



# TAPE MEASURE

TECHNIQUES FOR PROSPECTING BY PHONE COULD DO WITH SHARPENING UP, WRITES THIS MASTER NLP PRACTITIONER

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ou may be wondering what this is all about; another article that extols the virtues of telemarketing and telesales? Not really. I

want to raise some potentially much deeper issues around communication and new business development.

We are well aware of cold callers who will not draw breath once they have started their pitch and drag their victims protesting through their monotonous scripts. But what if these callers and the companies who employed them carried out their approach somewhat differently?

We live in the days of CRM and eCRM, where there is a constant reference to the importance of how we communicate with our customers or potential customers. So if the cold calling “spray and pray” merchants took the time and initiative to actually research the companies and their executives before they called them, what sort of difference would that make? Moreover, if they then used that research to determine whether the business climate of their target company was right for their product or service offering, imagine what a difference that would make.

It sounds so glaringly obvious, but the impact of doing this process differently would be overwhelming. The executive would be pleasantly surprised to hear that the call was now about them and their business. The cold calling company could abandon its spray and pray lists, as having done some basic homework they can establish whether there is any potential for their offering to address the current headaches that this executive and his company are currently going through.

Let’s also give some consideration to the principle that the delivery of any telephone conversation is five times as important as its content. It is not so much what we say but how we say it. Consider how widely the phone is used as a business tool throughout organisations to communicate, not only

with external but internal customers. How much evidence is there that there is regular communication coaching on the phone? This of course should not just be the exclusive domain of sales or marketing but for the organisation as a whole.

In times when we are told to work smarter, use faster technology and cut costs, how much are we really exploiting the phone to communicate well throughout our business and above all, using it to build our business?

Banks and financial institutions make it common practice to tape and monitor their calls for training purposes. But to what extent do we do it in our industry? Are we too busy to actually stop and check to hear how we are really communicating with the outside world?

We know ourselves what we feel if we call an organisation or speak to someone who sounds unhelpful or makes us feel indifferent; we just simply do not want to do business with them. Where are the checks and balances to ensure that the phone is working for us and not damaging our sales and marketing efforts? Someone once said to me that like airline pilots we should all have that gauge to know that we are on track in communicating well with others.

So, if we regularly record our own communication performance, we can get a much better picture of how we are engaging with the outside world, although note that you must conform to the OfTel regulations when recording telephone conversations. See OfTel’s website for more details.

We can then use various training methods to monitor and improve our delivery. I have found that NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) techniques can produce dramatic improvements in how we engage with others. Moreover, it really can address issues and fears associated with cold calling senior decision makers and dealing with the dread that a lot of people have about using the phone for meetings, rather than their preferred way of meeting, face to face.



It sounds all very touchy feely but guess what, this stuff actually works. I dream of the day when there is more funding and resources available to give this capability to all businesses. Not only will business be a lot easier to carry out but it will also make it a much happier world to work in. **SF**

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## KEY QUESTIONS

- Is research being carried out on the target organisations and their executives, to establish a valid business reason for calling them?
- Are your salespeople planning the calls before they make them? Is there a proper structure to determine the direction and objectives of the call?
- Is the initial contact about the customer's business, or your product and service offering?
- Are your salespeople aware of the principle that delivery on the phone is five times more important than the content?
- Are their calls being monitored and recorded to ensure that they are getting feedback as to how they are engaging with customers and potential customers? And are they actively using this feedback to improve their performance on the phone?
- Are your salespeople really comfortable to call at board level and if not are these fears being addressed?

BY DAVID FESTENSTEIN