

Learn to cold call the clever way



By [John French](#)

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Does cold calling leave you cold? Most people end up freezing when they are faced with the terrifying prospect of trying to sell something to a stranger on the other side of the phone.

There's no denying that cold calling is the most challenging method of marketing, but with the following communication strategies it can be made easier.

Why we hate it

Research indicates that cold calling has a limited 0.3% - 2% success rate. That's a whole lot of rejection and rejection is our ego's ultimate fear.

Rejection puts the human ego in a very 'unsafe' place and consequently our egos will do everything possible to avoid it. Our instinct therefore tells us to avoid cold calling. Our egos know that cold calling means putting ourselves directly in the rejection firing line.

The problem is that most businesses need to carry out cold calling projects from time to time. Unless you are a powerful big brand or have a successful advertising strategy, there are times where every business needs to reach out and search for new clients. Leads and referrals always achieve a higher success rate, but there are times when you find yourself picking up the phone and feeling like a kid out of school in your first telemarketing job!

Make your ego a partner in the process

As we have seen, your biggest obstacle to cold calling success is in all likelihood your ego which will do anything and will play tricks on you to get it off the hook. Unless you are tremendously thick-skinned, when cold calling you need to take your ego into account and come up with a strategy to encourage your ego play along and become a co-operating partner in the sales process.

The human ego likes pleasure and to have fun, and therein lies our plan! Now, who of you does not enjoy going to a casino and playing the slot machines? Come on, admit it. We all do. The gambling industry is one of the most profitable industries in the world and it is based on the premise of loss and rejection. But the thrill of winning, aiming for that elusive win and playing a high stakes game is incredibly alluring to the human ego. The chances may be incredibly slim, but the rewards are high. And so we play the game and enjoy it...

Do you see where I am coming from? Cold calling is actually very similar to gambling. It's a low returns game. You just need to learn how to play the game persistently well and develop the communication skills that will crack open those locks.

You can make cold calling fun; you can allow your ego to enjoy playing with the challenge and you should rather focus on that elusive win rather than dreading a sea of rejection.

It's all in the strategy

The next cold call challenge is that you need a strategy to 'open the door'. You need a conversation opener to allow a space for you to connect with your prospect.

The danger here is that we are living in a 21st century world where people are being spammed to death. How many telemarketers call you each week? How do you react to them? What stereotypes have you created in your mind about telemarketers? Just remember: everyone else has done the same.

You need to come up with a clever hook that will both get your prospect's attention and encourage them to be open up and start chatting with you. I know I personally clam up the moment I get a hint of someone trying to sell to me something. Enough already! This is the tenth one this week...

But the telemarketer who calls me like a business person on my level, who sounds like a confident expert, who has personalised the call, and who is calling to offer some kind of value/strategic partnership/some needed solution will definitely get the chance to chat with me. So, lift your status, talk like a business person and not a sales person, and utilise a strategic entry hook line that will get my attention. Now we're talking...

Does your voice attract or repel prospects?

Your prospect only has your voice and sales script to form a perception of you. When a stranger calls you, you immediately want to make sense of them. Who are they? What value can they offer? Are they worth talking to?

Your voice and how you use it tells your prospect everything they need to know about you. It gives them indicators about your background, education, confidence, status, people skills and general professionalism. When you are nervous and making a cold call, what does your voice say about you? Are you able to control the stress and tension coming through in your voice?

Your tone of voice makes 85% of your impact on the prospect. It's not so much *what* you say, it's *how* you say it that determines your chances of success.

What does your tone of voice say about your attitude? Do you sound confident, professional, enthusiastic and worth engaging with? Your tone of voice is your invitation to engage. Make sure it's a good one.

Having given voice coaching to tele-marketers in call centre environments for 20 years now, I can assure you that the ones who have learned how to use and control their voice effectively are the tele-marketers who succeed. Most telemarketers have never had voice training. What a shame. It's your only communication tool over the telephone.

Voice training for telemarketers teaches agents how to control nerves and tension, and helps them develop a strong, confident and clear voice that gets attention, sends out all the right signals and is listened to. It also teaches people how to modulate effectively and sell using the voice.

Sales is a psychological game, and it is essential that tele-marketers learn how to use a winning vocal tone and are able to lead conversations and prospects through using tried and tested vocal sales techniques.

Be realistic

One also needs to be realistic when it comes to successful cold calling. Are you going to make a sale with your first contact with a prospect? Depending on your industry, there may be more chance of winning the lottery. It's so important to be realistic when making contact with prospects.

It may be quite inappropriate to try and force your products and services on unsuspecting prospects. It's rude and may result in sabotaging your own brand.

It's usually far better to be realistic about what you can achieve with an initial call. Brand awareness may be the perfect prize. Making contact and paving the way for a future relationship is also a great win. Facilitating a new open channel of communication that can be followed up with a meeting or emailing them your promotional material is also a profound initial step on the road to success. It is important to be realistic - cold calling often isn't about making an immediate sale.

Be warm and strike hot when you cold call

By empowering yourself with realistic and effective strategies you can succeed when you embark on cold calling. Cold calling is about making a great first impression, building trust through confidence and effective communication skills as well as carefully sensing just how far you can get with that first call.

By applying all the strategies and tips outlined above you will certainly have a far greater chance of success.

ABOUT JOHN FRENCH

John French is a communication strategist and communication skills coach with 20 years extensive experience in the communication training industry. John heads up Communication Guru, a communication skills training company operating both nationally and internationally. E-mail John at john@johnfrench.co.za or visit www.communicationguru.co.za

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