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Christy Van Der Westhuizen

Welcome back to the Bridge The Gap podcast. I'm your contributor and host, Christy van der Westhuizen. So today we're talking about something that I know. Oh, I know this. I know all of us have done I've done it. You've done it somewhere. Right now, a prospect is opening an email that says, Hi Susan. Just checking in with a beautiful exclamation point.

No no no no. So today we are officially inducting some of our most overused sales phrases into the follow-up Hall of Shame, shame, shame, shame, because our prospects are getting calls, texts, and emails from everybody: senior living communities, home health companies, realtors, moving companies, their siblings, their doctor. So when we finally get their attention, we can't waste it with a message that basically says, Hi. "

Do you remember me? Okay, bye. And that is exactly what just checking in does. There's no reason to respond. No new information, no personalization whatsoever. No emotion, no urgency, no next step. It's basically the sales equivalent of poking someone on Facebook in 2009. So the first Hall of Fame inductee is just checking in. Okay. So we're going to retire it immediately because what are we, checking their pulse?

Whether Mom magically changed her mind since she toured two days ago. Instead, give me a reason for the call. Maybe it's something like I was thinking about your mom because you mentioned how much she misses playing cards with her friends. Or you mentioned your biggest concern was helping Dad feel like this decision is still his. I had an idea I wanted to share with you.

Intriguing, right? Or an apartment opened up that reminded me of what you told me your mom would love. And that's a view of the beautiful gardens. Now the person has a reason to respond. So follow-up should answer this question. Why should the person talk to me today? And if you can't answer that, you may not have a follow-up strategy, a true follow-up strategy.

So you might have a CRM task that someone like me says, " Hey, we need to do, but those are not the same things. Okay, so again, you may not have the follow-up strategy if you don't have a reason why that person would talk to you that very day. So think about that. So we're going to retire that phrase, following up.

There's a reason why maybe people like me and some other folks say that's a big. That's true. Few follow-ups. Okay. So let's retire it. Okay. I have another one for you. Circling back. Yep. I have done it. I have written it. I have said it. I've texted it. All of the things. So we're going to put that to rest.

How many circles are we really making? Circling back. Just circling back on my previous email. This makes me dizzy. Circling back. That sentence practically screams my CRM. Told me I had to do this today. Instead, pick up the conversation where you actually left off. So it's something like last time we talked. You were planning on speaking with your sister.

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Had that conversation go. Or you told me Mom was so nervous about losing her independence. I've been thinking about that. And I'd love to show her what independence can actually look like here. That is true. Follow up. You listened. You remembered. And now you're continuing the conversation. And so that is why. And I hope you see this. That is why great discovery matters so much.

Because if your note says daughter looking for mom scent brochure. Mom is 85, lives alone. Good luck getting creative with that. Good luck creating a reason for them to talk to you that day. But if your notes say mom's name is Betty, she's lived in her house for 42 years and loves gardening. Pink roses are her favorite. Her biggest fear is losing independence, and her daughter is feeling really guilty about the possibility of moving her.

So I love those notes, and I'm sure that there should be paragraphs and paragraphs, more specific information about that specific potential resident and her family. But now we have something to work with. You can follow up like a true human being, and that is what connection is built on. That's what Speed to Trust is really all about: its speed to connection.

And how do you have a connection if you know nothing about the person? It's very difficult. I've tried, remember, I've followed up, and I've circled. I've circled back more times than I can count. Okay, here's another one. Get ready. I wanted to see if you had any questions. So at first glance, it sounds extremely helpful because you wanted to see if they had any questions.

But it also puts all of the work back on the prospect and his or her family. And so what if they don't even know what questions to ask? They usually only do this whole senior living experience once or twice in their lifetime, so they may not know what questions to ask. So remember, we do this every day. They do not.

So guide them. So you might want to try. Most families at this point start wondering what moving day actually looks like. Would it help if I walked you through that? Or you mentioned finances were one of your biggest concerns? I'd love to spend ten minutes comparing what mom is paying for at home today, versus what she might pay at our community.

So great salespeople lead. But please make no mistake. They don't pressure; they lead. But they also don't sit quietly waiting for an overwhelmed family to figure everything out and call us with questions. All right, next one. Are you enjoying this? I am enjoying this immensely because I'm reliving some of my days when I made all the mistakes. Let me know if there's anything I can do.

All right. We're hanging that one up to folks. So instead of being vague, tell them what you can do. I can set up lunch with a couple of residents. I can come to the house and meet Mom where

she's comfortable. AKA home visit. That's right. I can send you the next steps so this feels less overwhelming. Specific is better.

Make it easy to say yes. And while we're here, can we please talk about copy and paste? Follow up on those emails that you've been using for the past nine years. Just need to be deleted. So something like. Hi Mary, hope you're having a great week. Wanted to check in and see where you are in your search. Oh, boy, I have copied and pasted that hundreds of times.

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Oh, I hope not hundreds, but lots of times before I truly learned how to personalize every interaction. And so we basically send that same email to 12 people because your CRM says, "Ope, gotta touch these 12 people today. So that's not personalized follow-up. That's basically a mail merge with an exclamation point and maybe a smiley face.

Your prospect should feel like you remember them, that you know things about them, because hopefully you truly do. And you've written all of that in your CRM. People may not remember every feature you showed them. How could they? They're probably not going to remember the square footage of your one bedroom, and they're not going to remember every single activity that you talked about, but they're certainly going to remember how you made them feel.

So they're going to remember. Did you listen? Did you remember what mattered? Did you make their life easier? Did you help them take the next step? Now that is really great. Follow up and follow up doesn't always mean Are you ready to move in yet? Are you ready to reserve that apartment? Sometimes the goal is to simply move the relationship forward.

Learn something new. Act on something new. Maybe the sibling gets involved. Or maybe a mom agrees to come to lunch or come for a second visit or an assessment. Maybe they agree to look at the apartment one more time to make sure that view is perfect for mom. Those are all wins on the board. Those are all micro commitments.

So what's the smallest reasonable step that we can take together? And so here's my challenge this week. Go into your CRM and find five prospects you've been checking in with. Yes, checking in. But before you contact them, ask yourself: What did they tell me matters most to them? What's actually preventing them from moving forward? And what value can I add to them today?

And then reach out. Not to check in. Not to circle back, not to touch base. Not to follow up. Reach out because you have something meaningful to say and something meaningful to learn. So here's the big takeaway from today. Great follow-up is not reminding people that you exist. I think I've used the words. Top of mind in the past, but great follow-up is reminding them that you listened, that you understand what they're navigating, and that you can help them take the next step.

So this week, if you catch yourself just checking in. Stop. Delete it. Think about the human on the other side of that email, that text, that phone call, and then figure out a reason for them to talk to you. Give them a reason to respond, because just checking in has officially entered the follow-up Hall of Shame. Have an amazing week, and for the love of all things sales, please stop circling back. Have a great day! Thank you so much for listening. Can't wait to chat with you again soon.