fault, but why are the cold callers still doing the same thing? It just doesn't work any more. The call should go straight for the jugular which makes the caller seem more credible.

This should be the script: Hi, Mr Peimer. This is John from [brand]. I need to inform you about a change we're undergoing regarding pricing/billing/products - or whatever.

Once you've established this is a call to a human being whom you know, and that there is something that needs to be heard, you're on your way. However, this comes with a word of caution – it's feedback from a sample of one – but I have the faint suspicion that it might just be the right way to go. But don't blame me if it isn't. In God we trust – everyone else must bring data.

ABOUT SID PEIMER

A seasoned and insightful executive with multisector experience in roles as diverse as senior management, strategic planning and copywriting. I am a qualified pharmacist with an MBA from UCT. I am also an accomplished keynote speaker and presenter.

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