

Turn Cold Calls into Warm Calls with Gifting

Cold calling – no one seems to like it anymore. It has dismal response rates, it alienates and angers prospects, and it demoralizes salespeople. In the age of social selling, why hasn't cold calling finally shriveled up and died?

There are reasons to keep cold calling, but prospects have changed and so should cold calling techniques. People expect personalization, genuine concern, and value. This builds an excellent customer experience, and customer experience is important even **before someone is a customer**.

Cold calling is intrusive, unwanted, and for most people a negative experience. But it isn't dead—far from it, although cold calling is not very effective, with campaigns typically seeing a 1% success rate. These rates are much higher with warm calls.

Sales Benchmark Index reports warm call campaigns with a previous connection are 4.2X more effective than cold calls. These numbers back up the common sense salespeople

already know: if you have a genuine connection, you've got a better chance at making a sale.

But is a warm call always warm? Can it be a cold call in disguise? Sure it can, depending on how you're looking at it. Imagine a prospect reaches out to you at a tradeshow. They want you to call them and talk about your solution. What happens if a month passes before you make the call? Now the familiarity might be gone and you're just another cold call. You can solve this problem by making a human connection that sticks in the prospect's memory.

Here are some ways to stand out of the crowd, get noticed, and make a human connection with your prospects...

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Build an engaging sales approach
- Stand out, get noticed, make a connection
- Build a scalable gifting program



BUILD AN ENGAGING SALES APPROACH

A recent global survey, commissioned by SAP, revealed the biggest frustrations that B2B buyers have when vendors sell to them. These figures speak for themselves: **80% believe scripted, one-size-fits-all approaches fail to engage.** Prospects expect a salesperson to approach them with familiarity, they should know what the prospect's market plans are, where their pain points lie, and most importantly, what value the salespersons brings to the table.

Sales teams that win use personalized, human sales approach. You get there by knowing your prospects before you call, and by standing out with a human touch. [Here are some actionable ways to get started.](#)

1 Research a Prospect Before the Call

A sales team can do some prospect research to both give them a competitive edge and to stand out from the crowd. Researching a prospect's website, social media accounts, and PR releases will put you in a commanding position when you speak. Doing research before you pick up the phone will let you shape the conversation and make the call more genuine.

2 Prepare Prospects for Your Call

How do you prepare a prospect for a cold call? Technically, you can't. If you send any sort of outreach before the call, you're going to be making a warm call. If you target a prospect with compelling marketing materials, the call may be much more engaging.

Try sending a postcard or gift to warm them up. Sending a mailer is a tried-and-true direct mail method, with PFL customer Exabeam reporting an 69% rise in response rates when they used a mail send in conjunction with a calling campaign.

While a postcard creates awareness before the call, sending something with more value, such as a useful gift, will create familiarity. Familiarity is important when it comes to making a connection through the phone. How important? Well, cold calling from local numbers makes prospects 58% more likely to answer because the number seems more trustworthy. Create an even stronger sense of familiarity with a standout gift that relates to your prospects' interest.

3 Create a Natural Reason to Call

According to Braveheart Sales, it takes on average 6-9 attempts to get through to a decision maker via cold

calling. To cut down on the number of calls required to make a live connect, try sending a gift. This creates a more natural reason to call and open the door to organic conversation. Rather than interrupting someone's busy schedule with a sales pitch, you're calling to follow up on something fun and surprising.

4 Account Based Selling: Narrow the List to Qualified Prospects

Cold calling campaigns often involve giant lists that include thousands of leads. Odds are you can't afford to send a gift to every single name on the list, nor should you.

This is when it's important to create a scalable program that qualifies your leads and makes gifting more appropriate. This responsibility usually falls on the marketing team, who uses firmographics, lead scoring, and other methods, to narrow thousands of leads to a more manageable number. With a smaller list, it is easier and cheaper to initiate a gifting component.

You could consider this a type of account based marketing (ABM)—a popular type of marketing that targets a narrower a selection of companies, but does so in a more robust way. Why waste time selling to prospects who aren't truly ready to buy? By narrowing your list to qualified prospects you can greatly improve efficiency.

5 Reward Prospects that Take Your Call

When a prospect takes your call, she's gifting you with time out of her busy schedule. Show your appreciation by sending her a gift as a follow-up to thank her. It'll show that you know her time is important and make her feel valued, rather than a name you checked off your cold-call list.

BUILD A SCALABLE GIFTING PROGRAM

You need a scalable solution to add a human touch to a cold calling campaign. Even after you've cut your prospects down to a manageable number, you can't spend time packing up and mailing every appreciation gift. So what does this scalable system look like?

Use an Automated, Integrated Solution

The effectiveness of cold calling lies in its potential to connect your reps to new prospects at surprising speed. A warm calling solution can't get in the way of that, it has to support the cold calling framework and add efficiency. To be scalable, the direct mail pieces, swag, and appreciation gifts you send have to be automated.

The ideal solution integrates seamlessly with your CRM to automatically send direct mail, gifts, and other items to prospects at the right time. Gifting can be driven automatically by rules, or can be task-based, but either scenario ensures your reps send the right gift at the right time. When your gifting is automated you've built a programmatic gifting solution.

Follow Up On Your Data

Sending gifts, warming up your cold calls, and surprising prospects with a follow up are all solutions that are only as strong as the data behind them. A detailed reporting system is critical for knowing if your efforts are working. Track call engagement, prospect behavioral data, and of course callbacks.

If you are sending gifts, know which ones work the best. Dig deeper and ask, 'why'? Are some prospects more receptive to coffee mugs with your logo, or are they responding well to an introductory direct mailer? See if there is a connection you can use to your advantage.



Keep Data Clean and Updated

Your CRM platform is only as good as the data you give it, so make sure your sales team is cleaning up their lead lists on a routine schedule. You can update your leads list by working with the marketing department to institute a lead scoring program. Know who your prospects are - and who they aren't. If someone isn't a good prospect, forget them. Don't waste time and money on prospects that aren't going to land a deal.

YOUR PROSPECTS WILL THANK YOU.

Setting up an integrated, programmatic warm calling solution can make your cold calling campaign an astounding success. Cold calling isn't dead. With some support and a human touch, it can yield real results for your sales team.

About PFL

PFL provides marketing and sales enablement solutions, including Salesforce apps and in-house printing, gifting, and fulfillment services. We directly connect B2B and B2C organizations to cutting-edge solutions that accelerate productivity and drive business forward.

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