

SALES & LEAD GENERATION

Why Telesales, when you can Telemarket?

By Leyla Hussein • 10 October 2019



I was in a client's office a while ago, waiting in reception, when I caught one side of a phone call drifting over from a desk nearby. A young lad, headset on, working down a list. "Hi, am I speaking with the person who handles your, er, printing?" A pause. "No? And who would that be?" Another pause, shorter. Then the flat click of a line going dead, and on he went to the next number, reading the same opening word for word. He had no idea who he had just called, what they did, or why they might conceivably care. He was not selling. He was reciting.

We have all been on the receiving end of that call, the scripted one where it is obvious within a sentence that the caller knows nothing about you. Number after number, the same stagnant pitch, the same irrelevant offer. The result is a listener, because there is rarely a conversation to be had, who is left faintly annoyed and a little less likely ever to answer an unknown number again. It is worth being clear about what that is. It is not marketing. It is noise with a phone attached.

The damage it does

The frustrating part, for those of us who do this properly, is that the bad calls poison the well for everyone. People have made genuine fortunes selling number-blocking software, precisely because so many of us are now actively trying to keep sales calls out. That is a remarkable thing when you stop to think about it: a whole industry built on preventing another industry. And it exists because too many callers never learned the difference between [telesales](#) and [telemarketing](#). People do not hate salespeople. They hate being interrupted by something completely irrelevant to them.

Do the work first

The fix is not complicated, though it is more effort than reading from a script. Make the call relevant. That means doing the research before you dial: knowing who you are calling, understanding fully what their company does and what this particular person's role is. There is no bigger turn-off than an under-prepared salesperson, and no faster way to earn a hearing than clearly having done your homework. Research the industry, research the company, research the person. Only then are you ready to pick up the phone.

Then make it a warm one

Once you know who you are speaking to and why it might matter to them, the call itself changes character entirely. Now you can be genuinely useful rather than merely persistent. Be confident, because you have something worth their time. Be useful, because you have taken the trouble to understand their world. Be polite, always. And above all, be different from the lad in that reception, because the bar, frankly, is not high. A warm, well-researched call does not feel like a sales call at all. It feels like a conversation with someone who happens to be able to help, which, done right, is exactly what it is.

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