

A SALES LEADER'S GUIDE

Cold Call Objection Handling



Outreach



At Outreach, we've worked closely with thousands of sales managers who want to give their team the best resources to be successful. We've based this guide on what we've heard from our customers as well as what we've learned from our own journey in outbound selling.



Before you even get to the objections...

Cold calling is hard. The truth is, reps that make cold calls are interrupting their prospects and their calls are not immediately welcome. We've taken a deep look at our own data and identified common objections as well as general best practices that all successful cold calls had in common.

Make your prospect feel safe

Humans are predictable, and when humans get caught off-guard, they immediately express a fight-or-flight response. If you've ever heard the phrase, "smile and dial", it implies that the likeable, non-threatening, warm attitude you convey can be relayed through the phone to the prospect. You want to make the prospect feel safe, increasing the chances that you can get through to the next challenge.

Be relevant to your prospect

Once your warm attitude gets you through the first few seconds of the call, you should focus on establishing relevance. Prospects at this stage are wondering "so what?" and you want them to think "me too!" Spend this time explaining why you have specifically called the prospect and what you are offering that will genuinely help him/her.

Be confident and be certain

Certainty sells. If you are attempting to convince a decision-maker to take you seriously and listen to you, you should practice the following four principles before and during the call.

- Truly understand your prospect
- Truly understand the pain they experience
- Truly believe your solution solves that pain
- Express your confidence and certainty in regards to all the above

If you do not believe your solution is a good fit for the prospect, don't call. If you genuinely don't believe in what you're selling, you should change your job to selling something you do believe in.



Conditioned Response

These generally occur in the first 10 seconds of the call and are intended to end the conversation as soon as possible. Here's what you'll hear from your prospects as well as how to handle them to keep the discussion productive.

If you get past your product pitch, you may encounter an objection. Here are three main categorizations of objections you may encounter as well as how to navigate around them:

OBJECTION	SUGGESTED RESPONSE	WHY THIS WORKS
<i>I'm not interested.</i>	<i>{Name}, many of my best customers also said they weren't interested when I first called but now they're getting X & Y results from our product/service.</i>	This transitions the narrative to one about your happy customers, reminding the prospect that you've called them for a specific reason — you're not asking if they are interested.
<i>Send me some information.</i>	<i>Happy to. But typically when I hear that what it means is you don't have time for this right now. When could we schedule a time when you're not so busy...</i>	You relate to the buyer's lack of time while offering a face-to-face solution that better fits their schedule.
<i>I'm headed into a meeting.</i>	<i>Understood, when is a good time for us to talk about...</i>	Meetings are important and you're respecting your prospect's schedule. This response gets your prospect to give you a time on the fly that they're more likely to answer your call. Now you can hold them to it!
<i>I don't have time to talk.</i>	<i>Totally understand. You weren't expecting my call. I'll be brief and let you get back to your day...</i>	You shouldn't expect to be on a cold call for very long. This statement reaffirms that you understand your prospect is a busy person and that you're being as succinct as possible.



<i>How did you get my name/number?</i>	<i>Fair question. I work for a company that focuses on X, and my job is to find leaders whose teams might benefit from our solution. So when I come across someone like you, I move mountains to get in touch with them.</i>	<p>This highlights their importance to you and the work you've done to get in contact with them. You're not calling them simply because they're on a list.</p>
<i>I'm not the right person to talk to.</i>	<i>No problem, {Name} — sorry about that! Who would be the right person in your organization to connect to?</i>	<p>Use this as an opportunity to learn who you should call next. Even better, you can namedrop this person in your next discussion: "John recommended that I speak with you". While this call may end, you'll have an even better chance at success with the next one.</p>
<i>I've never even heard of your company.</i>	<i>{Name}, I completely understand that you haven't heard of us. In fact that's the same thing we heard from the {insert persona you are calling} at companies like {insert customer references}. However, they took some extra time to give us a cursory evaluation and now their team is {insert results}. We would love to get your team the same results.</i>	<p>This response makes it irrelevant that the prospect has not heard of your company. This is about results, and you back it up by name-dropping similar companies in their space that have experienced those results.</p>



Business Case Objections

If you're able to get past the initial few seconds on the phone, you may face a more advanced objection—one that indicates they have a basic understanding of what you are trying sell and how it's not a good fit for them.

OBJECTION	SUGGESTED RESPONSE	WHY THIS WORKS
<i>We only do business a certain way.</i>	<i>We are actually very flexible. We can work with any team, any way they want to work. We work with companies like X and Y, who have a similar situation as you-- and we're producing {insert results} results for them.</i>	This response opens up the door for them to explain how and who they do business with. By adding customer proof points, you further validate this point and block the objection.
<i>We use a special, different approach.</i>	<i>Great, so do many of our customers like {insert similar customers}.</i>	This works because you let the prospect know you understand that it's OK to have a different approach, that you are used to that and have made other companies with different approaches successful as well.
<i>I am not looking for new software / solutions / this isn't a priority for me right now.</i>	<i>Understood-- I'm not asking you to buy anything right now. Let's take some time to talk about how we're producing X results for customer like {insert similar customers}, and if at that point you feel the same way, we'll thank each other for our time, and go on about our day.</i>	This response humanizes you as the caller-- in the end you don't want to sell something the prospect really doesn't need. This level-sets expectations and increases the chances that they'll give you time for a proper pitch.
<i>Call back in X months or X quarter.</i>	<i>What's going to change between now and then?</i>	We love this answer! This continues the conversation so you can gauge the authenticity of the prospect's objection and learn about current and future goals.
<i>I have everything I need.</i>	<i>That's great! So clearly, you're a forward thinker that invests in everything your team needs. We love people like you! Why not take a look at what we offer to make sure you have all the best tools?</i>	Your prospect will feel flattered and realize that they really should consider what you have to offer if they want to keep their competitive edge.



Incumbent Solution Objections

This type of response exposes an existing solution is already in place — leaving no room for what you have to sell.

OBJECTION	SUGGESTED RESPONSE	WHY THIS WORKS
<i>I'm not the decision maker.</i>	Look {Prospect Name}, no one is going to have a better understanding of how a product /solution like ours could boost the results for your team more than you.	This directs the conversation back to the results they can receive versus deflecting the call to someone else on their team. You want the prospect to either reconsider and continue the call or give you a genuine referral to who he/she believes is the decision-maker.
<i>I don't have the budget / it's too expensive.</i>	You weren't expecting my call, so I wouldn't expect you to have a budget. Most of our biggest customers started in this exact same way.	This response highlights that you are a real person who understands the inconvenience of an unscheduled call. You are a professional and you've heard this many times before! Remember, confidence!
<i>We already use X. (non-competitive)</i>	X Solutions are great for {what they're good for}. We're different in that we focus/specialize in {what problems you solve}.	Recognize that you understand the non-related solution referenced and that you understand that it's not the same as what you are trying to sell.
<i>We're already using one of your competitors.</i>	Many of the competitors do a fraction of what we do, and you may need to layer multiple solutions on top of one another to accomplish a single outcome. Would you be interested to learn how our solution is different as well as the benefits of a consolidated platform?	This smoothly transitions the conversation back into how your product/solution is different and why the prospect should take that into consideration.

Avoid these phrases at all costs

DON'T SAY	WHY YOU SHOULDN'T SAY THIS
<i>Is this a bad time?</i>	We'll go ahead and answer this for you for all your future cold calls. Yes , you've probably called at a bad time. You probably interrupted your prospect while he/she was doing something else. Don't give your prospect an easy way out in the first few seconds of your call.
<i>How are you?</i>	For one, your prospect immediately knows you're a sales rep, and two, they likely know you don't actually care how they are. Don't waste their time and instead tell them why you're relevant.
<i>Does that make sense?</i>	This question is lazy and an answer of "no" basically means the prospect is too stupid to understand what the rep is saying or the rep is too stupid to explain what he/she meant.
<i>Using the word "honestly"</i>	This could imply that not everything you said on the call up until this point was truthful. You want to come off as full of truth, not full of lies.
<i>Using the word "just"</i>	From "Smart Calling" by Art Sobczak: "The word 'just' sounds weak and diminishes everything that follows it."
<i>"I'd love to set aside some time"</i>	The prospect does not care what you'd love to do. Instead, say "Let's schedule some time."



Getting prospects on the phone and igniting interest is a rare feat, but when you're able to cultivate a productive and meaningful conversation by navigating swiftly through common call objections, that's where the magic happens.

Get started today by crafting your own Call Objection Guide.

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