



# **Sales Training Manual**



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## Introduction

This manual is designed for Business Development Representatives and other sales people and those who want to understand how and what we sell at Domco Technology. The purpose of this manual is to define our sales model, typical client, major divisions, commission structures, objection handling and how we as a company differentiate ourselves from our competitors by consistently bringing superior value to our clients. The goal of this material is to give you the information you need to better represent Domco Technologies to clients.

As you read each section, you will see certain sentences and phrases in *Italics*. Try to memorize these sentences and phrases word for word and use them in front of potential clients. They are tried and true and they will serve you well. Remember that only those things committed to memory will be of value to you when standing before a client. Read this material carefully. Highlight sections that apply specifically to you and take notes during training classes. After you have been on the job a few weeks, go back and re-read the material. Make it a habit to review this material a few times a year. If you earn your living through commissioned sales, it's critical that you know this material in detail. Experience may be the best teacher, but it is also the most costly. Dedicate yourself to committing this material to memory before the lessons become very expensive.



***“The trouble with experience is that she  
Gives you the test and then the lesson.”***

# Marketing Mix

## Divisions

Domco Technology has four major divisions. Our slogan is "*The Information Technology Specialists*". We position ourselves as a resource center for information technology professionals. Our divisions are briefly defined below:

### Project Solutions

This division offers complete custom software development project outsourcing. They take on full accountability for software deliverable. The projects division is structured into groups. Each group manager reports to the division director. Developers report to project leaders who report to group managers.

### Training Services

This division specialized in Information Technology (IT) training. They teach both public and customized classes for software developers and system administrators. They do not teach application or end user software. Their typical classes are built around an intense one-week format. They also deliver mentoring services and courseware. The staffing division consists of training sales representatives who report to a sales manager and trainer/developers who report to the director of the division.

### Network Services

The Network Services Division consists of network administrators, technicians and engineers who report directly to the division director. They provide capacity planning studies, network maintenance, problem resolution, emergency services and on-going support.

## Selling Philosophy

Selling to corporate clients today is very different than it was 15 years ago or even ten years ago. Advances in communications and transportation now allow us to sell to a much broader audience. There are many more clients for the services we offer. That's the good news. The bad news is that each of these clients has far less time to spend with us. Our industry in general has become fast paced almost to the point of frenzy. The time demands placed on decision-makers are increasing exponentially. Unfortunately, most people today earning a living through sales are still relying on sales approaches developed prior to the information age.

The majority of the sales training that is available today is rooted in methodologies that no longer accurately reflect the way that modern executives think and make buying decisions. It is my strong conviction that those who wish to be extraordinarily successful in sales to the modern decision-maker must embrace a different attitude towards selling.

The following information is a new approach and attitude to selling that is more suited for the information age. The world has changed and the sales professionals that I see being the most successful have changed their selling approach to fit the new paradigm.

Years ago, "*relationship selling*" became a standard for corporate solicitors.

Based on the teachings of Dale Carnegie and others in the early part of this century, relationship selling was based on the premise that "people buy from people they know and like". With this belief as the fundamental premise, salespeople set out to build long term relationships with corporate clients. The personal sales call was the main tool used to promote this end. Salespeople bought gifts for their clients, took them golfing, took them to dinner, and learned all they could about their client's personal life. If you were the account representative for Mr. Foister, then you were expected to know the names of Mr. Foister's family members, where he went to college, what sports teams he liked, etc. The image of the executive sales representative was that of a smiling, back slapping Joe who "never met a stranger". In fact, it was impossible to separate his clients from his personal friends, they were synonymous for all practical purposes.

The logic behind this type of selling was simple; if a client considered you to be a friend, then he would buy your product or service. It works! Sales professionals I know who mastered the human-relations approach to selling are much closer to their clients and their clients are very loyal, but they are not necessarily the high-volume producers of the information age. Unless we are in an industry that has very few decision-makers, you will need more than relationship selling to be uncommonly successful.

The world has changed and so have the executives to which we sell. Decision-makers do not tend to stay in one position or even with one company that long anymore. It used to be that if Mr. Foister was a purchasing agent for XYZ Corporation, you could count on him being there for many years if not for life. The “cradle to the grave” employee has become an expression of days long gone.

The lesson of the last part of this century has been that there is no such thing as job security. Most decision-makers now realize that we are all expendable and must depend on our own wits to advance our careers and to provide security for our families.

So, the first change we must accept in our new information age selling model is that decision-makers are transitory. Besides an increase in decision-makers moving between companies today, we also see a dramatic increase in these executives changing positions within their organizations. Companies are in an all-out defensive to keep their top decision makers. They have become very flexible, offering executives multiple career paths and opportunities to change job responsibilities when they get bored or feel burned out. The net result is good. Companies are starting to value their employees more and offer them options. Companies are viewing their workers less as robots and more as individuals who need diversion in their job responsibilities.

What does all this mean to our new sales model? It generally does not pay to put large amounts of time and effort into an individual client to build a long-term relationship for the purpose of selling. Decision-makers are transitory. After working for months building a relationship with Mr. Foister, you will call one day to find that he is no longer making the purchasing decisions for your service. He has been moved to another department to fill a vacancy left when a coworker resigned for another opportunity. Companies are constantly restructuring, reorganizing and reassigning responsibilities. Whatever new sales model we choose to use, it must be based on short term investments of our time with specific individual decision-makers. Long term investments of our time and energy in individual relationship building for the purpose of selling are too costly and risky.

The information age has also created another major change in the attitudes of executives. They make decisions faster. The demands being placed on decision-makers have increased exponentially. They now have to contend with multiple devices competing for their attention. With voice mail, e-mail, the Internet, personal digital devices, cellular phones, faxes, etc., executives have never been more accessible. Coworkers, vendors, employees and bosses are all able to get at the executive almost effortlessly and compete for his or her time. With a few exceptions such as government accounts, the speed with which purchasing decisions are made by executives is increasing at a phenomenal rate. The information age has increased the speed with which business moves. Decision cycles that used to be measured in months are now measured in days.



What does this mean to our sales model?

Most modern executives are not purchasing from their friends. They are purchasing from acquaintances who present a timely solution to the immediate problem they are facing. They are not as concerned about making the “best” decision as they are about making a reasonably good decision quickly. As a sales person and a decision-maker, I cannot tell you how many times I have found myself in this situation. I may know after a day of information gathering that the product or service I have chosen is a good and reasonable choice. It is probably not the best choice available, but it would take another full day or two of information gathering to locate and qualify a choice that would be only four to five percent better. Usually, it is not worth my time, so I go with the reasonable choice knowing full well that it may not and probably is not the best possible decision I could make.

Most decision-makers have learned to choose their battles and to protect their time. Their goal is not to make perfect choices, but to make reasonable choices in a reasonable amount of time. It is critical for those of us in sales to understand this *information age attitude* if we are to form an effective sales model for it.

Selling successfully today is not as dependent on the quality of the sales person as it is on the urgency of the decision-maker’s needs. The bottom line is that today's decision-makers are transitory and, in a hurry, to make reasonable decisions. The facts that we must consider when selling in the information age is that we have access to a lot more decision makers, but they have less time to spend making each decision. These facts dictate a sales approach that does not spend a lot of time with each prospect, but contacts as many prospects as possible at the time when they are making buying decisions.

So, what is the secret to selling successfully in the information age? First of all, stop spending so much time trying to create desire for your product or service and start spending more time locating clients who already know that they want your product or service. When it comes to selling in the information age, it’s far easier to find hungry clients than it is to try to make your clients hungry.

# The Sales Cycle

There are four distinct phases in our sales process. Each phase will be discussed in separate sections.

- A. **Prospecting**  
The process of locating the names and phone numbers of potential clients.
- B. **Cold Calling**  
The process of contacting prospects, locating the decision-maker and pre-qualifying suspect accounts.
- C. **Selling**  
The process of convincing a potential client that we have a reasonable solution that will meet his or her needs.
- D. **Relationship Building**  
The processes of solidifying a long-term relationship with a client that is built on trust and good account maintenance.

Each phase of the selling process is very important. Early on, your prospecting and cold calling skills will be your most important tools for success. As you build a loyal customer base, your selling and account maintenance will become increasingly important. You must be skilled in all of these phases of the sales process. A tragic weakness in any one area will neutralize your skills in the other areas. We begin with prospecting.

# Prospecting

## What is Prospecting?

Prospecting is the process of searching for potential customers, clients, or buyers in order to develop new business. The end goal is to move prospects through the sales funnel until they eventually convert into revenue-generating customers.

One of the most critical tasks a sales professional will engage in is the location and qualification of prospects. A prospect is a potential client or account. Prospecting is the art of locating these potential decision-makers. Most prospects will not become clients, but it is through the often-laborious task of prospecting that we eventually do locate our best accounts. If we contact fifty prospects, we will more than likely discover only one potential customer. Therefore, most successful sales representatives will spend more time prospecting than actually selling. Prospecting is the hard work that makes sales possible.

***It's more important to have good prospecting skills than good sales skills.***

An excellent prospector will run into a lot of customers who require no selling; they are ready to buy a timely solution to their immediate need. The greatest sales skills in the world will not help a representative who does not get the opportunity to make a presentation. Without good prospecting habits, clients will not be discovered and all of the sales skills we have discussed will never be utilized. When hiring sales professionals in the past, I have often had to choose between an individual who clearly had superior sales skills and one who had better tenacity and organization skills. I almost always choose the later. That individual will make a better prospector and that will ultimately lead to more success than having wonderful sales skills that do not get used very often.

Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock. That's the sound of the countdown that begins each day of every week of every month. It's the one aspect of sales that just never changes.

Sell, sell, sell.

As we've all experienced, sales essentially come down to two things:

1. Numbers
2. Time

And those two things often go hand-in-hand. While we (or our team) are racing to hit quota against that clock. But we *can* save time and maximize our numbers by investing in the right processes, activities, and skills.

Truth is, sales is changing -- *quickly*. As sales conversations grow even more buyer-focused, sales reps have begun developing their own hacks, techniques, and processes for prospecting.

That's where this guide comes in. In this growing sales landscape, we'll outline the various processes and key strategies for prospecting -- the phase of selling that often consumes the most time and energy (and is the most crucial to get right). Let's start with a quick refresher:

## **What's the difference between leads and prospects?**

### **Lead vs Prospect**

**Leads:** Potential customers who have expressed interest in our company or services through behaviors like visiting our website, calling for information, meeting at a trade show etc...

**Prospects:** Leads become prospects if they are qualified as potential customers, meaning that they align with the persona of our target buyer. A prospect may also be classified as a potential customer who has limited or no interaction with our company, but they would *not* be considered a lead.

Leads or prospects, the end goal is the same: Nurture potential customers until they buy our product or service. Here is what the funnel looks like:

## **Ways to Prospect**

Every industry has its best-kept secrets for locating potential clients. We will continually be advertising, conducting seminars, purchasing mailing lists, etc., but these marketing efforts can never replace the full-time efforts of the local salesperson. Here are a few habits that should be a part of your life for as long as you are involved in sales.

- **Competitors**

Make it a habit to get your competitors' marketing literature, read their web site regularly and subscribe to any newsletter they offer. Competitors will often list their client references and even announce with whom they have won bids. Even if their clients are completely happy with their current vendor, that competitor may not offer all of the services that we do. There may be a chance for you to get in the door by offering one of the services that we offer but the competitor does not.

A good prospector will constantly be on the lookout for opportunities to meet needs with the services we offer.

- **Never meet a stranger**

Our livelihood in sales depends on our ability to be in the right place at the right time; more specifically, our ability to accumulate and utilize information that will put us in the right place at the right time. Think about all of the people you meet at social events, church, and clubs or just around your neighborhood. Make it a habit when doing small talk to find out where your acquaintances work and what they do. Friendly people like to help each other out

More often, the individual you speak with will not be the decision-maker, but he or she will gladly point you in the right direction and give you a referral. Some people say that they are not comfortable mixing business and pleasure in this way.

High achievers tend to not make such strong distinctions between work and play. They do not just leave their skills at work when they go home. The people I meet often become my friends, and I like helping my friends to prosper.

- **Client Referrals**

The best source of all for prospecting is your own customer database. As it grows, you will be able to penetrate deeper into major accounts by leveraging your references. Always ask for referrals when you talk to you clients. We will cover this in much more detail in the next section.

### 1. Goal: Determine quality of lead

#### **Qualifying dimensions:**

Criteria used to evaluate the probability that a lead or prospect will become a customer.

#### **CRM (customer relationship management):**

Software that allows companies to keep track of their potential and existing customers at whichever stage they may assume in the sales cycle.

### 2. Prospect Goal: Get to a connect

#### **Gatekeeper:**

Person in charge of communicating or preventing information from reaching a decision-maker; for example, receptionists or personal assistants.

#### **Decision-maker:**

The person in charge of making a final decision on the sale. We usually have to go through a gatekeeper to reach them.

### 3. Connect Goal: Schedule next meeting

#### **Discovery call:**

The first contact a sales rep makes with a prospect with the aim to qualify them as a lead for the next step in the sales cycle

### 4. Educate and Evaluate Goal: Evaluate and qualify needs

#### **Pain point:**

A prospect's business need; this is what sales reps must identify in order to provide value and move them farther along in the sales cycle

#### **Objection:**

A prospect's challenge leading to opposing a product or service, i.e. budget, time constraints.

### 5. Close Goal: Turn Opportunities into Customers

**Closed-won:** When the buyer purchases a product or service from the sales rep.

**Closed-lost:** When the buyer fails to purchase a product or service from the sales rep.

**Closing ratio:** Ratio of prospects that a sales rep closes and wins.

# Sales Prospecting Techniques

As the sales environment matures, we're seeing a shift from and either/or methodology of prospecting. Reps no longer have to choose between inbound or outbound prospecting. Instead, they must decide how to do both responsibly.

Here's the big difference in the two methodologies:

## Outbound Prospecting

**Cold calling:** Unsolicited calls to sell a product or service.

**Social spamming:** Unsolicited social media messages to sell a product or service

**The Process:** Research takes longer without any prior history with a contact. Less context for us when we're ready to reach out to establish a connection.

Example: *"Hi John, I wanted to reach out to you because I've worked with companies similar to yours in the past."*

## Inbound Prospecting

**Warm emailing:** Warm emails to explore a relationship with a lead who has already expressed familiarity with your product or service

**Social selling:** Using social media to explore a relationship with a lead who has already expressed familiarity with your product or service; sales reps can provide value to prospects on social media by answering their questions and introducing them to useful content.

**The Process:** Research process is shorter as we already have their contact information and interaction history. Provides us with context about the prospect's interests or prior behavior, allowing us to develop more personalized outreach.

Example: *"Hi John, I'm reaching out because I noticed you were looking at our website."*

### **The Inbound Methodology:**

... with a responsible approach to outbound tactics like cold calling and cold outreach. Because, let's face it -- not every lead you get will be "warm." Our world is now characterized by infinite information, whenever we want.

Before we make a purchasing decision, 60% of us rely on word-of-mouth, friends, and social media; 49% on customer references; 47% on analyst reports and recommendations; and 44% on media articles.

Before a salesperson even has a chance to contact a prospect, he or she is already 57% of the way through the sales process. Yet, salespeople are still cold calling as if buyers have no awareness. Experienced salespeople can expect to spend 7.5 hours of cold calling to get ONE qualified appointment.

It's time companies and sales reps start paying attention to buyers, leveraging their context, and understanding who they are and what they need.

Companies using inbound and responsible outbound sales techniques are better positioned for success in this new realm of buyer awareness. In fact, 64% of teams that use inbound selling reach their quotas as opposed to 49% of sales teams who use only outbound sales.

Now, let's look at specific frameworks and techniques for how we can adopt an inbound approach to prospecting.

## Prospecting

50% of sales time is wasted on unproductive prospecting. I don't want you to fall into that sales statistic. That's why I recommend the inbound way and put together a basic framework that applies to all sales processes. But with a twist.

As I mentioned earlier, we understand that everyone has their own approach. So, I also weaved in personal prospecting tips and tricks from the best salespeople I know. Pick and play with whatever work best for your own sales hustle.

### Step 1: Research

This is by far the most important aspect of prospecting. We must ensure that we're qualifying our prospects to improve our chances of providing value to them or their business.

In this stage of prospecting, we're looking to accomplish a few goals:

- Determine if the prospect is workable
- Qualify and begin prioritizing prospects
- Develop a connection through rapport and Building trust



Here are some important qualifying dimensions to evaluate if a prospect has a high probability of becoming a customer:

### **Is the prospect's business an organizational fit?**

This type of qualification is based solely on demographics. Does the prospect fall within my territory? Do we sell in their industry? Does it fit our buyer persona?

Say our target market consists of small to medium-sized businesses with anywhere from 100 to 1,000 employees. We should eliminate any potential customers outside of these criteria.

Diving deeper, our product or service will naturally provide higher value to a particular profile within that target market. For example, medium-sized businesses consisting of a larger team.

Those customers are also more likely to upgrade to a higher tier of our product, providing more lifetime value as a customer.

**Takeaway:** Prioritize customers based on the size of the opportunity, or their potential lifetime value.

### **Have you identified key stakeholders?**

There are two types of people involved on the other end of our sales process:

#### ***Decision-makers and influencers.***

**Influencers** may not have the power to buy, but they're often the ones that will be using the product and thus can become our biggest internal advocates. If we get them to rally around our offering, they can make a compelling case to decision-makers before we even speak with them.

**Decision-makers** are, of course, the ones that either approve or reject the buy. We can ask these questions to determine the decision-making process: Will anyone else be involved in this decision? Does this purchase come out of your immediate budget?

**Takeaway:** Keep a working list of influencers and buyers, perhaps mapped out by the organizational structure of the organization. We'll use this list later, when we're in the outreach phase of prospecting.

### **Are the prospect's constraints a deal-breaker?**

Time constraints and budget limitations are often the biggest objections we receive from prospects. Before wasting time on an exploratory call to hear this objection, let's do some homework beforehand to see if we can filter out potential buyers who clearly don't have the bandwidth to consider our offering.

**Takeaway:** If we see a prospect has just launched a new marketing campaign, they might not have the time to cycle through an extensive sales process. We should take note of prospects who clearly have their hands tied and revisit them at a later date.

### **Do you have familiarity with the market?**

We're likely to be more familiar with certain types of companies, markets, or industries than others. Our pitch and sales techniques are also likely to be more refined with markets we feel comfortable talking about, so we should prioritize these prospects first.

**Takeaway:** Group similar prospects by characteristics such as their service offering, their market, or their industry, and prioritize these groups based on our familiarity with them.

Value-added prospects to whom we can provide more value are more likely to buy our offering. For example, if we're selling Solution based services to the construction industry and we see that our prospect already is using a similar product, the probability we can create tremendous additional value is high based on we can add more value and save them money.

**Takeaway:** Classify prospects by the level of value we think we can provide.

Do they have an awareness of our offering?

Our prospects will likely have varying levels of knowledge about our product or services. The more awareness they have, the more likely they are to see the value in our offering and become customers.

If a prospect has visited our website, subscribed to our blog, or posted content about something related to our offering, they probably know a lot about our company or service.

## Step 2: **Prioritize**

Prioritizing our prospects can save us time and ensure we're dedicating our strongest efforts to prospects that are most likely to become customers. Levels of prioritization will vary between each type of sales organization and each individual salesperson, but the main idea is to create a few buckets of prospects based on their likelihood to buy and focus on one bucket at a time.

Let's break down the qualifying dimensions used in our list above (and any additional relevant dimensions) into percentages between 1% and 100% based on how important they are to the sales process. For example, size of opportunity is probably more important to us than timing in terms of closing a deal, so it would receive a 70% whereas timing would receive a 5%.

Now we can assign a value between 1 and 100 to these dimensions for each prospect in our list. Once we complete this step, we can multiply each prospect's value by the percentage weight we gave to the dimension.

Add up these dimension scores until each prospect has a total score. And now our entire list is prioritized.

## Step 3: **Prep the outreach**

The end goal of this step is to gather in-depth information on our prospects in order to hone our pitch and personalize our outreach. So first, we must determine what our prospects care about.

We can do this in a few ways:

- Find their social media presence. Do they have recent updates or a new post?
- Check the company website to review "About Us" information

Once we've learned more about our prospect's business and role, we need to find a reason to connect. Do we have mutual connections? Has there been a trigger event? Have they recently visited our website? If so, which search terms drove them to our site? Which pages did they look at? This will help us better handle any objections and personalize a pitch that resonates with their primary objectives.

We could conduct a competitive analysis to determine how we can better position our company's service or product within the industry and how we can combat prospects' objections.

#### Step 4: **The first touch**

Whether calling or emailing, our outreach should be highly tailored to our prospect's business, goals and industry.

Keep these general tips in mind when contacting a prospect, whether on the phone or through email:

##### **Personalize.**

Reference a specific problem that the prospect is encountering with a specific solution.

##### **Stay relevant and timely.**

Ensure the issue a prospect is trying to solve is still relevant to him or her and their team.

##### **Be human.**

No one likes to communicate with a professional robot. Adding in details like wishing someone a happy holiday weekend or by conveying how awesome their company's product is are *real* touches that allow us to establish a connection on a deeper level.

##### **Help, don't sell.**

Provide value and ask for nothing in return. This process isn't about us, it's about THEM. For example, instead of scheduling a follow up meeting, we could offer to conduct an audit on their Inventory control and get back to them with our findings in a few days.

**Keep it casual.** Remember that this is just a conversation. Stay natural and as non-salesy as possible. The key to prospecting, and sales, is that we're **never** selling. We're simply determining if both parties could mutually benefit from a relationship.

In terms of establishing contact, we must decide between email or phone communication. Some of us will initially jump on the cold email approach while others will dive into the cold call. This strategy will vary based on what each salesperson feels most comfortable with, but let's quickly review pros and cons to both.

## **Email: Pros**

- Visual
- Allows prospect to consider our offer.
- Provides prospect with adequate time to research our company and product.
- Easily forwarded to key stakeholders who might be a better fit to speak with.

## **Email: Cons**

- Email is a cluttered space, so it may be harder to grab a prospect's attention.
- Emails are easily deleted or forgotten.
- We may have to follow up multiple times before we get a response.

## **Phone: Pros**

- Calls are less common than email, so they can grab a prospect's attention quickly.
- Immediately establishes a more intimate connection and develop rapport.
- Often more timely than email, and can accelerate the time it takes to close a deal.

## **Phone: Cons**

- Prospects maybe less inclined to consider a pitch or schedule a second meeting.
- There's no guarantee a prospect will pick up.
- Voicemail can often be as cluttered as email.

Successful first touch strategies often incorporate both approaches to take advantage of the pros and minimize the cons.

But, how do we leave a voicemail or send an email that prospects want to respond to? Let's dive into the dos and don'ts of each communication method below:

## The Warm Email

If we're looking to send a first-touch email that gets opened, there are some things that we must include:

- **Engaging subject line:**  
The subject line has to pique the prospect's interest while avoiding cliché hooks.
- **Personal opening line:**  
We should begin our cold email by saying something about them, not about us. After all, this process is about finding the prospect's pain points and determining a way to add value to their business or processes.
- **Creating a connection:**  
Now we have to make the connection. In our opening, they learn why we're reaching out to them, but now they need to know why they should care about what we do.
- **Clear call-to-action:**  
Suggest a concrete time to connect or ask a close-ended question to make it clear that the ball is in their court. Try using one of these lines: "Do you have ten minutes to catch up tomorrow?" or "Are you available for a 15-minute call on Tuesday between 9-11 a.m.?"

## The Prospecting Call

If we decide to call a prospect, whether in conjunction with an email or not, we can follow this basic structure for the call:

1. **Establish rapport:**  
We shouldn't shy away from personal conversations, like asking how a prospect's weekend was or what team they're rooting for in the game tonight. These intimate touches help us develop a more meaningful relationship with prospects and enhance our likeability which, hopefully, means a prospect will be more likely to buy from us.
2. **Leverage pain points:**  
Dive into their pain points during the call. By the end of the conversation, we should know all of their primary business challenges and the underlying causes associated with them. Once we have an understanding of these key issues, we can better position our product or services to solve them.

3. **Create curiosity:**

Ask questions about their business. Ask more than tell. This conversation is about them and understanding their needs and problems. The less we talk about our business and product, the more our prospect will be interested to hear the final pitch.

4. **Wrap it up:**

Find a calendar time between 24-48 hours after discovery call to book a follow-up meeting. Try this line: "Would you have 20-30 minutes to follow up this week? My colleague, John, will join us -- he's an expert in X, Y, Z. My calendar's open, what works best for you?"

## Step 5: Iterate

Keep notes throughout this process to assess what activities generated value for the prospecting process and which wasted time.

After each contact with a prospect, we should assess how well we think we:

- Uncovered challenges
- Helped create well-defined goals
- Confirmed availability of budget
- Understand decision-making process
- Determined consequences of inaction
- Identified potential results of success

This self-reflection will help us improve our calling techniques in the future.

# Cold Calling

## Why Cold Call

Cold calling is the engine that makes the automated sales approach work. Because there are so many leads out there and the phone is your main tool, cold calls become a way of life for the professional sales person in the information age. It's far easier to locate contacts that want and need your product than it is to try to create desire in contacts that do not have an immediate need for your services. There are a lot more clients out there today, but they have less time to spend with you. The phone is the fastest way to quickly talk to a lot of contacts. This all adds up to cold calling.

Over the years, I have made peace with cold calling. No sales person likes interrupting important people. We like verbal abuse even less. But, as your skin gets thicker and your successes become more frequent, making a cold call seems like fishing. Each call is like skillfully casting a line. No seasoned fisherman would curse the cast that did not retrieve a fish. In fact, casting is part of the pleasure of fishing.

***It's easier to locate needs  
Than it is to create them.***

No one likes to feel unimportant and cold calls have a way of doing that to you. When people brush you off or are rude, they are communicating that you are not as important as they are and what you have to say is not significant. It takes a lot of courage to make regular cold call presentation and a lot of self-esteem to deal with the rejection. "No" and "not interested" are the two most common phrases a salesperson hears each day.

The fact is that you, the sales person, are the lifeblood of any company. I always told my employees that there was nothing happening in the building that was more important than a sale being made. Successful salespeople and politicians say that it is not so much reality that determines the future as it is the perception of reality. The greatest product or service in the world is useless to you if you do not know about it. Salespeople play an incredibly important role in any economy because they build that vital bridge between the laboratory and the real world. Without them, there would be no laboratory or products from that lab for the world to enjoy.



The contact you call may be an important person and he may be doing something important, but so are you and so is the information you are providing. **Do not be intimidated by foolish managers who decide that your services are of no value to their organization before they even learn about them.** I assure you that it is their short sightedness and not your tenacity that is inferior. Many times, in the course of a day I play the roles of cold caller and decision-maker as salespeople call me. I assure you that a wise decision-maker will take a moment to quickly learn about the products and services that may benefit his enterprise. Good managers know that information is the key to success and they are willing to listen to free intelligence reports so long as they are benefits based and to the point.

Not all decision-makers that are short with you are foolish. Sometimes we all have a bad day or get stressed out. Even a seasoned manager will sometime brush you off if he is busy. Remember that one of the main goals of your call is to determine the right time to call again. If your contact is short with you are sounds hurried, you may want to say, "Well, Mr. Foister, it sounds like you are in the middle of something right now. May I call you tomorrow?" Most busy decision-makers see this as a way to get out of the conversation fast. They also see you as being sensitive to their needs and they like that quality in a vendor. Most often they will say, "yes". When you call Mr. Foister back later in the week, he will usually hear you out because, after all, he told you to call then and he feels obligated to listen.

When my responsibilities were primarily sales, I set a goal of fifty to seventy-five cold calls a day. Some days I make it and some days I end up rolling calls over to the next day in the CRM.

It is an on-going challenge to get caught up to date with my scheduled calls. Sometimes, I get a few days behind and it motivates me to work faster. There is nothing more satisfying at the end of the day before I leave work than to look at a blank screen where before there were what seemed like endless scheduled calls.

Cold calling is your lifeblood for selling in the information age, never stray far from it. We often have to check on deliveries, put ink in the printer, type contracts and generate sales reports. These things are also important, but none of these things directly generate sales the way cold calling does. It has been said that the average sales person actually spends less than 5% of his day making sales presentations. You may be having great sales this week, but if you don't keep up with your cold calls, the pipeline can quickly become empty. Cold calls are like investments for your future. A daily regimen of cold calling is money in the bank.

## **The first twenty seconds**

Many studies have been conducted to determine the most successful elements to include in your first impression sales call. The evidence is mixed because there are so many types of clients with varying backgrounds, but in the IT industry some things are clear. The decision-maker you are calling on will usually be very busy, behind on deadlines and harassed daily by sales persons hocking everything from hardware to Internet access.

***You have about twenty seconds to make your point before your prospect loses interest.***

Important people are busy. If they were not busy they probably would not be important. When they first answer the phone, you have their full attention. After all, they do not know who is calling. It could be their boss or an important client. Once you identify yourself, the next question the contact will ask is, "why is this person calling me?" which is followed by, "Why should I listen to what this person has to say?"

### **Elements of the Introduction**

An initial sales call should include these three elements in the first twenty seconds.

- ***Who you are***
- ***How you got their name***
- ***Why they should hear you out***

## **1. Who you are**

When contacting someone you do not know, you should always begin by stating who you are and whom you are representing. By stating your name, the contact begins thinking of you as a real person and not as one of those AT&T tele-marketers who call you every night during dinner saying, "Hello Mr. Foister, I'm calling from AT&T to tell you about..." When you identify yourself by name, you tend to be viewed more as an individual and less likely to be quickly dismissed. By saying who you are and the company you are represent first thing, it sets the tone for total disclosure and honesty. A good opening line might be "Hello Mr. Foister. I am Bill Smith with Domco Technology.

## **2. How you got their name**

As soon as you identify yourself, the contact's mind starts racing. Should he remember you? Why am I being called? How did you get my number? This is where you would like to have a reference. Everyone is a little suspicious of people we do not know, especially people who approach us unexpectedly. You can defuse this by stating up front how you got the contact's name. If someone has referred you to the contact, mention his or her name. "John Foister suggested that I call you because...If someone tells you that a small plane crashed in Africa last week, it will probably not command your attention. But, if someone tells you that a plane crashed near your house last week, you will be all ears because this is a reality in your neck of the woods. If you tie your opening lines to a person or event that the contact can relate to, you will go a longways towards removing the obstacle of suspicion. In fact, many contacts will hear you out simply out of respect for the person who referred you. When you have successfully made the referral link, you can often hear the contact's defenses coming down.

### **Commonly used referrals phrases**

- I was referred to you by...
- I was told that you are the person who...
- We have provided services to (another department within your company) and I thought we might also be a resource for you as well
- John Foister suggested that I contact you about...
- I noticed that a number of your people have attended our training classes and I wanted to tell you about some of the other services we offer.
- I wanted to thank you for attending our internet seminar last week and tell you about...

You will not always have a referral. That's when a call is cold. Do your best to warm up cold calls. It often takes many calls to locate the decision-maker in an account.

Each person you talk with will generally give you a little more information about that account on your way to the primary decision-maker. I do not like to get the main decision-maker too quickly for this reason. As you call through the account you may learn that the company is moving in a new direction. Now when you call the decision-maker you can tie these points into your presentation, "John Foister suggested that you might be interested in our services. We specialize in....."

### **3. Why they should hear you out**

After identifying yourself, during that first twenty-seconds of the call, you must give the contact a reason to talk further with you. This is usually a concise statement of the services we offer. Try to mention all our services in this brief statement unless you know that the contact is only interested in one thing. You most often do not know which service will open the door to conversation with a manager, so make sure that your opening statement includes all of our offerings. Here is an example of a generic statement introducing our services.

The goal of everything you have said during this twenty-second introduction has led up to this question. Now, you pause and wait for the contact to speak. Few managers today could honestly answer "yes" to this question. If they answer "no", then the door is open for you to respond by saying, "Which resources do you need?" By using the above approach, you have drawn this busy decision-maker into a conversation and forced him to analyze his needs in light of our services.

### **Probing Questions**

During the next phase of the conversation, you have entered into the selling stage. You want to keep the contact talking by asking probing questions such as:

- Do you currently use contract staffing?
- Who does your developer training?
- Are you completely satisfied with the service you are receiving?
- How do you deal with large numbers of projects in your backlog?
- Have you ever outsourced a project?
- What happened?
- Why would you do it or not do it again?
- Are you exploring Internet development tools?
- Have you heard of Domco Technology before?

All of these questions are designed to draw your contact into a conversation so that you can identify the services he or she might be interested in discussing. Remember that the more time a client spends talking to you, the more he will feel that you understand his needs.

## **A brief description of the services of interest**

Once you have identified the service or services of interest by using probing questions, you need to fire off a brief description of the service. Concentrate on what makes our service different from our competitors. Use your fact/benefit statements. If a contact expresses interest in several services, do the same for each offering in turn.

### **Brief Distinguishing Features of Specific Service**

**We have certified full time employees.**

**Projects -**

**Training -**

**Network Services -**

**Combination or Special Services**

### **Special Offers: Building a Sense of Urgency**

We will talk a lot about how to create a “sense of urgency” in this manual. Busy decision-makers have many “to-dos” on their desk. Often, they really do want to explore the services you are offering but they just do not get around to doing it. How do we get our action item to the top of their long list? A busy decision-maker has to believe that some opportunity will be lost if he or she does not act on your offer immediately. Many professional marketing agencies use this technique. You are probably familiar with the phrases,

*“For a limited time only”*  
*“The first 100 people in the door”*  
*“While supplies last”*  
*“Offer expires June 6<sup>th</sup>”*  
*“One time only”*  
*“Once a year event”*  
*“RSVP required”*  
*“Limited seating”*

All of these techniques work well and are used by marketers to motivate a customer to action. Although our services are much more of a soft-sale, we also should create a sense of urgency when possible. An upcoming class or free seminar is a great way to do this when cold calling.

They get decision-makers into our office and informed about our services. Utilize lost leaders such as a free class or seminar invitation. These events happen on a given date and therefore require prompt action by the decision-maker. When you call to give something away, you are not a sales person in the mind of the contact. Use these lost leaders sparingly, but where appropriate for key prospects.

For example, if you call a prospect and say that you are calling to invite that person to our “Free Domco Solutions Seminar Luncheon”, you will tend to get a better response than when you call trying to sell something. You can also use the event to get to the right decision-maker by asking,

***“Who else in your organization would be interested in getting an invitation to attend this event?”***

You are more likely to get the referrals you want if you are giving a free seminar or class away then if you are just asking who you can solicit next.

### **Cold Call Conclusion**

Throughout the call, you are evaluating how valuable this contact is to your sales effort. If you are trained to sell the services requested, then go directly to objection handling techniques discussed under basic sales skills. If the contact is interested in a service you are not trained to sell, let the contact know that someone from that group will be contacting him or her to answer specific questions and transfer the lead.

Remember to document your conversation and any information you gathered about this account. Schedule your follow up contact and send out your second impression literature that we will discuss later. Following are some closing remarks you may want to utilize:

- Would it be all right if I had someone from the ... group contact you?
- Can I send you some information about Domco Technology?
- Would you like to be on our mailing list for our newsletter/certification class schedule?
- When would be a good time for me to contact you again?

## **Cold Call Mistakes: Pauses During the First 20-Seconds**

Do not pause or ask questions during the first 20-seconds of a presentation.

Do not ask if this is a good time to talk or if the contact has a minute? I encourage you not to use the “How are you today?” pause in your opening remarks to a contact you have never spoken with before. Although this may play well if you are calling people at their homes or in other more relaxed settings, Managers in the heat of battle generally do not appreciate an interruption followed by a demand for a response. Many will view an inquiry into their wellbeing as insincere coming from a person they have never spoke with before. Worst of all, it creates a pause in your presentation during the few seconds when you have the contacts full attention.

By using this imperative, you have inadvertently communicated that you are sales person that will waste the contact’s time with small talk. During this pause, most managers will begin thinking of ways to get you off the line. Once a contact starts thinking down this path, it is very hard to focus him back on the value of the services you are presenting. Speak quickly and to the point. Value your time and the contact’s time. Busy IT decision-makers will view this as professionalism and they will consider what you have to say as being more important if presented in this way.

### **I. Am. Reading. This. To. You.**

The worst thing you can do is to sound like you are reading a script. Be especially careful of this while stating the generic overview of the services we offer. You will be perceived as phony or unintelligent if the contact thinks you are reading or reciting a rehearsed sentence. Practice the generic 20-second services overview sentences until they sound off the cuff and natural.

Contacts do not like to feel that they are being professionally sold or that they are on the receiving end of a canned pitch. Change the speed of your words as if you are thinking about what you are going to say next. Pause briefly in the middle of a sentence as if you are composing your thoughts. Talk as you would in an impromptu conversation even though you know exactly what you are going to say.

### **This will only take a minute**

If a contact interrupts you or sounds impatient, stop your opening monologue and say, “If you are busy right now, I can call back later”. If they say “OK”, then ask, “When would be a good time for me to call?” This again shows respect for the contact’s time and sensitivity to meeting the contact’s needs. Remember that often, these contacts are in meetings or up against a short deadline.

You will do better calling back when you can command their full attention and, when you call back it is at their request, so they will more than likely hear you out.

## **Dishonest Messages**

Some people teach what I consider unethical tactics for getting prospects to call you back. They will tell a gatekeeper that they have an “urgent message for Mr. Foister.” They will sometimes leave a message on a contact’s voice mail stating that they have very important information to discuss but not say what it is. These tactics will generate callbacks, but are ultimately counterproductive to the sale process. They make clients feel betrayed or tricked and trust, the most precious thing in the sales process, may never be regained. If you leave a message, be truthful and straightforward. Follow the voice mail prospecting guidelines in the next section. ***Remember that the wrong impression is the only thing worse than no impression at all.***

If you know that someone is a good prospect, you may want to call back a few times to try to talk to the contact in person. However, when calling unqualified prospects, this is not a good use of your time. Do not be afraid to leave voice mail. Remember our motto, “It is easier to find hungry people than it is to try to make people hungry.” When calling unqualified prospects, I like to get voice mail. I can leave my entire uninterrupted presentation. If the person is hungry and I tell them in a voice mail message that I have food, he will call me back. If not, then he was not a good prospect to start with. I can make hundreds of prospecting calls per day, when leaving mostly voice mail presentations. Voice mail is a good and fast medium for prospecting. A contact only checks his voice mail when he has time to consider the messages.

A voice mail presentation to a relaxed decision-maker with pen in hand can often get better results than a personal pitch to a contact that has been interrupted and is thinking about something else.

When leaving a voice mail introduction, make sure that you follow the exact format used for an in person presentation with two small exceptions to the end of the presentation.

- 1. Change your final question from “Are you currently getting all of the resources you need?” to “If you would like more information about any of our products I’ve mentioned, please give me a call at...”***
- 2. Include two more important sentences in closing, “If you are not the person who would be interested in these resources, please forward this message on to that person or call me and let me know who would be interested in receiving this information. Thank you for your help.”***



These modifications to the cold call format are important when leaving voice mail because we do not know if we have the right decision-maker. Unlike an in-person call where you can ask for referrals, if you get the wrong person with voice mail, the trail to the decision-maker ends. For this reason, you may want to try a few times to personally contact good prospects or prospects with key titles. But for most unqualified prospects, voice mail will do if you leave a presentation that includes asking for a referral.

## Referrals

We have said in the previous section on prospecting that the single best source for leads is usually from your leads. The best place to get new contacts to add to your database is from the contacts that are already in your database. **Asking for referrals is so important to the prospecting process that it deserves its own section.**

It comes after the Cold Call section because it is usually after our introduction that we begin to determine if we have the right decision-maker. If not, or if there are more than one decision-maker, we must go into intelligence gathering mode. You will rarely get the right decision-maker the first time you call into an organization. No matter how good your cold calling skills may be, if you do not get through to the right decision-maker, you will not make a sale. **Locating the right decision-maker is the most important part of prospecting.**

The first thing a salesperson does after making the initial sales introduction to a prospect is to try to determine if this person is the decision-maker we want. The last thing we want to do at the end of our phone presentation is to try to get the names of at least one other person in that organization who might be interested in our services. You should ask questions like:

- *"Is there anyone else you would refer me to that might be interested in knowing about these services?"*
- *"Do you know of someone else who might like to receive our training news letter?"*

Most sales representatives fail to locate decision-makers because they forget to ask for the referral. Mastering this technique alone can sometimes double a salesperson's commissions.

## Referral Reluctance

Do not take, “no” at face value when asking for referrals. Many prospects are reluctant to give you the names of their co-workers in fear that you might harass them. The MCI “Friends and Family” program was an excellent example of a referral campaign that backfired do to underestimating this reluctance. You must test a negative response for truthfulness. If the contact says "no" when you ask if someone else might be interested in our services, you need to qualify the response for truthfulness. You should ask,

If the client does not hesitate, then you may have a solid contact account, and you may not need to fish around for more names in that department. If the contact does hesitate, there probably are other decision-makers and he is uncomfortable about stating a bold-faced lie in light of the way you have phrased the question. You must give this contact a comfort level that you will not harass others in his name. Tell the contact that you will only make a brief introduction call not mentioning his name, and if the contact is not interested, you will not call again. You need to make the contact feel that if he does not give you the referral, he may be keeping a much-needed resource away from his co-worker. You may want to mention some of our major references and talk about what a valuable resource we were to them. You may also even hint that the co-worker might be upset that such valuable information was kept from him by the contact. Here are some phrases you can use to get around referral reluctance.

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- ***“A lot of managers are searching for services like these.”***
- ***“Even if they do not need these services now, they will probably want to have this information on file for when they do need them.”***
- ***“We offer free training and technical seminars from time to time, and I’m sure that others in your organization would want to know about them.”***
- ***“Almost every IT manager I know of today is struggling with resource allotment and I’m sure they would want to be aware of any resources that can help them do their jobs.”***

## One Excellent Technique for Getting Referrals

Instead of simply asking, "who else might be interested in these services" you might want to try this approach.

**"We periodically sponsor free technical seminars and new letters. In fact, over twenty-eight thousand computer professionals receive our news letter and nearly one hundred managers attended our last luncheon seminar on Domco Technology Software solution strategies. Is there anyone in your organization who might want to receive our news letter and invitations to our free seminars?"**

This is a non-evasive way to get the names and phone numbers of other decision-makers. Remember your skills. If you still sense hesitancy, follow up by assuring your lead source that you will not harass or waste anyone's time. Say that you will only call the referral one time to ask permission to put them on our newsletter and seminar invitation list. Reassure your lead source that this will be of real value to the referred individual and that he or she will appreciate the service.

**Referral reluctance can be overcome if you:**

- 1. Let the contact know that you will not harass the referred person.**
- 2. Assure the contact that the person he or she is referring you to is more than likely very interested in hearing about the services that we offer.**

## Leads Multiplication

In general, every lead should become two additional leads. Every time you hang up the phone, you should be entering on average two new contact records and scheduling calls to them. I call this the prospecting snowball effect. It is amazing how leads multiply in our industry because there are so many decision-makers for Domco Technology type services. The path to the decision-maker you are seeking is full of roadblocks, detours, rejections and valuable information. Stay the course.

## **Account Penetration**

One of the biggest dangers to avoid in selling our services is inadequate account penetration. This happens when we are calling on or doing business with some individuals or departments within a large company, but totally unknown to others within the same corporate structure. Many times, representatives stop prospecting or asking for referrals because they think that they are already thoroughly working with a particular account. They assume that Domco Technology is a known entity within the entire account when in fact, they have just scratched the surface of an iceberg.

Make sure that major accounts are being worked completely. If the bottom up approach is not working, try the top down approach or a lateral move. I can think of several accounts for which we thought we were their sole source vendor for years only to discover major divisions of that company that knew nothing of our services. I often challenge account representatives who tell me that we are completely working a particular account by making a bet. Given twenty minutes on the phone, I can usually find an entire division or group within that account that has never heard from anyone in our company. While you are prospecting, do not forget that some of your newest clients will come from within some of your oldest accounts and that these are often the easiest sales to make.

## **Gathering Intelligence**

Gathering and organizing information is the secret to success in corporate selling. In general, the contacts you call have the information you need. They know about what's going on in their area. They have overheard things in the cafeteria and read email about long range plans. The best way to gather intelligence is to listen. Sounds simple until you tape record one of your last conversations with a client. More than likely, you do 90% of the talking. You have to get the contact talking to learn things about the account. A contact is not asking himself, "What information can I give this sales guy that will assist him in systematically selling his services to my organization?" We should be so lucky. The information we need has to be skillfully extracted by asking the right qualifying questions. We have already discussed getting leads and other information from contacts, but the best information often comes out unsolicited when you get a contact talking about his job and how it relates to the company in general.

It is not enough to work hard. We have to work smart. Your contacts are full of valuable information. Try to get them to talk freely. Let them go on if they want. Remember that everyone loves to talk about themselves and what they do. Prime them with questions about their work. And above all, listen, listen, listen.

## The Coach

The coach is a contact that will assist you in selling to his company or department. The coach is usually not in a position of great authority and has time to talk. He is a person that likes to talk and for some reason likes you and is willing to give you advice and information. A coach is just a nice person that likes to feel important..

I have an excellent coach at a company in Research Triangle Park. He and I go to lunch once in a while. He is not a decision-maker and has never purchased anything from me, but he has assisted me in selling hundreds of thousands of dollars in services to his company. He will occasionally look up a name in the on-line company directory and let me know who's in charge of what and how to get in touch with that contact. He lets me know about major projects that are looming and who is in charge of them. When I get a new contact, he will often tell me about the person, so I will know how to package my presentation.

Finding a coach is often better than finding a decision-maker. Document this person as a coach in our CRM database so that you can locate and utilize this valuable resource when doing intelligence gathering in the future. You will know a coach because he likes to talk and to feel like what he is saying is important. He likes to be treated as a valuable resource. Play to his ego. Coaches like to feel that they know the real deal about what's going on in their company. They like the fact that they are doing you a personal favor for which you always express the utmost gratitude.

## Organization

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work as a sales person, sales trainer, sales manager and sales force automation consultant. I have had the opportunity to see many sales professionals at work. I have observed numerous selling techniques and habits that generated varying degrees of success. Because I firmly believe that an enterprise will either grow or die based on the quality of its sales staff, I have made a lifelong goal out of identifying and recruiting the best salespeople available. This search has led me to deeply analyze the sales approaches of numerous highly successful individuals in a variety of industries. This research has led me to conclude that one quality is essential above all others for a successful sales person to possess. If a sales person possesses this quality, he or she will be successful almost in spite of the lack of other important talents. If a sales person lacks this one skill, then consistent success at selling in any industry will always elude him.

## The Single Most Important Sales Attribute

What is this quality? You might think intelligence or eloquence? Is it the ability to build relationships or trust? Is it the mastery of detailed product knowledge or objection handling? Is it that psychic ability some salespeople seem to have to create desire for the product or service they sell? No. Although all of these skills are important and do marginally increase the likelihood of closing a sale, none of these skills can be said to guarantee success the way the one skill I have identified can.

In order to understand the singular importance of this skill to selling in the information age, we must understand **why** most sales are made; not **how** they are made. I believe that most busy decision-makers today buy things because they are presented with a product or service that meets the immediate need they are facing.

They do not necessarily buy the best product or service or even the lowest priced. They do not predominately select the best sales person or company available. In fact, most of them buy things because they are presented with the opportunity to buy it at the precise time they discover that they have a need for such a product or service.

Let me give you an example. I had a credit card with a \$99 annual fee. Almost every other week around dinner time a telephone sales person with some company would call to let me know that I could sign up for his company's card and pay no annual fee.

I tried to be polite because I know how difficult a telephone sales person's job can be, but I got off the phone as quickly as I could. There always seemed to be other things to do and think about that were more important. One evening after dinner, I was opening up my credit card statement and saw that a \$99 annual fee had been charged that month to my account. I wondered why I did not switch to another card that did not charge an annual fee. A few minutes later the phone rang. It was a telephone sales person representing a bank with a no annual fee credit card. I signed up for it. The sales person could barely speak English. The sales approach was obviously canned.

I have no idea if the bank sponsoring the card had a good reputation for service.

All I know is that at that moment I realized that I had a need and there was a convenient way to quickly deal with the problem.

By no means am I saying that purchasing decisions at major companies are always made this way. Often there are predetermined vendor lists, long bidding processes and detailed presentations required before a service is purchased or a contract signed. Obviously, simply contacting a decision-maker at the right moment is not necessarily enough to close a sale, but it is usually enough to get you into the running. If you contact the decision maker the precise week he is re-bidding the vendor list or sending out request for quotations or scheduling vendor presentations, then you have a good chance of getting to the next stage of the game. If you do not contact that decision-maker that week, then no matter how advanced your sales skills, you will probably not get a chance to use them.

I would go so far as to say that ninety-five percent of all sales are made predominately because the sales person was in the right place at the right time. I have read numerous books on sales methodologies, attended countless sales training courses and seminars and learned valuable things from almost all of them. These sales skills are all important. Knowing how to build trust with a client, handle objections and present the facts/benefits of your product or service are all critical to the sales process. They are all also quite useless if your client does not have an immediate need for what you are selling.

Most sales courses today are concerned with how to create desire for a product. Our work is not about creating desire. We will leave that up to marketing and advertising. In sales, our job is to locate existing desire. If you are selling food, you will find that it is much easier to locate hungry people than it is to try to make people hungry. In other words, it is easier to locate someone who already wants our services than it is to try to convince someone that he has a need and really should want our services.

So, what is the single most important quality for a sales person to possess? **Organization.** Only with thorough, meticulous and disciplined organization can sales people statistically increase their probability of being in the right place at the right time. It is through such organization that we can schedule and track the information about our clients that is vital to determining that "*right time and place.*"

Over the years, I have worked hard and mastered this organized approach to selling. At least once every day or so, I call a client and after listening to my opening remarks, the client will say something like "It's quite a coincidence that you happened to call today" or "How strange that you should contact me at this time." The fact is coincidence has nothing to do with me calling that client at that time. I had more than likely had that call planned for that day for months. I don't believe in luck or ESP, but I do believe in the law of averages. I have found one trait to be common to nearly all unusually successful salespeople. They know how to get and organize information about their clients, and they know how to utilize that information in time management.

You have heard that knowledge (information) is power. Wars are won or lost based on which side can best gather and organize information about the other. Your commission check will directly reflect more than anything else your ability to gather and organize intelligence about your clients.

The following sections offer no magic solution for increasing sales. They do offer techniques on how to get, track and organize information about your contacts that will statistically increase your probability of being in the right place at the right.

# **The Company Sales Tool**

What practical steps can we take to organize information about our clients to increase our probability of being in the right place at the right time to offer our timely solution? First of all, accept the fact that you must use a computer to organize your sales efforts. Trying to do professional sales in the information age without having and knowing how to use a computer is like going into battle without a gun. Human memory is too frail and paper systems are far too slow to make you successful selling in the information age.

## **Features**

### **The Contact Database (CRM) Customer Relations Manager**

Our company sales tool is like most sales force automation products on the market today. It is built around a database of contact records. Think of each record as an index card with information about one of your contacts on it. You can enter, delete, modify and browse important information about your contacts. Predefined fields are used for basic contact information such as company name, client name, address, phone, email address, fax numbers, etc. Predefined fields are generic to all of the contacts in your database. Custom fields, we have created for tracking information that is specific to our clients in our industry.

### **The CRM**

Our sales tool is much more than a database. It's most powerful and important feature is its scheduling capabilities. It will allow you to easily schedule, re-schedule and track activities as they relate to a particular contact or account. A good sales person generally is dealing with hundreds if not thousands of clients and prospects simultaneously. Even the best memory is far too inadequate to begin to handle such a task.

Every contact takes time and time is our most precious sales resource. Only with a CRM can we organize our time by clients. It helps us organize when and how often to make each contact so we do not waste time with fruitless sales efforts. The second benefit of the CRM is its ability to prioritize your schedule based on whatever criteria you give it. Top salespeople are usually even busier than the executive decision-makers on which they call. Things come up and tasks need to be re-prioritized regularly. How well and with what criteria you use to prioritize your schedule is the single most important factor that will contribute to your success in sales. It desires the best-automated tools



# Qualifying Prospects

Pre-qualifying a prospect is the art of determining how much of your time and energy that prospect is worth in relation to reaching your sales goals. You can work very hard selling to unqualified prospects and fail to meet your sales goals. How much time should I spend on this prospect? The correct answer to this question will determine how successful you will be in sales.

## The Philosophy

Selling in the information age is different in many ways. Whereas the "in person" visit was the main sales vehicle in the past, the telephone call has become the most effective tool today. ***You may spend two or three days in the office cold calling to set up one onsite sales call.*** Most sales representatives do not spend enough time pre-qualifying prospects before jumping in their car and driving over for a meeting. In the time it takes to make one sales visit, you can usually make twenty-five sales "phone calls". I'm not suggesting that we should never visit clients. I am saying, make sure that they are worth your time before you give up twenty-five prospecting calls to visit them. With so many leads to follow up on, it is hard to justify the time required to drive across town to visit unqualified prospects. The moral here is to spend your time calling and asking for referrals rather than driving around town on wild goose chases.

Because we are discussing mass quantities of prospects and the time management required to follow up on them, this is as good a place as any to talk about the proper attitude for making sales calls. An important rule for selling in the information age is:

**Don't waste time talking to people that don't want to talk to you.**

Yes, make your presentation if you can. Yes, send him your information and yes, try to overcome objections. But, never waste time by regularly calling on someone who has expressed little interest in what you are selling no matter how big of an account he represents. If you have given it your best shot and he has heard your presentation and he still shows little or no interest in our services, then it is time to move on to next prospect. Try another door into the account or wait until there is an opportunity created by the development of a particular need that we can fill, but don't keep knocking on a closed door.

Remember that there are multitudes of contacts out there that have an immediate need for what you are selling, and they really want to buy our services.

I know that this philosophy goes against many of the "never give up self help for salesmen" books, but it is the best way to sell to managers in the information age.

Yes, I have heard the inspiring stories of how after 134 phone attempts and 24 personal sales visits, persistence paid off and the account was sold. ***However, you never read about the other fifty sales that were lost while wasting time on this guy.*** If you keep shaking long enough, you may see fruit fall from a green tree, but it is probably not because of your persistence. The fruit most likely ripened with time of its own accord independent of your constant shaking. ***The secret to success is knowing how much time to spend with each client.***

Let me clarify. You should never give up on a contact, just don't waste time on it. If you hit a brick wall, schedule a call out three or six months or even a year from now and don't call that contact again until then even if he is the head purchaser for the plum account in your territory. Never just stop scheduling calls to someone whom you know is the right decision-maker; just let more time elapse between your calls. Remember that people change, retire, get promoted, demoted, switch jobs and responsibilities. If you call back in six months and Mr. Foister is "no longer working in this office", ask who took over his duties.

I am not suggesting that you stop calling on IBM for six months because one purchasing manager expressed no interest in our services. I am just saying to stop calling that one purchaser so often. If you are pumping each contact for names, there are probably a number of ways to get around one stubborn purchaser. Sometimes you can use your leads to approach an account from the bottom up. Remember that often purchasers have to answer to their users and these users are often managers who can dictate the vendors they want to be used to the purchaser. Other times, you can approach a large account from the top down by calling the purchaser's director. If you sell the director, I assure you that the purchaser will get in line. You may think that the purchaser will get upset and feel that you went over his head. So, what? He was giving you no business to start with, so what have you got to lose? Make a bold move.

The moral of this story is don't waste time. It is your most precious asset. If a door is closed, try the back door and then a window. But don't keep knocking on the same locked door.

**Never just stop scheduling calls to someone whom you know is the right decision-maker; just let more time elapse between your calls**

## Right Time Call Scheduling

Knowing when to contact a decision-maker is the single most important concept presented here. If the database tells us the right place, then it is the scheduler that tells us the right time. Only with the religious use of a CRM can we estimate, track and be reminded of the right time to contact hundreds of clients simultaneously. The most powerful feature of any and all contact tracking software systems is the calendar.

Once you talk with a contact and determine how much of your time that client is worth, as soon as you hang up the phone you should estimate and schedule the next time you plan to contact that client. It is important to point out here that computers do not track information; people do. Computers just help us to remember where we put the information. All of the hardware and software in the world will be of little use to you if you cannot discipline yourself to record the appropriate information before you move on to the next contact. Only salespeople that can discipline themselves to be organized in this way will be able to use this sales methodology successfully.

As you speak with a client, you should be asking yourself the question, "when is the right time to contact this client again?" The answer may be never again if the client is not the decision-maker you seek. You can even ask the contact when would be a good time for you to call again. Here are a few of the typical answers you may hear from contacts and when you would schedule a call based on each response.

## Clues When to Call Again

- *"Well, we really won't have any money until we get our new budgets in July" ----* Obviously, we want to schedule a call to this guy in July. We also want to record when his fiscal budget begins in July.
- *"We are pretty well set for the next couple of months" ----* Schedule a call to this guy in two months.
- *"We hope that our new building will be completed by November" ----* If the completion of this building means that attention will be turned to other needs, you'll want to schedule a call to this guy in early October.
- *"You have to be on the vendor list we just set and it is only bid every three years" ---* No problem, schedule a call to this guy in three years minus a month or two. By the way, don't forget to ask who is in charge of the exceptions list.

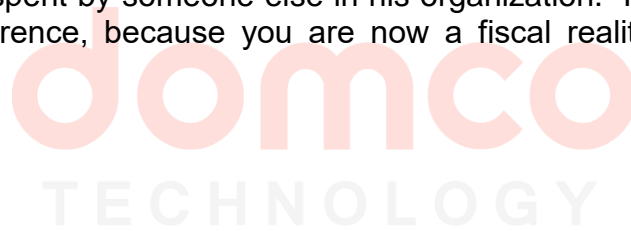
You get the picture. Occasionally you will get a real jerk who says, "Don't call me, I'll call you. I have noticed though that these harsh types usually become your most loyal customers once you've won them over. In general, over ninety percent of your contacts will recommend a good time for you to contact them again. Remember, these decision-makers are busy and they don't want to waste their or your time. It is in both of your best interests if they tell you when they might need or wanting to know more about your services in the future.

One of the best things about this technique is that after a while you don't have to worry about whom to contact each day. When you turn on your computer in the morning, up comes a list of all of the calls, meetings and to-does for that day. If you finish them all, it is time to go prospecting for new leads. If you don't finish them all, then you have to roll them over to the next day. After you have been using this technique for a few months, you will begin to notice phenomenal success. It will seem like almost every scheduled call is to a person who really is interested in what you are selling. You won't be wasting a lot of calls on people who don't need or want our services. The longer you strictly follow this pattern, the more efficient you will become and your sales volume will soar.

## **Timed and Timeless Activities**

Timeless activities are scheduled calls or to-do's that can be done at any time during the day. Timed activities are ones that need to be done at a certain time. I like to keep all of my sales calls as timeless. If a secretary says that Mr. Foister will be back in his office at 4:00 p.m. and you are having a hard time getting in touch with him, you may want to schedule a timed call to him at 4:00 p.m. and set an alarm. The alarm will beep at you at 4:00 p.m. and remind you to make the call. A word of caution, use the alarm sparingly and only for things that really do have to be done at that critical moment because alarms can really get on your nerves and even lower your productivity with too many interruptions to your train of thought.

Look for reasons to schedule calls. The old bandwagon technique still works in the information age. When you make a sale or get a contract with one department at a large company, search your database for other contacts at that company. Schedule calls to the key decision-makers you find. Disguise the call as a regular follow up "do you need anything call", but casually drop the information that Joe over in building five just purchased... A decision-maker gets really interested when he hears that money is available and being spent by someone else in his organization. He will remember your name and your reference, because you are now a fiscal reality in his "neck of the woods."



## **Generic Notes vs. Specific Contact Notes**

Notes about a contact can be kept in two places. There is a generic notes section for keeping general notes about a contact or account and there is a specific notes section for each cleared contact (call, meeting or to-do).

### **Generic Notes Section**

Generic notes should include information about the contact that is not tied to a specific conversation or event. This information is general and might include:

- Directions to the contact's office
- Budgeting Information
- Generic Hot buttons or concerns
- Organizational Charts
- Personal Information about the Contact
- Likes and Dislikes
- Etc.

### **Specific Notes**

Specific Notes are kept on a specific cleared activity. They relate to that one call or meeting and are sometimes called "Results". Here is the type information you would put into the specific or results notes.

- He wants me to email a written proposal to him by Friday
- Bob expressed concerns of the project delays
- Said he may need contractors in the spring.

Another important reason to use this field is because every client likes to think that he is your only client and your biggest concern. If you have not spoken to Mrs. Foister for six months and he suddenly calls you one day, he will be very impressed that you remember him and what you discussed last.

## Call Scheduling Notes

When you schedule a call or meeting, take a moment to put in a brief description of what you want to discuss. This note might be very generic such as, “cold call”, “Get information I sent” or “Any business?”. This note on the scheduled contact can also help you warm up a call by reminding you about some common ground you may have with that contact. For example, a while back, I was having difficulty establishing trust with a client. Our company was rather small for the large project we were discussing. One day over the phone, he asked me to call him back early Friday morning because he was leaving work at lunch time to pick up his wife from the hospital. Good sense and common courtesy told me that I should ask about how his wife was the next time we spoke. I genuinely was concerned and wanted to express interest, but that was five days away. I was averaging seventy-five calls a day and would more than likely have conversations with 375 other contacts before I called this client back on Friday. Would I remember to ask about his wife? Of course, I did because the notes on the scheduled call said:

**>>>>Asked me to call early Friday. Picking up wife at hospital**

Document anything you want to remember to say to the contact. Some of these things might be:

- Ask how is that internal project we discussed coming along.
- Ask if he is still happy with the staffing agency he is using.
- Ask if the new layoffs are going to affect his department.
- Discuss his pricing concerns.
- Quality sensitive. Remember to push quality button.
- Ask for more referral names.
- Invite to next free seminar.
- Mention that we did work for their other location.

People like people who remember things about them. People like people who seem to place importance on things that are important to them. And all things else being equal, people tend to buy from people they like. If a contact mentions that she will be on vacation next week, when you should make a note to ask, “How was your vacation?”. Never trust frail human memory. If you take a few seconds to document your calls, you will never drop the ball. Never trust human memory.

# Basic Sales Skills

Let's assume that you have done a good job or prospecting and your cold calls have led to an opportunity to enter into a sales dialogue. This dialogue could be over the phone or in person. This is where your skills really get put to the test. Selling is one of the most difficult and rewarding careers available. You are a communicator who must be able to size up opportunities, manage time effectively, control your emotions, organize religiously and think on your feet. In my experience, sales are most often lost due to forgetting to apply some rather basic sales principles. Most often, success in sales is the result of consistently applying the basic techniques. Here are some of those basic principles.

## Fact / Benefits

Every product or service has both facts about it and possible benefits that may be derived from those facts for the consumer. Successful salesmanship involves effectively bridging the gap between the facts and the benefits. Facts are indisputable. They can be proven and are not subject to interpretation. Benefits are subjective and more open to interpretation but based on the facts that support them.

Examples:



**Fact:** This chair is made from solid oak.  
**Benefit:** It will last a long time.

**Fact:** We have delivered over 200 successful projects.  
**Benefits:** Your project will be successful because we have tremendous experience delivering these types of systems.



# Most Common Sales Errors

## Using or stating an opinion as a fact

Your facts must be indisputable before they will give credibility to your benefits statement. Make sure that your client will recognize your supportive facts as facts and not as opinions.

If they are viewed as opinions, but presented as facts, you will not only fail to prove the benefit, but also lose credibility.

### Example:

**Opinion:**

**Our developers are the best-trained technicians in the industry.**

**Fact: We require our developers to gain new certifications and take training classes each year.**

**Opinion:**

**Domco Technology is a financially sound and stable company.**

**Fact: Domco Technology has nearly doubled in size each year and has never had an unprofitable quarter.**

## **Failing to Connect a Fact to a Benefit**

Many, even seasoned sales professionals, assume that the client will automatically make the connection between a fact and a benefit. They have often used the same facts so many times that they fail to mention the associated benefit assuming that the connection is obvious, and the client will see the benefit automatically. Make sure you state the connection, or your biggest guns may not hit the desired target. Remember that many facts can be associated with multiple benefits and the client may mentally attach a given fact to a unintended (none issue) benefit.

For example, a sales person may say “this chair is made out of solid oak” assuming that the client will associate this fact with the intended benefit of longevity. But, the client may associate the benefit with the product’s strength only. Since the client is a ninety-pound woman, the product’s ability to support her weight was never an issue and the power of the fact is lost to her real buying concern of longevity.

Another example; a client has expressed concerns about our ability to complete a project by the given deadline. The sales representative states the fact that our developers are paid overtime for billable work, but states no associated benefit. The sales person assumes that the client will know that this policy encourages our developers to work overtime when necessary to meet a client’s deadlines. The client, however, may not make this connection assuming instead that the benefit from this fact is merely in our ability to attract and keep good developers. If this was not a concern for the client, the fact does not promote the sale.

Spell it out. Remember that clients are hearing this for the first time and that they do not eat and live this stuff the way we do. Use connector phrases such as “*now what this means to you is...*” or “*the benefit here is...*”. Always, put a connector phrase between your fact and the benefit that you want it to support.

<b><i>Fact:</i></b>	<b><i>Our developers are paid for billable overtime work.</i></b>
<b><i>Connector:</i></b>	<b><i>What this means to you is</i></b>
<b><i>Benefit:</i></b>	<b><i>They will be more eager to work overtime when necessary to meet your deadlines.</i></b>

**Fact:**                *Our instructors are project leaders who teach no more than 50% of the time.*

**Connector:**        *The benefit of this is*

**Benefit:**            *They have practical insights and real world examples to add interest and value to the classes they teach.*

Check your sales pitch regularly to make sure that your facts are not dangling. Any fact left hanging with no benefit to anchor it may totally lose its power. Positive facts about your product or service are precious things. Don't waste them. If you use a fact, make sure your client is going to associate the full benefit you want attached to it.

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### **Connecting Facts to the Wrong Benefit**

Another elementary mistake salespeople often make, especially new salespeople eager to close a deal, is connecting facts to a non-issue benefit. Facts/benefits statements must be targeted to a specific client concern or objection in order to have an effect. A deal breaking benefit to one client may be totally inconsequential to another. Most facts can be connected to multiple benefits. Shooting off your facts with random benefit connections before knowing what your client's real issues and concerns are is like a battleship that fires all of its missiles before selecting targets.

## **Follow this outline to target your facts/benefits statements**

1. Determine your client's major concerns (hot buttons). Do this by listening to objections, horror stories or simply by asking, "what is most important to you when selecting a vendor for...?"
2. Restate the client's concern. This will let the client know that you heard and understand it. It will also give the client a chance to correct you if you are wrong.
3. Once you know what the main issues are for this client, mentally formulate a benefit statement that will have the biggest impact.
4. Now, select the facts that will best support the benefit you have selected.
5. Verbalize your facts/benefit statements

### **Example of Targeting Facts to Benefits**

#### **1. Determine the Client's Concerns**

You are talking to a client about our Software services. The client goes on about how he is tired of using outdated and slow software. He keeps stating that his time is important and talking of all the things he has to get done. You think that the issue to target for him is to demonstrate that our Software is current and fast and that it will minimize his down time.

#### **2. Restate the Client's Concerns**

You say, "It sounds to me like you are looking for the most recent innovations in software, that gets you up to speed with a new technology quickly and efficiently". The client agrees.

#### **3. Formulate a benefits statement**

In order to win this business, you must prove to the client that our software is exactly what he or she is looking for and provides solutions to the current issues.

#### **4. Select the facts to support the benefit**

Possible facts to support the selected benefit:

- Our software training is built around a one-two day format rather than the typical 3-5 format.

#### **5. Verbalize the complete Facts/benefits statements:**

- Our Software training is built around a 1-2 day format rather than an 3-5 day format. This means less down time for you because we cover more material in a shorter period of time.



**Remember that most facts can be used to support multiple benefits. Reserve your facts until you know what benefit you are targeting and then connect them to the benefit associated with a given client's concern.**

For example, let's say that the client's primary concern in the above Software case study was that the learning curve might be too long.

We could use many of the same facts but connect them to different benefits. Each example below uses the same facts to target this very different client concern.

- Most of our software training exercises are already completed up to the point being studied. This means that you will have more time to concentrate on what you are learning and not filling in redundant labs.
- Our Domco software training is detailed. This means that you will have detailed notes to review after the training to make sure that you are up to speed and ready to use the software.

### **Before you leave, fire all missiles**

One important point here is that if you are meeting with a client who has expressed no objections and you have probed and feel that there are no hidden objections, go ahead and use your best fact/benefit statements.

Always put your best foot forward. Make sure every client hears what is best about our services even if they express no objections.

# Objection Handling

Good objection handling is critical to sales success. Objections are any issues that must be overcome before the client will feel comfortable purchasing from us. When a client states an objection, you should be glad because now at least you know what the client's objections are. The objections that you do not know about are the ones that will cost you the sale. Ask probing questions, like "what concerns do you have about outsourcing this project" or "what kinds of problems have you had in the past using contract staffing?"

## Case study: Unskilled sales person losing a customer

Sales Person: That's why it is often more cost effective to let us do your software development work.

Client: I don't think so. Your hourly rate is twice as high as what we can do the work for internally.

Sales Person: You are obviously not counting all of your internal costs.

Client: I know exactly what my internal costs are.

## Adversarial Rolls

Our typical client will usually be well educated, intelligent and successful. This often means that we will work with clients who have healthy egos and are strongly opinionated. It is very easy to slip into an adversarial role while overcoming objections. Winning the argument and losing the customer is not a good trade off. Be careful not to tell clients that they are wrong or misinformed especially when around others. Never bluntly say, "that is incorrect". Never criticize their current systems or way of doing things. Our only role is to offer suggestions to be considered. More deals are lost from ego clashes than technical inability. Consider the following dialogue.

## Another example of poor objection handling

Sales Person: That's why I think Domco Technology is the best choice for your inventory database.

Client: I think XYZ Server is far superior to Domco Technology.

Sales Person: But, XYZ Server does not support...

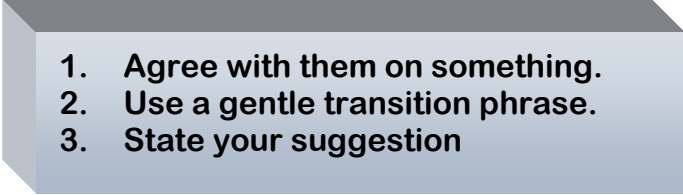
Client: The next version of XYZ Server will.

Sales Person: Even so, it still will not run on Unix.

Client: You guys just don't like Microsoft.

## Disagreeing with Clients

When you must disagree with a client or take exception to something that has been said, do it using this cushioning technique.

- 
1. **Agree with them on something.**
  2. **Use a gentle transition phrase.**
  3. **State your suggestion**

When a client hits you with a strong objection statement, your natural tendency will be to counter directly defending your position. This will make the client want to defend his position against what you said and thus you find yourselves arguing. The only way to win an argument with a client is to keep it from happening. Remember that our goal is not to win arguments, but to sell our services. Keep focused on your goal. Professional salespeople must have a strong sense of self-esteem; strong enough to not have to prove the point when they know they are right. We let others win argument. You can cry all the way to the bank over the argument you lost!



Begin by finding some part of what was said that you could agree with and state it before your rebuttal. If you cannot honestly agree with any part of what was said, at least agree that they have the right to feel that way or that you understand why they might think such a thing.

Then use a cushioning, non-offensive transition word or phrase like, “however”, or “you may want to consider”.

This skill is best learned through examples. Consider how a more skilled representative would have avoided the adversarial path in the previous examples.

### Examples of Defusing Dialogue

Sales Person: That’s why it is often more cost effective to let us do your software development work.

Client: I don’t think so. Your hourly rate is twice as high as what we can do the work for internally.

Sales Person: I certainly understand why you might feel that way, in fact, a lot of my best clients felt the same way before they seriously considered what their internal projects were really costing them.

Notice that the sales person begins by agreeing with the client. This defuses a possible adversarial slide. The sales person shows respect for the client’s beliefs. No dogmatic statements are made. Subjective terms such as “may” and “might” are used to cushion the counter. Keep in mind that a client may counter again with more objections. Each objection must be dealt with using the same format. When all objections have been successfully dealt with, a sale will happen.

# Letters and Sales Collateral

## Impressions and Dominant Positions in the Mindset

We have discussed a lot of ways to make sales or rather to be in the right place at the right time when the conditions are favorable for a sale to happen. But, by far the easiest way to make a sale is when a client just calls you up one day out of the blue and asks to buy your service. After working hard all day with little immediate results, I love to get a call at 4:45 from a client who is just dying to buy something. When that happens we all smile to ourselves and think, "Gee, that was an easy sale--- there's got to be a way to make this happen more often." There is.

Several years ago, I was responsible for a mass media campaign that involved producing television commercials, radio spots and display advertising. I learned some valuable lessons about advertising that can really be applied to sales in general.

Any advertising executive understands the importance of making multiple impressions on an audience. Very compelling research in this area has led most media buyers to the consensus that at least three impressions in a short period of time are required in order for a majority of an audience to remember the message you are communicating. If you hear an ad for a product on your favorite radio station once, you will more than likely hear that same ad three times again during a week. They plan it that way. The first time you hear the ad for a product or service you might be interested in purchasing, it is just background chatter you put up with while you are driving. The second time you hear that ad, you tend to listen more because it is somehow familiar to you and you think to yourself, "what I heard of that, sounded like something I could use." And, the third time you hear it, you are really prepared to listen and you are even ready to write down phone numbers.

Just as radio time is purchased in "flights" to statistically increase the probability of three impressions per listener in a short period of time, television commercials are purchased in "runs" to accomplish the same goal. If you see a TV commercial on Monday, you will probably see it at least three more times within a week or two. Some advertisers have even started running the exact same commercial immediately behind itself or back to back. This technique guarantees two impressions per watcher in a very short time frame.

A dominant position in a consumer's mind set is the company name or service a customer thinks of first when he discovers that he wants or needs such a service. Kleenex is one company that has certainly earned such a dominant position in the mindset of most tissue users. If you are like me, you probably refer to all tissues regardless of the manufacturer as "Kleenexes".

I overheard a woman in a grocery store once ask her husband to get her a box of tissues. The husband asked, "Which box of Kleenexes do you want?" She responded, "Puffs". If you think about it, we don't buy aspirin, we buy Excedrin. We don't buy toothpaste. We buy Crest or Colgate. By repeatedly putting the name of their product before us, these products have gained a dominant position in our mindset.

OK, how does all this relate to my commission check this week? Advertisers and direct salespeople are alike in that we both are competing with our competitors for a dominant position in our client's mindset. If you sell solution based software and one day a client decides that he needs Solution based software for his office, you want him to think of your company's name and more specifically, your name first. If he picks up the phone and calls you, then you have been successful in gaining a dominant position in his mindset.

**If you want a contact to remember you,  
make at least three impressions  
over a two-week period.**

The way to gain a dominant position in your client's mindset is by making multiple impressions in a short period of time. This may sound contrary to the "stick and move" philosophy we discussed earlier, but hear me out. The "stick and move", "don't waste time on people who don't want to talk to you" attitude is for lead qualification only. Once your cold calls have identified a decision-maker who seems to be interested in your product or service, the next goal, is to attempt to gain a dominate position in her mindset, so when she is ready to purchase, she will call you first. We do this by making at least three impressions in a short period of time just like professional advertisers do.

- **First Impression:** We cold call a contact and discover that he is at least somewhat interested in what we are selling. We make a positive sales presentation discussing how our product or service can meet his needs. We promise to send company literature.
- **Second Impression:** We follow up this conversation with correspondence reiterating the benefits we discussed during the first impression phone call. This letter is specific to the needs of this particular client. We will discuss this letter in detail in the next section. This correspondence should also include any nice marketing material we have on our company or services, our business card, and maybe even some references. The contact should receive this impression within three or four days of the first impression.

- **Third Impression:** We call the client back a few days after he should have received the correspondence. Give him a few days to make sure that he has had time to review the information. State that your reason for calling is to make sure that he received the information you sent and to see if he has any questions or concerns. If the contact has not yet read the information, then tell him that you will call back after he has had time to look it over. The third impression is very important in gaining a dominant position in this client's mindset because it involves more of the client's senses. The first impression involves only the sense of hearing and the second impression involves only the sense of sight. Memory experts tell us that the more senses we use, the greater our ability is to remember something. During the third impression, the client is most often looking at your materials, touching your business card and listening to you tell him about the benefits of using our services at the same time. It is this third critical impression that is most effective in gaining mind set dominance. This client will more than likely remember you for a while. During this call, always ask the client to file the information away so that he will be able to locate it the next time he has a need for any of the services we offer.

All of the other techniques we have discussed still apply. You will still need to determine how important this contact is to you based on your estimate of how much and how often he will purchase from you. You will still need to schedule periodic follow up calls. You will still want to track important information about this contact, listen for clues and try to get leads. But, if you follow the three-impression rule, you will start getting a lot more calls from clients ready to purchase. Remember, anytime a client calls you, it is the right place and the right time.

### **The Second Impression Letter**

The second impression is usually a letter and company information sent to a contact after an initial phone call presentation. The mere thought of having to follow up calls with a letter is troublesome to most sales persons. In general, we are talkers by nature and have a more difficult time communicating in script. We are also very busy, and this letter thing sounds time consuming. But, the follow up letter is crucial because it is the only thing a client can file and reference later. It gets the client's visual senses involved increasing the length of time that you will remain in the dominant position of his mindset. It allows us to make a second impression that is not offensive to the contact.

Most contacts would consider a sales person to be a pest if he made three phone calls within a two-week period. The letter allows us to make a non-offending second impression and a good excuse to make the third impression to see if the promised information arrived.

Following up the first impression with a letter plays a crucial role in the psychology of the sale. When we promise a contact that we will send information and it arrives just like we said it would, we have begun the process of building trust with that client.

When we call later to make sure that the information has arrived, we begin to communicate to our client that we will offer good customer support and follow up. The little things we communicate to our clients create the emotions that drive their purchasing decisions. Anytime you can make a promise to a contact and fulfill that promise, you will be miles ahead in their trust category. When a customer asks you to do something, try not to see it as a burden, but as an opportunity to build trust.

Every contact you make does not need a follow up letter. You only need to be concerned about three impressions if you have determined that this person is a decision-maker or influences a decision-maker concerning our services. If you decide that a contact is an A or B client, then you will probably benefit by sending out a letter and scheduling a third impression phone call or visit.

Follow these rules when creating a second impression letter.

- 1. Mention all the services we offer.**
- 2. Customize the template to make it unique to that contact.**
- 3. Promise to follow up within a week.**
- 4. Target the specific customer's concerns if possible.**



## Sample Letter Templates

Following are some sample sales letter template we use for Client that are primarily interested in our Staffing Services.

Date

Name  
Company  
Address  
Address

Dear Mr. Foister:

Thank you for your interest in the resources we provide at Domco Technology. Enclosed, you will find our company brochure describing the four services we offer. I have also included a schedule of our upcoming training classes and my business card. For over a decade, we have been a valuable resource to hundreds of information technology companies in all of our core competencies. Perhaps we could also be a resource for you.

Domco offers a comprehensive suite of online business solution applications. Customers use this technology to track their employees, manage projects, and be more productive while at the office or on the go, without having to worry about expensive or outdated software. We also provide technical support both remotely and at-home. With years of experience in multiple fields of technology, no problem is unsolvable for our Tech Support Team

I will be following up with you in a few days. Please keep my card on file. If you have any questions or would like to know more about how Domco Technology can assist you in reaching your information technology goals, give me a call. I would be happy to work with you or to direct you to the appropriate person to assist you here at Domco Technology.

Sincerely

## Elements of the Introduction Letters

Notice how this letter has three paragraphs. The first paragraph is a general introduction of the company and services we offer. The middle section is information about the specific service of interest and the last paragraph is a general closing. The second impression letter should follow this outline. This first and last paragraphs are always pretty much the same. The middle section is where you go into more detail about the service for which your contact has the most immediate interest.

### Sample Middle Section for our Domco solutions software Impression Letter

Domco offers a comprehensive suite of online business solution applications. Customers use this technology to track their employees, manage projects, and be more productive while at the office or on the go, without having to worry about expensive or outdated software. We also provide technical support both remotely and at-home. With years of experience in multiple fields of technology, no problem is unsolvable for our Tech Support Team.



## Customization of Templates

Try to customize templates to address the specific needs of each client. Use your sales skills especially objection handling. Repeat your customer's concerns so that he or she knows that you heard them and that you take them seriously. Vendors who really listen are rare and will be valued highly. Discuss specific technology that is of interest to the client. Let's say that you have made the first impression via phone with a contact. While asking probing questions, you learn that they are interested in possibly using Domco Technology's Software Solution Suite. The client has expressed some concerns about working with a Beta version of this tool. He has also mentioned that he feels that he did not get his money's worth from a previous vendor who gave him a "black box" solution. Here is a sample of a middle section that has been customized for this client.

As you have accurately pointed out, there are a lot of pitfalls working with other Software development companies. There can also be great returns on your investment. We have had good success recently delivering robust enterprise web-based solutions for several of our clients utilizing our Domco Technology's Software Solution Suite. There are several ways that we could assist you in building your software while minimizing the risk. Next week will be conducting an Introduction to our Software Solution Suite, in our training facility. I would like to invite you to attend a day or two of this 3-4 day-long class at no charge. Perhaps we could meet for lunch that day to discuss our web-development application framework or partnering on your project. As you know, the problem with complete outsourcing is that it does not facilitate a transfer of knowledge to your organization. Being a training company at heart, these issues are very important to us. I have several ideas on ways that we might be able to assist you in reaching these goals.

Notice in the above customization that we reiterated the client's concerns letting him know that we heard them. We not only agreed with the client, but we began the process of formulating possible solutions. There was a timely offer of a class creating a sense of urgency and a proposed next step. ***The sales representative has begun painting a picture of himself as a consultant rather than a sales person.*** The hint of "ideas to help you reach these goals" is very powerful. Good advice is hard to come by and this representative is dangling it like a carrot if the client will put forth the time to meet with him. The sales representative has skillfully positioned Domco Technology as a company dedicated to the transfer of knowledge to clients. This positioning puts the company diametrically opposite of the previous vendor in the client's mind. The sales person here knows that unless he can successfully differentiate us from the client's previous bad experience, he will not sell anything. Use customizations to second impression letters to lay a foundation for how you will approach the account.



## **Specific Templates**

Special letter templates can also be used to target specific objections that you hear regularly from clients. These can be standalone letters or just a series of middle section paragraphs that you cut and paste into your standard second impression letter template. You may want such templates addressing “certain issues. If you hear an objection regularly, be prepared to respond. ***If you take the time to automate your written response to common scenarios, you will save huge amounts of time and mental energy in the future.***

Special letter templates can also be created for common dominant buying motivations or specific approaches to selling a service. Our staffing service for example, can have two very different second impression letters depending on the mindset of the client being targeted. If a prospect company has never used contract employees, a template letter can be sent discussing how using contract employees could save them a lot of money over adding permanent staff for temporary bubbles in their work load. If the prospect company is already using contract employees, then we should send out a letter template that discussed how adding agencies to your vendor list increases the likelihood of getting a contract employee with the skills and rate you want.



***Build a pattern for success,  
Automated it and then  
Systematically utilize it.***

## **Letter Mines / Email Mines**

Sales and marketing are often compared to war games. We gather intelligence, vie for positioning and execute strategies. Using this analogy, second impression letters, emails and company information kits can be compared to landmines. They can sit around for months on a desk or in a drawer and when you least expect it, they get stepped on and prospect calls you up for more information.

On many occasions, I have decided that a decision-maker should have a "D" status and that I would not call him again for a year. Six months later he has a need, locates my information and second impression letter in his file cabinet and calls me up to place an order worth thousands of dollars. On other occasions, I have had purchasers call me that I have never contacted. They found the information I sent out to someone else in that building a year earlier. One of the best clients I have made, first contacted me after finding in her desk the second impression letter I had sent to her predecessor months before she moved into that office.

Anytime a prospect contacts you it is the right time and place to make a sale. This is the easiest sale you will ever make. Many times, a manager who has an immediate need for one of the services we offer will ask a fellow manager for a referral. If the fellow manager vaguely remembers your call months earlier, he will search his file for the literature you sent and pass it on to his co-worker. A major benefit of sending literature out is that it sits around waiting to go off at the appropriate time.

# References

## Compensate Them

Good references are precious things. Keep your references happy. It takes time and energy to be a reference for a vendor. People keep calling them up and asking questions. They tell the same story over and over. After a while they start to feel used. Compensate your references for this. Do something for them every quarter or so to let them know how much you appreciate their efforts. Send them a thank you card. Give them a free Domco Technology shirt. At Christmas, send them a gift certificate for dinner out. **Must be approved by Domco Technology-can't look like bribes.**

## Check your References Regularly

Don't assume that a good reference will always be a good reference. You need to re-qualify the reference regularly. Sometimes, references get upset about being called so often and start to sound frustrated when contacted by a potential new client. There may have been an invoicing problem that has not been resolved, so they are hesitant when asked for a reference. Maybe someone in the group had a less than perfect experience with some other division of our company. For whatever reason, you must re-qualify references on a regular basis. The best way to do this is to call them up thanking them for being a reference and asking them if they would continue to be a reference for us. They will tell you if they have any concerns. Another way to check out a reference is to ask the potential client what the references you gave out had to say. They will usually tell you. If a reference becomes less than stellar and you continue to use it, it will eventually cost you business.

## Good Quotes

Try to keep a list of good quotes from your clients. An excellent way to build an arsenal of good quotes from current clients is to call them and ask them why they buy from you. After they say a few good things, ask them if you could quote them on that. You can even prime them for the quotes you want. For example, if you need a good quote concerning the quality of one of our instructors, asked the client what she liked about this instructor. It's easy to get great quotes from happy customers. These quotes can later be used to target specific client concerns.

# Project Solutions

Once it has been decided that a project should be outsourced, a Salesperson must be able to effectively win the business for Domco Technology.

## The Importance of Trust

Projects usually have a longer sales cycle as various decision-makers in the process struggle to gain a feeling of trust with us. Once a project has been outsourced, the client has few options but to stay with that vendor. Switching vendors is time consuming and very costly, so most clients want strong warm fuzzy feelings before any PO's get signed. Trust is built by consistently doing what you say you are going to do. Look for opportunities to build trust. Tell a client that you will email something over within the hour and do it. Tell a client that you will call at 10:00 on Monday and then make the call precisely at 10:00. If you promise an estimate by Friday, have it there on Thursday. These little things are very important as you begin to build the trust process. Look for opportunities to obligate yourself and then meet the obligation precisely as promised. If a client asks you to do something, do not look upon the obligation as a burdensome task, but rather a wonderful opportunity to prove trustworthiness. Dale Carnegie said it best,

*"Little things don't mean a lot...  
They mean everything."*  
Dale Carnegie

When obligations cannot be met as promised, let the client know as soon as possible and let the client feel your frustration in not being able to meet the obligation. If I tell a client that I'm sending over an email right now, and then discover that someone in my office is using my computer for some reason. I call the client back and let him know that there will be a short delay. Building trust is important for all types of sales.

## **Project Sales Objection Handling**

Every decision-maker has hot buttons or areas of concern when it comes to outsourcing. Remember that all objections are serious to the client and must be dealt with even if they seem silly or trivial to us. Make a note of a client's objections or areas of concerns in your contact management system. Each time you have contact with this client, it will remind you to reinforce this area of concern. Here are a few of the major objections you will face and how to overcome them. Memorize the phrases in *Italics*.

**Objection:**        **Is your company stable, financially sound and in business for the long haul?**

**Cues:**            When a client starts to tell you a war story about a vendor who did not deliver or who went out of business, you know that **company trust is the hot button** you will have to deal with before winning this business. Clients may ask questions about how long we've been in business; how large we are or who we've worked for in the past. We are not IBM. Many clients will have never heard about us. Do not assume that they know our size or history. These questions are all indicators that the client needs a feeling of security about the company in general.

**Response:**

- *We have been successfully delivering custom software development projects for nearly a decade.*
- *We have successfully completed over 700 projects.*
- *We were founded as a consulting firm specializing in employee outsourcing.*
- *We have nearly doubled in size every year for the last four years.*
- *We have hundreds of employees.*
- *We have 4 offices including our Raleigh office.*
- *We have never had an unprofitable year.*

## **Objection:            Do you have the necessary technical expertise?**

**Cues:**            Many vendors say they can do anything just to win the work. Most clients have been burned at least once by vendors who did not have the expertise they claimed to have. Clients do not like to fund their vendor's learning curves. They want seasoned expertise if they are going to pay top rates. You will recognize this as a hot topic when clients start to ask questions like, "How do you find good developers?" Other telltale questions might be, how do you keep up with changing technologies or how much experience do you have with...?

### **Response:**

- *All of our developers hold at least one technical certification and regularly must earn additional certifications. The company sponsors this program.*
- *A candidate must do well on our certification tests to get into our five-stage interview process.*
- *Our policies, training and exciting R&D work help us attract and keep some of the best talent available.*
- *Having our own in-house training division gives us a tremendous edge in both recruiting and in cost effectively providing regular and systematic training for our technical employees. We stay ahead of the curve. For example, we had developed Domco Technology Software Solutions suite, trained several of our developers and bid solutions with this tool before it was even in common use.*

## **The Power of Understatement**

The power of understating your strengths or admitting to weaknesses is that you gain integrity points with the client. If trust is of primary importance and you trust who you believe, then expressing honesty before a client is very helpful. Present the company as having made mistakes in the past, but having learned from them. Express shortcomings that are not critical. For example:

Client:                   How have you learned to hire good people?  
Sales Person:         By making a lot of bad hires over the years!

This is said tongue in cheek, but rings of complete honesty. Client's like that. You must go on to say that we have since put in hiring controls and have a very good success rate with new hires. This is much more powerful and believable than simply saying, "We hire good people." Tell a story. Do not just tell a client that we are good; tell them how we got to be good. Tell them about mistakes we have made and how we learned from them. People trust companies they know about. By sharing our story, you are building on that trust relationship. Other examples:

domco

New salespeople are often so eager to sell something that they sometimes overstate our abilities. Look for opportunities to use understatements or to admit weaknesses. A trust filled relationship with a client is more important in the long run than winning a project that we may have difficulty delivering.

## **Audience Types**

Decision-Makers come in many flavors. Each DM has his or her own goals, objections and perspectives. To win business, you will have to be able to sell effectively to all types of DM's. On large account sales, you may find that there are several types of DM's in the critical decision making path. You may have to sell to each type of DM differently. In general, we categorize them like this:

### **Technical Decision Maker (TDM's)**

They understand the technology and they deal in general when it comes to project outsourcing. They are not as concerned about application experience because they know that when it comes right down to it, data is data regardless of what it represents. They will be most interested in our technical expertise.

### **Business Decision Makers (BDM's)**

These are your general managers, marketing directors, CEO's, COO's, and business task force leaders. They are more interested in our business analysis skills and understanding of ROI. They want to hear about our industry experience and similar references. Talk process, not technology with a BDM. Concentrate on how to do it better, faster, or cheaper.

### **Influential End User (IEU's)**

These are application experts who will actually be using the software once written. They do not care about our technical expertise. They assume that any vendor can do the job technically. **What they really want to know is that you understand their concerns about usability.** They want to know that you will listen to them and give them what they need to do their jobs. Let them know that we will give them the power they need to get what they want throughout the development process. Talk about functionality, not ROI. Act disgusted when they tell you about a problem they have with their current system. Say, "that's totally unacceptable... how can you get your job done with a tool like that?" Be an advocate for their cause. Remember that these people are usually the one's putting pressure on management to do the project. They may ultimately push the BDM to a vendor of their choice.



# Time Management

## Prospecting Prime Time

No matter how well you apply the principles we have discussed, you will constantly be running out of time during your workday. The more contacts you make, the more leads you will generate, and the more leads you generate, the more contacts you will have to make. The clock especially harasses salespeople who also have administrative responsibilities. Organizing your day around your marketing responsibilities will free up what I call marketing prime time.

Most contacts can only be reached during regular business hours. They are most often busy or not in around noon and they don't want to talk to sales people late in their workday. We all have non-prospecting things we have to do each day. Try to schedule these activities before 9:00 a.m., around lunchtime and after 4:00 p.m. Try to be making calls during prospecting prime time. Prime time for selling is from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Try to schedule sales meetings and other tasks during non-prime time.

We have already discussed the time investment needed for an in person sales visit. When you do need to meet with a client, try to do it first thing in the morning or around 4:00 p.m. That way, it does not cut into your prime calling time as much. Try to schedule all off site trips first thing in the morning or before quitting time so you can do them on the way to or from work.

## The Golden Rule of Time Management

Time management, organization and prioritizing are techniques that we have all heard about. They are buzzwords at time management seminars. Most people know all about these techniques, but they just never seem to have time to do them. They insist on relying on their memories and wonder why things keep falling through the cracks. In brief, prioritizing means keeping a pad of paper in front of you all day. Every time you are asked to do something, or you think of something you need to do, **write it down**. Even if there is only one other thing on the list, write it down anyway. It will amaze you; the things you can forget. As you begin to use the automated sales approach we have discussed, things are going to start happening a lot faster in your office. You will forget.

If you are a highly productive sales person, you can probably relate to times like this. It sounds impossibly confusing and indeed it is if you rely solely on your memory. Even, very important things can be forgotten amidst more recent concerns. If you keep that note pad before you and use it religiously, you will remember and do everything, and you can stop and re-prioritize at will. A barrage of things may happen all at once, but there is usually a calm after the storm where you can regroup, prioritize and get things done. Discipline is the key. Force yourself to document everything as it happens. If you just finished a call to a client and need to schedule another call to that client and someone walks in your office and wants your immediate attention, ask him to wait a second. Turn to your computer and schedule the call and then deal with the intruder. If you are asked to do something and then you are told that a call is holding for you, write down what you were asked to do on your memory pad and then pick up the call. The caller will wait for the ten seconds it takes to jot down a note.

## The Primary Rule of Organization

The simple rule is **deal with it immediately or document it**, but never ever, under any circumstances store it in fragile human memory. Under stress, your memory will become your worst enemy because it will constantly lure you by saying *"Trust me. I won't let you forget it. You are going to do it in a few minutes anyway."* Then, in the heat of battle, it is gone like a crashed hard drive; clients are disappointed, managers are mad, co-workers let down, leads are lost forever and worst of all, you feel that your work load is insurmountable as stress dominates you.

All this can easily be avoided. Not by making one big decision, but by making hundreds of little ones. To any task that presents itself, you must immediately decide whether to deal with it or to write it down. These are the only two options. Trusting it to memory is not an option for the organized. This sounds so simple, but few people ever really discipline themselves to do it effectively.

## **Prioritizing**

Prioritizing only becomes possible when you have a written comprehensive list of tasks. If it looks like you are not going to get to everything on your list, then stop for a few seconds and prioritize the line items by number. When prioritizing, estimate how many of the items on your list you can realistically get done today. Rank them by importance. When ranking, think of how bad the consequences will be if a task is moved out until tomorrow. Think consequences. If you are going to disappoint a client if you do not get two tasks completed and you only have time to get one done, estimate how valuable the clients are to you and disappoint the lesser. Many of the tasks we choose to do first have the lowest consequences, but we do them first because we over estimate our ability to get to everything else on the list. You never know what will come up. Always rank tasks and do them in order of priority.

Start with number one and mark tasks off as you accomplish them. Even if you don't get everything done today, you will have the satisfaction of seeing the marked off items you accomplished. A certain peace comes from knowing that nothing was forgotten. Everything was done in its order of importance. You did all you could do and that the rest will wait until tomorrow. Stress is minimized. You will feel in control.

Begin each morning by quickly listing the things you need to accomplish that day. Carry over items that did not get done the previous day. Use your CRM calendar. That's the same as "writing it down". And, most important, remember don't break the rule. Do it immediately or write it down.

# Call Reluctance

Call reluctance has been called the biggest problem facing sales people today. It has been a career stopper for some of the most talented sales professionals I have known. Being able to identify the signs of call reluctance is critical to your success in sales.

## What is Task Reluctance?

Task reluctance is a subconscious defense mechanism that helps us avoid difficult or uncomfortable situations. Most people dislike and avoid conflict and stressful or awkward events. Task reluctance is our psyche's natural motivation to protect us by stirring us clear of such events. It is human nature to put off unpleasant tasks.

I suffer from grass cutting reluctance. I hate to mow the grass at my house. I can justify putting this task off for weeks at a time. It is only when the grass reaches an unsightly length that I am forced to deal with my reluctance and take action. Our minds are great at coming up with good reasons to avoid the unpleasant tasks we know we should be doing. I often think to myself:

*The grass is too wet today.  
I really should sharpen the blade first.  
It's too hot right now.  
I really should spend more time with my child.*

## Reluctance Justification

This brings us to an important fact about any task reluctance. Task reluctance uses true statements to justify postponement of action. When you find yourself thinking up good justifications to avoid an unpleasant task, that's the clue that task reluctance is quietly affecting your behavior. When we subconsciously start putting off important tasks, we may not even notice the consequences of what is happening.

## The Effects of Call Reluctance

Call reluctance is task reluctance in regard to making cold call. Making a cold call qualifies as a reluctant event. No one likes to interrupt busy decision-makers. Trying to forge new trails in unfamiliar territory is often frightening. The potential of being verbally abused or made to feel unimportant excites us even less. Cold calling is often unpleasant. It means dealing with rejection. The fact that we are dealing with sale objections means there is conflict.

We have discussed in detail how the sales approach that has been most successful at Domco Technology is one of making many contacts. Because we sell several IT services and our decision-makers are scattered throughout the organization, our business lends itself to making a lot of contacts. Our motto is *“it is easier to find hungry people than it is to try to make people hungry.”* This means making a lot of calls. Call reluctance is the most devastating problem facing our sales people today.

To succeed in sales under this model, we must will learn how to spot call reluctance and overcome it. There are always a dozen important tasks that we could be doing instead of making our calls. Almost any of these tasks will be more pleasant than cold calling. Call reluctance eats away at our productivity. I have observed that no task a sales person can do here that contributes more to his or her success than using the phone to make contacts.

## **Forms of call reluctance**

### **1. Process Perfection Justification**

*“I need to spend more time perfecting the process.”*

This form of call reluctance is centered around continuously spending time thinking of ways to gain minuet efficiencies in the sales process. This is a convenient justification for call reluctance because the process can always be improved some. A sales person suffering from “process perfection call reluctance” will avoid unpleasant sales calls by tinkering with the company software, perfecting the wording on corporate documents and sales material, generating slightly better reports or memos, etc. They argue that they are working hard to help the company’s sales efforts and their co-workers, but it all boils down to simple call reluctance.

### **2. Better Preparation Justification**

*“I need to research the account more before I call.”*

This form of call reluctance is built on the misconception that if we know more about the account before we call, the task will be less unpleasant. This justification for delaying sales calls is hard to recognize. Obviously, some pre-sale research can be beneficial, but a person suffering from this form of reluctance will waste a lot of time before finally making the call. They will check out a company’s web site, read every database history record for every contact within the account, draw an organizational chart, discuss the account in pains taking detail with everyone in the office and outline word for word what they are going to say before finally making the call. This reluctance will dramatically limit a sales person’s call volume and thus their total sales. They justify their time-consuming overkill by saying that the pre-sale preparation is important to the sales process. Like all task reluctance justifications, this is true, but it’s still just call reluctance.

### **3. Current Customers Justification**

**“I need to call people who already know me.”**

A person suffering from this form of call reluctance does in fact make a lot of sales calls, **but not to new prospects**. This person has discovered that it is less unpleasant to call current accounts than to call new prospects they do not know. These people justify putting off prospect calls by reasoning that account maintenance is important and so they need to spend all of their time kicking around the current customer base. While it is important to maintain contact with current clients, the fact is that one's sales volume will primarily grow when new contacts are added. Over attention on current customers is a sign of this form of call reluctance.

### **4. Just too busy Justification**

**“I'm really just too busy doing other important stuff.”**

This form of reluctance takes on many forms. Salespeople and managers suffering from this type of call reluctance have discovered that almost any task is more enjoyable than cold calling, so they fill their hours doing these things. A bid that could be complete in one hour now takes two because some really cool graphics were included. The graphics do not significantly increase the probability of winning the business, but it was an hour spent more enjoyable than cold calling. The “just too busy” justification is a form of call reluctance that can express itself in many ways. Meetings that should take fifteen minutes, now take thirty, Internet research that should have taken ten minutes now requires an hour. Even social discussions with co-workers are lengthened because every minute used up is another minute we will not need to spend cold calling.

Beware of call reluctance. It creeps in when you least expect it. Prosperity can often be the biggest obstacle successful sales people face because it gets us out of our routine for future success. Here are some ways to avoid call reluctance.

- 1. Identify the type of call reluctance you may have.**
- 2. Learn to spot call reluctance justifications in your daily routine.**
- 3. Ask yourself before beginning a new activity if this activity is more important than making your cold calls today.**
- 4. Set aside dedicated hours each day exclusively for cold calling. Treat this time as sacred.**
- 5. Set call volume goals each week and reward yourself for meeting those goals. If you miss your goals analyze what tasks contributed to this failure and how important were they.**

# Avoiding Conflict with Clients

Whenever money is involved, conflict is inevitable. Sooner or later, you will find yourself at odds with a client. We have already discussed objection handling techniques and how to avoid adversarial situations with clients. Here are some general guidelines that will help you stay on your client's good side.

## 1. Help the client feel that you are taking full responsibility / accountability for any misunderstanding.

- This is especially important if you are right and the client is 100% wrong.
- Allow clients to save face when they are obviously wrong especially around others.
- Memorize the magic phrase, *"I'm sorry, I must have misunderstood you."*
- Move the conversation off of the misunderstanding (blame) and onto a constructive plan of action to accomplish new priorities.

## 2. Never let a customer be surprised.

- Start thinking in terms of the customer expectations.
- If you need to change a client's expectations, do it as soon as possible and be ready to explain why.
- Apologize whenever customer expectations are changed even if no one is to blame.
- Share bad news as soon as you find out about it.

## 3. Help clients feel like they are in control.

- Keep in mind that your role is to lay out the options with the associated benefits and consequences and then let the client make the decisions.
- Try not to recommend a course of action unless asked by the client.
- Constantly look for areas where the client can make a decision and there by mentally take ownership of the outcome.

## 4. Get angry with, but not at a client.

- Keep in mind that we are usually partially at fault when a client gets angry if for no other reason than for that fact that we could have done a better job setting his expectations.
- Taking accountability will pacify the client's anger.
- Try to avoid defending yourself as this will lead to assigning blame.



# Selling as Resource Consulting

We have discussed how to sell each of the services available through Domco Technology. Now, let's consider how to position ourselves for selling all of our services collectively. What should our demeanor and sales approach be when we do not yet know which service our client is interested in purchasing?

## We are Resource Consultants

All Domco Technology Sales Professionals should consider themselves to be a resource consultant. This is how you should always present yourself to clients.

An initial presentation to a client should include a brief overview of our company's core competencies only. Never go into a sale presentation pitching the benefits of one of our particular services. If you do, you will be labeled as a sales person.

Most decision-makers feel that a sales person has to be guarded against because his or her job is to sell you a particular product or service. A resource consultant, on the other hand, is someone who listens and then makes recommendations.

The typical "sales person versus decision-maker" adversarial roll no longer exist. The guard comes down and you become a valued and trusted advisor.

When clients tell you about their pain and all of the work they may need to outsource be careful not to show excitement or pleasure at their predicament. If you do, you will be labeled as a salesperson and treated as such. A resource consultant should express thoughtful concern at this disclosure and begin the process of helping the client weigh the pros and cons of various solutions.

Always be forthright with your client. If the client's needs do not fit our services, say so. You will lose a sale, but you will establish yourself as a trusted consultant which will most often prove more valuable to your long-term sales goals than the missed opportunity at hand.

## How to position yourself as a resource consultant

1. Include all of our services in your initial overview to a new prospect even if he is just inquiring about one particular service.
2. Try to talk with prospects about why they are interested in a service and not just about the logistics of delivering that service to them.
3. Try to get your clients talking about their long-term objectives and goals.
4. Use phrases and sentences that will position you as an unbiased resource consultant, not just a sales person for a particular profit center.

It would be a cardinal sin for any sales person at Domco Technology to talk to a prospect and not mention all of the services we offer. You must keep in mind that many IT managers are the decision-maker for not just one, but all of the services we offer. Many others who just handle one service such as a training manager also have influence over other IT managers and co-workers who would be interested in our other services. It makes me crazy when I hear clients say things like:

***“I didn’t know that you guys do staffing.”***

***“I thought you were just a Software company.”***

***“I could have used Domco for my Network Services need.”***

***“I thought you guys were primarily just a project outsourcing shop.”***

Ahhhhh! When I hear things like this, I always look up who their sales person was and find out where we went wrong. If clients do not know about all of our divisions, then we have lost the power of our unique marketing mix that differentiates us from our one-horse competitors.

Get your clients talking about their plans, goals and ultimate objectives for their organizations. If you just get them the staffing contractor they need, you may totally miss out on their ultimate plan to outsource all Web based development.

Let the client know that you are not just trying to make a sale. Clients must feel that you have many tools in your box and that you are in the process of analyzing which tool will best meet their needs. Use phrases and sentences that will position you as an unbiased resource consultant. When describing why we have a Staffing Division, emphatically tell your client,

***“...Because some projects should not be outsourced.”***

When discussing our project solutions, tell clients with conviction that

***“The best solution to an IT resource crisis is often not to outsource, but rather, to invest in your own people and build the skills you need in house.”***

By saying these kinds of things early on in your discussions with clients, you will begin the process of establishing yourself as an unbiased resource consultant and not just another salesperson. Our competitors typically offer only one solution to every manager struggling with IT resource issues. If their company only offers contract staffing or just project outsourcing or just training, this is the solution they must promote regardless of what is best for the client. When differentiating Domco Technology from our one-horse competitors, discredit the competition tongue-in-cheek by saying things like this to your client.

***“Well, if all you have is a hammer, then every thing looks like a nail.”***

When positioning myself as a resource consultant, I find testimonials to be very powerful even if it's my own testament. I like to say something like this to a potential client,

***“One of the things I enjoy best about working for Domco Technology is the fact that I don't have to promote just one particular service. This leaves me free to be unbiased while helping my clients select best-fit solutions. ”***

Memorize these key sentences and phrases.

They are very powerful and should be used over and over again. Consider the above sentence. This one testimonial statement accomplishes a lot.

- It positions me as an unbiased resource consultant.
- It differentiates Domco Technology from its competitors.
- It established the client's needs as my primary concern.
- It defuses the traditional salesperson/client adversarial role.
- It portrays Domco Technology in a favorable way from an employee's perspective.
- It communicates integrity, honesty and a customer-oriented approach.
- It focuses the discussion on the larger issues of goals and objectives.

A well-placed sentence at just the right moment is sometimes all it takes to win a customer for life. These phrases are too important to create while talking to a client. They must be memorized, practiced, setup and then delivered like a normal part of the conversation.



# Motivation

## Burnout

Keeping our motivation level up and our stress level down is an on-going concern for technology sales professionals. The pace at which we work is great for productivity, but it can also increase our likelihood of burnout. Using automated tools and time management techniques will help you work faster and smarter, but it cannot keep you interested in your work. In fact, you can become so regimented using these techniques that after the novelty of new-found success wears off, you can find yourself feeling like you are in a rut.

No sales training would be complete without discussing the possible bad side effects of burnout. Burnout is a state of mind in which a sales person finds himself bored and lacking the motivation that is so critical to success in sales. I have seen top producers drop to last place in sales volume because of burnout. Many sales professionals will switch jobs as a means of dealing with burnout, but this fix is only temporary because the cure for burnout comes from within oneself and not from rotating outward situations.

Burnout comes because of boredom and boredom comes from repetition. Unfortunately, the secret to success in selling is in developing a successful pattern and repeating it religiously. The pattern of making calls, asking for leads, sending out second impression letters, scheduling follow up calls, etc. can become a relentless cycle. You may also feel trapped as you can easily become accustomed to the large commissions repetition generates so that in time you find yourself unable to leave your current position bound by the proverbial "golden handcuffs".

The secret to avoiding burnout is to avoid boredom and the secret to avoiding boredom is change. If the sales pattern is always the same, what changes? Our goals change. Your best defense against burnout is in creating, changing and striving for goals that are important to you. The race is always new and exciting if the finish line is different each time.

## Goal Setting

Work should be tolerable and sometimes enjoyable. It can be even amidst the mundane rigors of process selling if you learn to always keep a fresh goal in sight. Always have some goal you are working towards. You should have some long-term goals and some short-term goals in place simultaneously. For example, a short-term goal might be to make fifty calls before five o'clock while your long-term goal might be to purchase a new car you have dreamed of since you were 15 yrs. Old.

Put some energy into selecting goals that are important and real to you. Selecting monetary and number-oriented goals are fine, but I do better by associating a monetary goal with a luxury reward. For example, some of my rewards have been:

- to go on a cruise
- to buy a Motorcycle I have always wanted
- to take my family to Fiji for a vacation

All of these goals could be reached by applying the techniques discussed in this manual. The techniques I used to earn the commissions that made these goals attainable were always the same, but having a different goal each week somehow made the work different, new and exciting.

Select goals that are important to you. Remember that we work so that we can play. Cold hard dollar amounts will generally not motivate you unless you can visualize what those dollars will provide for you and the people you love. Place a reminder of your goal on your desk. Every morning, I looked at that picture and hit the ground running

Make a game out of selling. Everyone gets excited about winning. Tell other people about your goals. By making your goals public, you up the stakes and make the challenge more real. Try not to compete with others. Compete with yourself. Make your goals difficult, but attainable. If you fail, set the goal again for a different time period. Winning is the best motivator of all.

Procrastination is a symptom and a cause of burnout. When you find yourself putting things off, stop and check your goals. It may be time for a motivator. If you have something unpleasant to do, do it first thing in the morning and get it off your mind. If you don't feel good about one of the services we are selling, then let's talk about ways to improve it. You cannot maintain positive selling motivation if you do not believe in what you are selling.

To quickly recap:

- **Set goals that are important to you.**
- **Set a deadline on attaining each goal.**
- **Tell others about your goals.**
- **Set long-term and some short-term goals.**
- **Try to keep a reminder of your goals on your desk.**
- **When you reach a goal, celebrate and set a new one.**
- **Never go to work "goal-less"**



## **Enthusiasm**

Most people are about as successful as they make up their minds to be. Top sales persons are incredible aggressive and optimists. This seems to be a common personality profile for top performers. Some people spend their lives wishing and others doing. We may not accomplish everything we set out to do, but we rarely accomplish anything we do not set out to do. In other words,

**“We will miss 100% of the shots we do not take.”**

Top sales persons are risk takers. They believe that everything is possible, and they somehow get other people to believe as well. I read a study that showed that successful entrepreneurs are not necessarily smarter or more talented than the general public. In fact, the only factor that distinguished them from the pack was a strong internal believe that if they tried hard enough they would accomplish their goals.

### Do not be afraid of making mistakes.

Mistakes are the inevitable by-product of a growing company. What is important is that we learn from our mistakes and quickly get it right. Some would argue that we should encourage our people to make all of their mistakes as quickly as possible, learn from them and move on to a pattern for success. If you are handling dozens of things at once and moving at the pace we tend to work, you are going to make mistakes, say the wrong things and occasionally lose business over it. I have tremendous patience for people who make mistakes because they are moving too fast. I have no patience for people that analyze every move so carefully that they never make a mistake, but they never get anything done either.

My advice to any sales representative is, “Load the torpedoes, full speed ahead.” Better to eat a few torpedoes and accomplish your mission than to set safely back unengaged in the battle. If you enthusiastically believe that you can, and you have the courage to try, you probably will succeed most of the time. Be aggressive. Be enthusiastic. Think big

**“There are two kinds of people. Those who believe they can  
and those who believe they can’t.  
They are usually are both right.”**



## **Attitude**

A positive can-do attitude goes a long way in any profession but especially so for sales people. We work long hours, deal with a lot of stress, and shake off tons of rejection but we keep coming back for more. Sometimes it is hard to maintain a positive attitude under these conditions, but it is critical that we do.

There will always be things to complain about. Internal resource allotment is always a tradeoff, commission disputes are inevitable, and sometimes you will be convinced that senior management just doesn't have a clue. You will not always have control over your situations and circumstances nor the power necessary to change them, but you will always have complete control over your choice of attitude towards such circumstances. The glass will always be half empty and half full. You may not be able to fill the glass, but you have complete control over how you view it

Motivation is tied to success in sales. We have to keep our motivation up in order to do our jobs and to succeed. A positive attitude is critical for maintaining motivation. Attitude is very contagious especially in sales groups. Try to keep your distance from negative influences. Negativity will suck the life out of your sales volume. Avoid it at all cost.



## Getting Started

The reason some sale representatives have failed at Domco Technology is not because they lack intelligence or the ability to use our sales tools. The most common reason for failure is that they don't take seriously the one essential skill a sales representative must practice; the rigor of organization. If you can set a pattern for success and follow it religiously, you will be successful. Discipline yourself to take a few seconds after each call to record the important information about that contact. Make it a habit to ask for referrals. Every time you contact a client, evaluate his or her worth to your sales process and schedule the next call accordingly. After you make the first impression on a decision-maker discipline yourself to immediately send out the second impression letter. Only by systematically following the patterns for success can we be guaranteed success.

So, how do we organize our attempt to get organized? How do you begin to implement all of the techniques we have discussed? The answer is "*one step at a time.*" It is difficult to find time to practice a skill. We usually have to make time for it. The man who is so busy running to his destination that he does not have time to learn how to drive a car is foolish. All of the knowledge in the world is utterly useless to us until we systematically apply it to our daily situation.

Each week, concentrate on a single technique we have discussed until you can do them all without thinking while talking to a client. For example, one week you might want to put a note on your computer to remind you to get referrals from every client you call. Set goals for the number of referrals you think you can get that week and reward yourself for reaching it. The following week, you might want to change the note to remind you to ask probing question to determine a client's hot button or dominate buying concern. If you feel that you are weak in a particular area, you can put that note back on your computer for another week. If a prospect stubs you with a question or objection, look up the proper response and use this teachable moment to memorize the correct response. Mastering these techniques will take time, but the good news is that you can practice all day while you are making sales calls and earning commissions.

**Question:** "Do you know how to eat a whale?"  
**Answer:** "One bite at a time!"

When you start to use our sales automation tools and the techniques discussed in this manual, your workday may start to change from what you are used to. Some sales people I have trained in the past have said that they spend less time trying to find information, and remembering what to do. Calls are laid out for them each day and using the CRM, they say they don't worry about forgetting to do important things.

Let me address these two very different views by stating that a career in sales is not well suited for the weak, timid, lazy or insecure. Sales can be a very rewarding and lucrative career, but it is also one of the most difficult careers out there. If you choose to make your living as a sales person, then you live under the constant pressure of performing. How quickly sales managers and owners forget the tons of money we made them last month. The attitude seems to always be "what have you done for me lately?" A commissioned sales person is an entrepreneur in every sense of the word. Our pay is based on our successes. A few bad months and we may be literally "out of business". There are a lot of jobs that tolerate poor performance. Sales is not one of them.

As you begin to use our sales automation tools and the techniques discussed in this manual, you will become increasingly more efficient. You will be amazed at how many things you can do at once and yet keep them all perfectly organized. You will become so familiar with your computer and the capabilities of the CRM software that they will almost become an extension of yourself. One day you will stop for a moment and realize that you are printing a letter, addressing a label, sending a fax and dialing the next contact's phone number all at the same time. It will amaze you that you barely gave a moment's thought to any of the tasks you just accomplished. They all just kind of happened instinctively. It scares some people. They have never been able to accomplish so much in so little time. You may say to yourself, "I have never worked so hard in all my life."

Successful selling is not about working long hours, taking your work home with you at night, and working through lunch each day. Successful selling is about making sales. It is accomplishing a lot in a short amount of time so that we don't have to work sixty-hour weeks. The techniques I have discussed in this manual have enabled me to work more efficiently and in so doing to spend more time with my family and to provide a better life for them. I wish that for every professional sales person working at Domco Technology and I hope that the time you have invested with me here will assist you in accomplishing the same.