

Why Executives Won't Take Your Call

By [Shamus Brown](#) on Jul-12-2004 | [How to Generate Leads](#)

Do you hang up on telemarketers? 9 times out of 10 I do.

Why do we do this? I hang-up because I am afraid that they are going to waste my time.

Telemarketing is a tough job. Most of the people who do it aren't given enough training to excel at it. Companies take the sink or swim attitude in hiring here.

As a result, you, I, and everyone else receive a lot of bad telemarketing calls. It's to the point where we expect the calls to be bad. We are conditioned by experience to assume that they will suck.

This conditioning by bad telemarketing makes it very difficult for the business sales professional to get through to c-level business executives. I had an experience recently that made me think about this. The events took place by email rather than by phone, but the psychology around the events is the same.

I received an email offering me a free "special report" on eSelling using streaming media technology. I get so much spam these days I am not sure if this email was spam, or if I was on their opt-in or opt-out list. Doesn't really matter though, I decided to respond as the email caught my interest.

I clicked on the link to get the special report. I was taken to a lead form webpage to fill in my personal information - name, address, phone number, etc. Minutes later I was downloading the special report and printing it out. Well done on their part I thought.

I read the special report. The first few pages were great. It spoke my language. It talked about how technology isn't usually designed for selling, but that theirs is.

Then I read the next section of the special report.

This section explained what their technology was and how it worked. It told me all about how the internet uses web pages, web servers that are "stateless", blah... blah... blah....

Yawn...

They lost me.

Let's go back now to when I filled in my personal information on their website download page. On their webpage, I didn't enter a phone number, even though it asked for one. Like you, I have been conditioned to expect that most sales pitches I get will suck. I did not want another sales call that would waste my time.

Getting me to download and read their special report, was the equivalent of getting past the gatekeepers and the voicemail screen to speak to the executive. They had my interest until they bored me with tech-talk that I didn't need to know at that point. Then they lost the sale.

The same thing happens when we try to get through to exec's. They are afraid that you are going to waste their time. So they put up a lot of screens to keep you out.

It is nearly impossible to come up with set of sales persuasion techniques to get past every screen every time. You can improve your percentages though, by following a simple formula.

When cold-calling executives focus on these three things:

- Benefit gain
- Pain elimination
- How easy it will be to get these from you.

Be specific about the potential benefit gains and pain elimination. Tell them that one of your customers saved thousands or millions of dollars by working with you (using a real customer success story that you have verified of course).

Do not discuss how your customer got these benefits. And avoid identifying yourself by the type of product or technology that you sell. If you make either of these mistakes, you have given your target something to pigeonhole you with. Once that happens, you lose the opportunity to keep the conversation going long enough

to establish whether there is even a problem of his that you can solve.

You want to be specific about the cause and magnitude of their pain, yet vague about just how you will eliminate it. You only need to show that you *can* eliminate it. You do this by relating the specific benefits or pain gained or eliminated by one of your customers.

All you want to discuss at the beginning of your call is what they can expect to get from doing business with you and how easy or quickly they can get it. Make the gatekeepers your allies. Treat them with respect by assuming that they know as much as your target exec does (they often do). Use the same approach with them, and you are much more likely to get put through to the executive.

Save the "how it works" discussion for your meeting with the lower level people responsible for making it work. Otherwise, you may never get that opportunity.

Tags: [selling to c-level](#)

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