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Q & A

Put Your Phone Calls to Work



Suzanne Paling

Q. In my consulting practice, I work with companies to improve both their internal and external customer service. When prospecting for new customers, what can I say in my introduction or voicemail that will interest them enough to continue speaking with me or call me back?

—Customer Service Consultant, Belmont

A. A good prospecting call gets the customer interested and engaged so that you can have a more in-depth discussion with them. To increase the chances for success, make your introduction or voicemail conversational by stressing benefits and raising questions.

For instance, you could say: "In my consulting practice, I have successfully helped companies improve customer loyalty and employee retention by enhancing their external and internal customer service. If an improved customer service plan is something you've been considering, I'd like to discuss my services with you further to see if I might be able to have similar success with your organization."

By asking them if they have considered improving their customer service program and acknowledging that you don't yet know if you are the right person to help them, you are setting the tone for an honest discussion about their needs and your services. This should increase the number of positive responses you receive.

Q. To increase the number of employers I represent as clients in my employment law practice, I would like to send out a mailing describing my

legal services to general counsels at small to mid-size companies. How do I go about following up on this mailing?

—Employment Lawyer, Boston

A. Most general counsels will be interested in hiring you if they think an employment-related legal problem is better handled by a specialist or believe a specialist can save them money. Therefore, your follow-up call should make reference to both those possibilities.

Try saying something similar to the following: "This is attorney Jane Smith with XYZ Legal Services. I specialize in the area of employment law and have 15 years of experience assisting companies like yours solve their employee related legal matters quickly and cost effectively. If your employee-related legal issues have been a concern to you, I'd like to continue talking with you further about how my legal services can help your company save time and money."

If all signs say you are needed and you can address the general counsel's concerns, then by all means ask for her business.

If she seems reluctant to hire you, offer to handle one case for her so that she can compare your work to that of the attorney she is currently using. When her needs in this area are sporadic, keep in touch every few months so she will remember you.

Suzanne Paling is the founder of Sales Management Services, a consulting practice that specializes in hiring, coaching and managing salespeople.

If you would like to submit a question for a future column, e-mail it to suzanne.paling@salesmanagementservices.com. Names will be withheld upon request.