



Ok, enough already; everybody wants their calls respected and returned. Try these ideas cause your co-workers called and asked me to tell you they're sick of hearing you wine about prospects not returning your calls; Oh ya and let me know how you make out.

Remember the number one tool in your sales satchel is your brain and how you choose to use it.

1. Use the side door with the help of a referral or e-quest

Getting a friend or acquaintance to make an introduction is probably one of the best ways I know of but; if that isn't possible there are some 21st century ways of doing it. More people than you may imagine have a Facebook profile (which may be a good bet for now). Simply add yourself as a "friend" and say something nice about their company initiatives, product or service or ask a question in "add". Don't SELL or send info, just work toward building an e-relationship and follow up with a call in a few weeks.

2. Work on the Gatekeeper (or personal assistants)

Time is at a premium for most decision makers so forget about them taking your call on your schedule. Only you and your mother think you are the most important person at the centre of the universe. Make your strategy a long term commitment. Insisting that you only wish to speak with the Kahuna exclusively will get you nowhere. Work with the sentinel or gatekeeper to build a value based opportunity to get through. If they are convinced that your proposal is vital, compelling, highly entertaining or absolutely necessary they'll always bring that to the boss; in fact, if they like you they'll cut the red tape on your behalf. Have your 30 second infomercial (not some sales pitch) ready to share with the personal assistant or admin supervisor and typically your message will get through almost verbatim.

3. The Rule of Reciprocity

This is a good one and it's based on a long standing principle of persuasion. If you consider that the person you want to speak with probably has dozens of folks just like you chasing them; the odds are that precious few may get through. Wanna be one?

First you need to pique one of the most powerful cues or triggers known in marketing. CURIOSITY.

Here's how: Send a gift that rocks or maybe a book that directly relates to them or refers to something you feel they should really know about. (Personalize it by writing inside the front cover or on a handwritten note).

Now here's the where the curiosity factor enters; put the item in a Priority Post, Fed Ex or UPS box preferably (no brochures) and send it along with the note handwritten note that says what day and time you will be calling. It will likely improve your chances of getting through by upwards of 30%.

4. Develop the Tenacity Factor

Being persistent with a prospect may feel like you are bothering them but if you have something of real value that they might be interested in continue to nudge. Be consistent and vary your communiqués; e-nudge, snail-mail, Facebook and in many cases you'll get through. Then a nice touch is a follow-up sign of appreciation (gift or tickets etc) that may serve to cement the relationship. Be wary, some companies have a "no gifts" policy which you may want to explore before sending something.

5. Get Out of Line

One of the best ways to get noticed is to do things that will make you stand out from the crowd. I call it "getting out of line". Since everyone else is waiting their turn in line, you need to think of ways to differentiate yourself from the rest. Start planning your strategy now for the prospects you want to get to in the near future; by doing so you will already be ahead of everyone else that will be waiting in line next month.

6. Become a Key Player in the Big Kahuna's game

Want to get noticed? Become part of the program. Offer to help in any way that you can at any event the prospect may be planning. People notice people who want to help; maybe not right off but eventually you get noticed for your willing contribution. If you are perceived as a team kind of player looking to help for the greater good you'll get recognized.

7. Be Compelling

This requires some due diligence. You need to find a triggering event that presents an overwhelming reason why they should want to meet with you. In order to sell, it's not unlike a doctor finding the pain and having the solution for the patient, in your case the prospect. Your job is to identify where the pain is and what is causing it. A merger, the competition, product launch or slumping sales; find out what the pain is and offer the prescription. Desperation is a compelling reason for creating the "will to buy" scenario.

Think about it; if you have a splitting headache no one needs to convince you of the miracle of aspirin. You just need it and want it. Find the pain.

Bonus: Start a positive Buzz crusade

Initiate positive Buzz or news about the person you want to meet with. Often if we hear a positive reference about us through the grapevine we are curious as to who initiated the remark and why; which will make us one step closer to the conversation we wish to have with the prospect. A now close friend and business associate once told me the reason we became friends is that on the first occasion of our meeting I initiated the conversation with saying "you look like someone interesting I'd like to know". That conversation has led to many projects together and more than a few testimonials and referrals that have spun into an enormous network.