

Target Prospecting™
21-Step Motivation Guide

Developed by:
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“Style points don’t count. Ability is not enough. In sales, winning comes with attitude. And winning at prospecting is all about attitude!”

- Michael J. Galante, The Sales Coach

Those who are successful at developing new business don’t see it as some duty listed on their job description. As a matter of fact, prospecting is a part of *who they are*, not a job they do.

Successfully opening new accounts comes from a constant flow of new opportunities and is a function of a strong prospect database. It is the act of literally keeping your sales funnel full.

Winners in this area are those who always have time to prospect; keep their skills razor sharp and can’t wait to make the next prospecting call.

Those with a positive attitude toward prospecting and an ever-growing customer base, find their revenue growing year in and year out.

Here, I offer a few thoughts on how to get and stay motivated when prospecting or cold calling. I have also included suggestions that will help you overcome the fear of rejection.

When you internalize these concepts and ideas, you will not only become a motivated prospector, but also schedule more appointments and achieve a higher level of financial success.

Good Luck. Now go out and sell something!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael J. Galante', written in a cursive style.



1. Believe in it, it works! Prospecting is to your business, what advertising is to McDonalds. They are a household name, yet advertise all the time. Prospecting is about you advertising within your designated territory, account base or vertical market. You want to let every available prospect know that you represent the particular products/services you sell. Prospecting has been a part of business growth for thousands of years and today, millions of salespeople are doing it. Why shouldn't you?
2. Discipline yourself. Discipline is about forcing yourself to do something that you don't want to do. In our business, prospecting is often a job that salespeople do not want to do. Every time you find yourself procrastinating or feel like quitting, you are being bit by the Fear of Rejection bug. The only way to beat this bug is to get/keep going. When you are staring at that name on your prospect list or standing outside the prospects door – Just do it! No one has more power to discipline you than you.
3. Make the time to prospect. This is part of the discipline theory. Many salespeople I meet say they are too busy to prospect. This is nothing more than an excuse and an infection by the Fear of Rejection bug. Top salespeople put a priority on prospecting and do it regularly. Regardless of their workload, they make a habit of allocating a certain percentage of their week to prospecting. It is your responsibility to MAKE time to prospect and create this habit.
4. Prepare yourself properly. Prospecting is a contact sport. You are either prepared and have an advantage over the other person, or you are unprepared and don't. Top salespeople have regular phrases, statements and/or scripts they use to generate interest. They also have a list of common objections and responses to handle any resistance the prospect or gatekeeper may give. This preparation comes from practicing with peers or a sales manager and from making lots of prospecting calls. Are you “fully” prepared?



5. Convert that feeling. Try to understand why you get sick to your stomach when you have to prospect. Or why you hate the phone and have the fear of rejection. Ask yourself why you feel this way and then listen for the answer. When you really believe in the value of prospecting and the rewards it can bring, the true reason will come out. Don't let that feeling control you, you have to learn how to control it. Once you make your first call, the negative feelings you have will be converted into positive energy. My experience is, the worse you feel now, the stronger you'll be when you convert that energy and the more likely you are to become a prospecting dynamo. (No kidding!)
6. Don't take it personally. Most, if not all, of the prospects you are going to call are bombarded each week by salespeople. And they reject most, if not all of them too. Prospects don't reject you; they reject salespeople. So when you call, it is not you they are rejecting, they are rejecting just another salesperson. Don't feel so singled out. You are among an elite group of people who have the ability to find qualified opportunities for your company. Be proud of who you are and what you do. It carries through over the phone.
7. It's a numbers game. Professional baseball players rate in terms of skill in the top 1% of the top 1% of all the millions of people who play baseball. Yet they are only successful at getting on base about 30% of the time. So let me get this straight. They are the best of the best, get paid millions of dollars and actually fail 7 out of 10 times! Why don't they get the fear of failure? Because they understand it's a numbers game. In the sales profession a 15 to 20% success rate is good. 25 to 30% is great! When you can secure 2 – 3 appointments from every 10 prospects you speak with, you are doing a great job. Keep in mind that every "no" gets you one step closer to that elusive "yes." Just keep getting up to bat!



8. Organize and rate your leads. Top salespeople have *at least* 100 qualified leads on their call list at all times. (Some of my clients have as many as 300!) A qualified lead is a prospect that you know can use the products/services you offer and has the ability to pay for them. Additionally, categorizing leads by either the potential sales size or the time frame in which they are likely to purchase can be very helpful. The most common rating systems are A/B/C, Hot/Warm/Cold, 30/60/90, Focus/Target/Key Accounts, etc. The purpose is to keep your efforts focused and efficient.
9. A business card with notes on the back of it is not a prospect. I am amazed at how lax some salespeople are in regard to the value of prospects. A stack of these things with a rubber band wrapped around them is not an efficient way to prospect. I recommend using Contact Management Software, an index card system or a 3-ring binder to keep more detailed information on each prospect. As you will see, the more contacts you have and the more information you have for each prospect the easier it will be to make appointments. In addition to basic company information, you **MUST** have multiple contacts. This way you will have multiple doors to open and information to leverage.
10. Locate the *final* Decision-Maker(s). Strong lead lists will have the names of the Decision-Maker(s) for each lead. A Decision-Maker is generally defined as the person(s) who makes the decision in relation to your products/services. There are two things to look for when categorizing someone as the final Decision-Maker: 1) the ultimate authority in their organization to over-rule everyone else regarding your products/services, 2) the ability to allocate money, set budgets, issue POs, sign checks, give you a credit card or enter into agreements. **THEY** have the money and **THEY** can spend it!



11. Create interest. Set yourself up for success and change the prospect's perception of salespeople by sending a well-written, professional introductory letter before you call the Decision-Maker for an appointment. Your strategy should be to present yourself as an expert in your particular field and offer as much value as possible before, during and after your calls. By following up with hand written cards, personalized emails, and informative support material, you set yourself apart from your competition and build trust in the eyes of your prospect. Soon their resistance will wear down and they may even call you back.

12. All at once or not? Salespeople regularly ask me if it is better to cold call for eight straight hours (one full day) or to break it up into two four-hour sessions. Frankly, I have met successful salespeople that do it both ways. One salesperson may prefer to allocate a full day to prospecting while another may prefer to break it up into two mornings on two different days. I don't think it makes a difference, I believe we all have to find the method that is comfortable for us. Provided you discipline yourself to concentrate on prospecting during this time period.

13. Break up the day/session. The fact of the matter is that even great prospectors are going to be rejected. Prospecting is a numbers game based on percentages. Having said that, I believe it is sometimes difficult for people to take a lot of rejection for a long period of time. So I recommend breaking up your session in a fashion similar to this. Make a particular number of calls to brand new prospects, then make some calls to prospects you have previously called on, then call some people for referrals, then take a short break. What I have just described is one cycle. The length of each cycle will depend on your commitment to prospecting, your work ethic and level of tenacity. In order to effectively prospect, you are going to have to repeat these cycles as often as you can in order to get results. Only you can determine the length of each cycle and how many cycles per day you are comfortable with.



14. *Make Happy Calls.* A “Happy Call” is a call to a new or existing prospect in which you are not asking for the appointment. You are either following up on a piece of information you sent, trying to qualify a lead or calling a lower level person in a prospective account to learn more information. The purpose is to keep your name in front of the prospect and advance that prospect by either gathering more information or making a relationship call. These calls are made without putting yourself in a situation where you might get rejected and the customer doesn’t feel any pressure to schedule and appointment. Typically, they are “happy” for you *and* the prospect.
15. *Partner with a buddy.* Many people go to the gym to exercise with a friend. They do this because they enjoy the workout more, keep each other motivated and keep each other in line. I recommend finding another salesperson in your organization that has the same or better work ethic as you. You can agree to keep each other going and positive during prospecting sessions. When you make commitments of when, how long, and to whom you are going to prospect, you subconsciously put pressure on yourself to hold up your end of the bargain. This is very healthy pressure and can make the job of prospecting more fun.
16. *Hold all calls.* Not for motivation, for discipline and efficiency. A telephone prospecting session is just that – outgoing calls only. Have your receptionist or secretary hold all your calls or direct them to your voice mail. Telephone efficiency is all about rhythm. Once that rhythm is broken it’s hard to get it started again. When you start to field incoming calls you might get sidetracked by a friend or even worse by a customer who needs something NOW. Keep the rhythm by making outbound calls only!



17. Use a headset. Not for motivation, for discipline and efficiency. When you are “literally” connected to the phone via a headset, it is much harder for you to walk away from your desk. So many people put the phone down and have trouble picking it back up. They don’t even realize it, but as soon as they put it down, the resistance to picking it back up again starts to build. If you don’t have a headset, make it a rule that you will never put the receiver down until you dial at least “x” amount of calls. Just hang up each call with your finger instead of putting the receiver down. You will make more calls and feel less resistance to each!

18. Build on little successes. Regardless of your experience level, you may occasionally hit slumps just like professional athletes. To overcome this, the athletes don’t quit; they focus their attention, practice regularly and keep at it. Little by little they start to succeed and get their confidence back. You can do the same by working a strong referral list or by calling on previous prospects or accounts. This can get your rhythm back. As soon as you start to succeed throw in a couple of cold prospects and watch your confidence take over. Even if you are not in a slump, during a call session you may want to make a few easy calls to “dormant” customers to keep your motivation and confidence level up.

19. Increase your tolerance level. You don’t start a running career with a 26-mile marathon. You start by first running 1 mile. Then build your way up to the 26-mile event. Same with prospecting. If you are suffering from a lack of motivation or the fear of rejection, start small and build your way up. Start with 10 calls the first week, 15 calls the second week, 20 calls the third week, 25 calls the fourth week, and so on. Recently I was thrown out of a building by the security guards while prospecting with a new sales rep. She was so embarrassed and devastated. I though it was fun!

20. Pick some low-hanging fruit. Typically in every industry there are vendors who are not very competitive or customers who are easier to sell too. Take some time to really sift through your territory, account base or vertical market to identify the companies you can go after that would be easier to get your foot in the door. You may not be able to sell the exact product/service you want, or the amount of product you want or even get the best price for it, however, you just want to start with some level of success. Very often smaller accounts or smaller sales volumes are easier to sell. Other times, an immediate need or low cost product might be your entry point into a new account. Either way, your goal is to crack the door open just to get the feel of success. Home runs are much harder to come by and take more times at bat. However, a couple of solid base hits can really change the scoreboard.
21. Set goals. Recently I was speaking with a veteran salesperson that had just started with a new company. At his previous job, he had a strong account base, which he built himself, but more recently did not have to make many cold calls. He took this new job (which does most of its business by telephone prospecting) because he was looking for more upside potential. He said he was scared at first because he was making a good living, but had faith in his prospecting efforts. He told me the main reason for his recent success was because he sets goals for himself every week. He said he has goals for the number of times he wants to dial the phone, the number of contacts he has to make and the number of appointments he has to set. Basically, he said he works as many hours as it takes to hit those goals. Now that's discipline, commitment and desire! (He was up for a promotion the month I spoke with him.)



“The world is full of opportunities. Successful salespeople make a habit of finding good ones.”

- Michael J. Galante, The Sales Coach

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