



Tame Your Prospecting Nerves

Description

By [Janet Nankin, Managing Director, Southeast Region](#)

If you watch Food Network, you may have seen a show called “Worst Cooks in America.” I love the Food Network, but I generally watch it for several reasons: to learn new cooking techniques, because I’m hungry or because I am just bored. I certainly don’t watch it to see people who can’t even boil water.

However, the more I reflected on the show’s concept the more I thought that perhaps watching people not doing a job well is one of the better ways to learn what and how to improve (hey, it worked for the winning “worst cook” after all!). The most authentic place we can start is for me to peek into my own Pandora’s box and share a couple of my past faux pas. Perhaps you can learn from my errors, begin to explore how to happily endure your own prospecting and appointment-making efforts, and tame those nerves.

My Prospecting Past

There are people who LOVE prospecting, but unfortunately I was never one of them. I love talking to people at the grocery store, in an elevator or waiting in line to be vaccinated (hello, 2021!). I realized that when there is nothing at stake, it’s just fun to connect with strangers and learn something new. Talking with a prospect feels different, however, and many people have nerves around it but this does not exclude you from being a successful sales professional. Nerves get the best of all of us, including me.

One morning during my set prospecting time in the beginning of the pandemic, I was lucky enough to get a CEO on his cell phone. Maybe because it was my first phone call of the day or I was just shocked he answered his cell phone, but I just began to ramble to the point that he said to me, “I’m not sure what you are trying to tell me, so why don’t you just email me.” UGH! Crushed for the day and it was only 9:15AM!

I took a deep breath, hit my mental reset button and reaffirmed that every phone call, video chat, email and LinkedIn message is just an opportunity to meet someone new and connect with a stranger. For

the most part, these are the same people I'm completely comfortable chatting it up with out in the community.

Tip #1: Do Your Homework and Find Ways to Make a Connection

I told myself to just start out slow and plan on making ten prospecting calls from 9 AM to 10 AM every morning. I looked everyone up on LinkedIn, Facebook, Google or their corporate website first but didn't spend hours of time researching. And the calls went something like this:

Good morning, John. My name is Janet and I was calling to see about setting up a time to talk about some ideas for your business, but I noticed you're a big Dolphin's fan. I've been going to games since I was a kid!

Remember, people want to do business with people they like! Find common ground and some ways that you can make that personal connection.

Tip #2: Just Go for the Appointment

Phone prospecting can be daunting for seasoned sales vets but especially for those new to the sales process. I understand that for many of us, picking up the phone or leaving a message is sometimes more intimidating than talking with someone in person. When I first began my career in sales many years ago, each dial required a big deep breath as if I were about to bungee jump off the Golden Gate Bridge. It was literally exhausting and terrifying to me, but here's another helpful hint I learned: just go for the appointment.

During my prospecting time, I tried to focus on just getting the appointment and not selling anything. The rest of my call with John went something like this:

I could talk with you about football all day but I know you're busy. I have availability on Tuesday or Wednesday next week and would love to spend a little more time getting to know you and your company to see if I have any ideas that might be helpful. Which day/time works best for you? Plus, we can talk about the game!

Next time you sit down to focus on prospecting, remember to build some rapport, focus on setting the appointment and that the person on the phone might just be the same person who was in front of you in line at the bank just last week (okay, maybe last year since we've all been socially distancing, but you get the idea!). Prospecting can be fun and ultimately productive, so pick your hour each day, settle those nerves and get to it!

Category

1. Articles and Blogs
2. resources

Date Created

April 16, 2021

Author

lisa-peskin