

# **The Power of Voice Mail**

## **Five Steps for Turning Cold Calls into Sales**

By Tim Cotroneo



Sometimes when I'm making a cold call to a client, I subconsciously hope to hear his or her voice mail. Sales phobia has nothing to do with my silent prayer. Actually, my thoughts are quite the contrary. A voice mail recording gives me all the time I need to carefully deliver a message that sounds like music to the ears of my new client.

As a headhunter in the fields of engineering and architecture, I'm constantly searching for and contacting new prospective clients. Before I call these new customers, it is important that I devise a strategy for maximizing why it is in their best interest to be receptive to my message and our services. Once my strategy is tailored to this phone call, it's not all bad to hear a voice mail message on the other end. Here is why.....

Think about your reaction to the unsolicited phone calls you receive at dinner from various companies. Usually it takes about five seconds to determine that these scripted calls are wasting your time. Why is that? It's because the person calling is typically looking to just make a sale. On the other hand, what if solving a major problem or making your client's life better is the motivation behind your call?

### **Think like your client**

Put yourself in the place of your client. What can you say that would be well received? Deliver a message that actually sounds like you know what they do and how your product or service can make their life better. Also, the beauty of leaving a voice mail is you can explain the benefits of your product or service at a calm pace, rather than a hurried pitch like when you're speaking to a new client over the phone for the first time.

### **Step Number One – Research, prepare, and deliver**

Before making your call, research your new customer so you have a decent understanding regarding what they do. Scour their Internet web site and any publication that will help in preparation for your call.

## **Step Number Two – It's all in the notes**



No two companies are alike. The more personal you can make your call, the more likely it is that your new client will respond favorably. Therefore, it is helpful to have notes to refer to when mentioning key points as to how your product or service can benefit the customer. The notes are for guidance, your message shouldn't sound like you're reading from a script.

## **Step Number Three - What's in a name?**

If you are calling a company for the first time, do your best to find the person most likely to make a decision regarding your request. So whether leaving a voice mail or sending an email, your chances for message success are much greater if you reach the right contact the first time. The Internet and publications like the Thomas Registry are helpful in narrowing the contact search.

## **Step Number Four - Words are precious**

This is the point where it is very important to put yourself in the chair of the person receiving your call. After identifying who you represent, your opening statement is key to maintaining the new client's attention. This statement says, "I'm here to make your life or your job better." My product or service can make you money, save you money, save you time, or enhance your reputation in the eyes of your customers or boss.

*Example: As a headhunter, rather than just calling an employer and asking if they have any engineering needs. I find the resume of a candidate whose background exactly fits their profile. The more specific the better. When I leave my voice mail, I inquire if they would have a need for an employee that does something that reinforces I have a grasp on their company, clients, and industry. It's amazing how this type of targeted inquiry illicit a positive response.*

## **Step Number Five - Less is more.**

Keep your message brief and to the point. If you've really thought about your client's needs, than your concise message should hit home on a strategic point or two that

summarizes a reason why it is in their best interests to return your call. Remember to leave information as to the easiest way to contact you via phone or email.

So before making another cold call over the phone, think about how your opening statement can be the ultimate ice breaker or relationship developer. You only get one chance to make a good first impression. Think like your client, convey a message that speaks to their needs, and if you really want to increase your chances for sales success, *don't call during the dinner hour.*

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