

## FEATURE ARTICLE

# People to People: The Root of Successful Telemarketing Campaigns

If there is one marketing initiative that often generates negative emotions, it is the wide spread use of outbound telemarketing. With its questionable image in the business-to-consumer environment, many business-to-business companies wonder whether telemarketing is still a viable outreach initiative. Of course it is, but only when it is done with foresight, sound planning, professionalism and an understanding of business relationships.

Despite its value and sophistication as a cost-effective business tool, telemarketing technology is not enough to make an outbound program successful. It cannot replace the personal approach that comes from human interaction. Most people want to deal with real human beings who understand their needs, not just a series of automated responses such as “Press ‘1’ for this. Press ‘2’ for that.”

When it comes down to basics, the success of a telemarketing program is highly dependent on the personality traits and skill sets of the telemarketers. A telemarketing campaign that does not take this dynamic into account is likely to fail. Callers need to be enthusiastic, empathetic and have a genuine interest in the person on other end of the line. In addition, they need to be good listeners, quick responders and thick skinned individuals in order to handle the inevitable rejection they will receive. Other skill sets include effective vocal delivery, organization and attention to detail, the ability to negotiate, handle stress and manage time well.

When planning a B2B telemarketing campaign, start by recognizing the value of the company’s image in developing business relationships. “The most important things to remember are the ethics and standards of the company,” says Joan Mullen, vice president of special projects and industry relations at ORC ProTel, a nationwide contact center. Mullen points out that those guiding principles should always apply whether the company’s campaign is being

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Feature Article
- TPS Marketing Tips
- Recommended Reading
- Business Resources
- Quarterly Quote - “I Wish I Had Said That”

## TPS WRITING SERVICES:

- Feature Articles
- Opinion Columns
- Success Stories
- White Papers
- Marketing Research
- Newsletters
- Books
- Memoirs
- Corporate Profiles
- Grant Proposals
- Blogs



CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

run in-house or through a call center. “When businesses outsource contact center support, they should select a partner company that has the same philosophy and goals as the business,” Mullen says. “Price should not be the only determining factor.”

Just like any marketing program, improper execution is the kiss of death for a telemarketing initia

tive. When those on the receiving end, whether current customers or prospects, conclude that a call was unnecessary or perhaps an imposition, it can do more damage than good. It is this type of response that no sales representative wants to hear. That’s one reason why it is essential to provide callers with adequate training, role play opportunities,

an understanding of program objectives and accurate database information.

Another telemarketing red flag is inflexibility once the campaign begins. Marketers need to be alert to potential weaknesses in program design and then quickly correct them to achieve campaign results. Flexibility includes the ability to reassess goals when call statistics are analyzed. For this reason, project overseers need to be involved, resourceful, supportive

*Marketers need to be alert to potential weaknesses in program design and then quickly correct them to achieve campaign results.*

and effective in building telemarketing teams. When strong teams are in place, success rates tend to be higher.

In the end, goal-oriented human interaction is at the heart of successful B2B outbound telemarketing. It’s all about “building relationships, not frying them”.



## BUSINESS RESOURCES:

*To improve results, take advantage of resources available for the B2B telemarketer:*

1. The Benchmarking Network offers a comprehensive group of links with information on relevant considerations such as customer satisfaction, complaints and measured outcomes. The site contains suggestions for best business practices, always important where telemarketing is concerned. [www.iccbc.org](http://www.iccbc.org)
2. The Direct Marketing Association’s (DMA) Telemarketing Resource Center has information about the telemarketing industry to help businesses respond appropriately to media and consumer questions. [www.the-dma.org/telemarketing](http://www.the-dma.org/telemarketing)

**RECOMMENDED READING:**

1. *Encyclopedia of Small Business, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, Ed. Kevin Hillstrom and Laurie Collier Hillstrom.
2. *Marketing For Dummies, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, Alexander Hiam.
3. *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives*, John Naisbitt.
4. *Top Telemarketing Techniques*, Ellen Bendremer.

**TPS MARKETING TIPS:**

In order to develop new relationships or enhance current ones, consider these key steps:

1. **Define goals.** What is the purpose of the outreach initiative? Is it to generate leads, sales or simply improve customer relationships? Once the purpose has been clearly identified, write a specific program description to keep the campaign focused.
2. **List development.** Profile existing customers and prospects. Then use the information to build or rent a new list. Alexander Hiam, author of *Marketing for Dummies*, writes that “lists...give your callers at least a 15 percent success rate, more than 10 times the average for typical bottom feeder consumer telemarketing operations.”
3. **Develop script and call guidelines.** These include identifying the company, the reason for the call and permission to continue. Some may question the permission request, but remember that the goal is to initiate or supplement a business relationship, not deter from it. If the person on the receiving end is on a deadline or has just experienced a personal tragedy, they are less likely to be open for a conversation. In this case, the telemarketer shows professional courtesy by asking, “When is a better time to call back?” The written script needs to be flexible, include questions to determine a prospect’s or customer’s needs and interests, a way of handling objections and a method for determining next steps.
4. **Record keeping, database management and measurement.** The only way to evaluate success is through outcome measurement. Analysis of results includes a number of factors such as extensive records of calls, reviews of responses, and ongoing evaluations of the current and potential customer profile as a result of those responses. Sophisticated technology exists to help companies do this, but even good manual systems can be effective too. Such reviews can help determine whether the call list has been appropriate and effective for the intended market.

**QUARTERLY QUOTE:**

I Wish I Had Said That

*Hire character.  
Train skill.*

— Peter Schutz



**TRADE  
PRESS  
SERVICES**

*Writing and Publishing Specialists*

2854 Sapra Street  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362  
Phone: 805.496.8850  
Fax: 805.374.9167  
[www.tradepressservices.com](http://www.tradepressservices.com)