

Once You Get Through to the Decision-Maker

Many of the same principles for leaving a message apply when you are speaking directly with the decision-maker. For these calls, you should prepare and practice a script that works well for you. The following is the type of script that has proven to be **effective**.

YOU: Hello (first name of potential client), this is Paul Planner. I'm calling about an event planning service that can increase sales and enhance employee relations.

TIP: **Focus on the benefit that is likely to be of greatest interest to the person you're calling. For example, the Marketing Department is likely to want to "increase sales" while the Human Resources Department will be more interested in a service that can "enhance employee relations."**

YOU: *(Say lightly, as if the answer is obviously "yes")* I'm sure you would say increasing sales and maintaining great employee relations is something (insert name of potential employer's company) cares about, isn't it?

TIP: **The decision-maker will respond at this point. Most should respond positively. If he or she doesn't respond positively, you may want to cut the call short and move on to the next name on your list. Trying to turn someone around who won't respond politely to even the most basic question is almost always a waste of time and energy.**

YOU: I thought so. My services can help (insert name of company) increase sales and improve employee relations with unique special events that delight employees and customers. I have a 15-minute presentation that explains my services in detail. I'd like to meet with you to show you my portfolio of events I've planned for other companies. Do you have 15 minutes in your schedule on Wednesday afternoon, or might Thursday morning work better for you?

As the example above illustrates, you can **avoid a mistake** many cold callers make of giving the decision-maker a choice between saying "yes" to a meeting or saying "no." Instead, give them a **choice** between two possible meeting dates. If you want to set up a meeting, you should also clearly state a time limit – ideally no more than 20 minutes– because many decision-makers view their time as limited.

You may get a nibble right then, and an appointment. Or the decision-maker may ask you to send things to look at before you're offered an appointment. If that's the case, say:

“I’ll be happy to do that. If you can switch me back to your assistant, I’ll make sure I have the proper mailing information. And if I may, I’ll just touch base with you around the middle of next week. Thanks so much, Mr. McOrder.”

However, instead of getting an appointment or an invitation to send something, don’t be surprised to get at least a mild objection. An excellent way to respond is to **agree** with how the decision-maker feels and explain that many other people felt exactly the same way until they had a chance to learn more about your program.

CLIENT: We don’t have a need for this type of service right now.

YOU: I understand how you feel. Many of my clients felt exactly the same way until I was able to show them how they could benefit from this service. I’d like to show you the same thing. Would Wednesday afternoon work for you, or would Thursday morning be better?

Although you are not giving them any more information, the above statement can be surprisingly effective in getting the client to agree to a meeting. Often the first objection

is an automatic reaction, and just a little push can get you in the door. However, if the client wants more information, you can certainly give them more. For example,

CLIENT: We always want to save some money and maintain good client relations, but I’d have to know a little bit more about what you’re selling to set up an appointment.

YOU: I understand. In addition to planning memorable events that can help you get more business from your clients, I can show you how to improve employee productivity through company events. Would Wednesday afternoon work for you, or would Thursday morning be better?

If the decision-maker is still not interested, then move on to the next person on your list. If you are **overly aggressive**, most decision-makers will be turned off and may not want to do business with you. Your time could be better spent focusing on people who are interested in what you have to offer.

Don’t worry if your first few calls don’t go as planned. Consider them practice. Once you have been using this approach for a while, it should generate a **respectable success rate**. Depending on what you are proposing, a good success rate for setting up meetings may be one “yes” out of every ten calls or even one “yes” out of every two calls. It is up to you to determine if making a lot of cold calls is a good use of your time.

If this approach doesn’t work, go back and take a hard look at your script. Are you **clearly communicating** the benefits of taking the action you suggest to the decision-maker? If you believe you are, ask someone you respect to **listen to you**

make some of your calls. They may discover something in the way you communicate that could be improved.

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