



First Timer Sales Traps

By ATCEN

Most sales and business development executives today will use cold calls as one of the standard modes of approaching new clients. However, there are some obstacles I'd refer to it as traps, which the executive will fall into. Almost all first timers at sales will fall into either one of these traps, if not all of them. In most instances, it is a matter of phases before an executive will eventually fall into all of them. Here, we take a look at the context at which the executive singles out one full day a week to make cold calls. Here are four of the most common traps [in no particular order]; 1) getting started, 2) the first call of the day, 3) Standardization, & 4) over-preparing.

The first call of the day is usually going to be the hardest call of the day. Imagine a new recruit, coming just in time to work, taking 15 minutes to settle down, arrange his things and getting his cup of water/tea/coffee/Nescafe, and finally, he is ready to make his 1st call [when in fact, by then, he should already be at his 5th -8th call]. Then there's the pause. The clearing of throat, the verbal preparation, the anxiety of making that first call. All in all, he would have wasted anywhere between 20-40 minutes of precious prime time [there's only 8 hours of it in a single day, and minus one hour for lunch!]. That's almost 10% inefficiency/redundancy/waste, and you're never getting that back!

Fortunately, for everyone, there is a solution. It's called Professional Discipline. By gauging the amount of time needed for oneself to get settled in, warmed up, and ready to make that call [it usually takes between 15-30 minutes of preps], and then coming in to the office with that space of time to get prepped, you can immediately get on the phone at the start of prime time, and get the intended person right at the start of the day.

Now, we move on to the first call of the day, at which you will never quite be fully prepared for. Notice that I said never. It's true. No matter how long you've been in the business, how many sales orders you've closed, how much time you've spent on the phone, you will still never be fully prepared for the first call of the day. How can I say that? Because you will find yourself sorting things out in your head as to how the pitch should go for this first call, what you know and remember of this client, what your expectations are and what is your strategy/approach, all within a time frame where you are still a bit groggy and still haven't reach optimum performance levels. Most executives find themselves delaying, procrastinating that very first call of the morning to try to be as prepared as humanly possible, but the only thing they succeed in doing is wasting valuable prime time.

Time would be better spent just getting over that first call. In the words of Nike, Just Do It. Of course, I am not asking you to jump on the phone and randomly call any number that appears on your screen or notepad [which would put you in a totally unprepared poise and most likely lead to you being severely humiliated and losing any chance of doing business with that same client]. What I do suggest is to call a lead of which you have done enough research to know who they are, what they do, and what you can provide for them that would benefit them. Also, to minimize the cost of making blunders of the conversation, choose to call a client of which the prospects of doing business with them are the lowest, where if you lose this account, you wouldn't be banging your head on the wall. Although in reality this seems like a practice call, treat it like a big deal, by being genuinely interested in providing the client with

options from your company that can increase, develop, or enhance their business.