

Seven Surefire Openings That Kill a Cold Call

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Most of us dread making cold calls because we typically get such bad results. There are reasons why customers disconnect instantly. It centers on the fact that we have nothing relevant to say and that we truly are wasting their time. There are seven openings that many of us use as our default opening when we have not carefully planned the call. These should be considered mortal sins and avoided at all costs.

1. **“I just wanted to introduce my self and my company.”** Customers are busy people. They aren't waiting by the phone hoping that someone, for example, will call them about new software. The reality is there are so many companies out there doing exactly what you do. Business people have very little interest in learning about what they perceive is just one more company. If, on the other hand, you tie your product or service to one of their pain points, you may stand a chance of getting the customer to listen further.
2. **“I wanted to check in with you.”** Unless you are this person's mother or long lost relative, clients don't really want you to check in with them. To turn this opening around, you will need to add a “because” statement or a statement in which you share some interesting factoid you recently read about their industry or company from an online service or industry magazine.
3. **“I was just wondering if you received the information I mailed you.”** Busy executives receive so many brochures and marketing pieces that the administrative assistant trashes many of them as soon as they come in, or they remain unopened at the bottom of

a pile of similar pieces from other companies. If you really want your marketing piece to be opened and read, you need to send it Federal Express. Federal Express envelopes are always opened. If you choose to use this opening, expect that the executive will say no and suggest you resend. It is a waste to resend the information unless you can get a commitment from the customer that she will give you ten minutes to talk about the information at a later date. However, you can also briefly summarize what was in the information that would be relevant to the person on the other end of the line and see if that sparks some interest.

4. **“I was calling to ask you a few questions about your business.”** Most people see no benefit in taking time to answer questions about their business. They have no relationship and trust level with you and actually may be annoyed by your assertiveness. It is too premature. Customers need to hear your value points before they are willing to reveal anything about their business.
5. **“I just wanted to see if you had any problems in the area of...”** This type of opener always fails because the caller sounds desperate and grasping at straws. Also, the caller has given the listener the opportunity to end the call by saying “no.”
6. **“I am calling to see if you would like us to come out and do an analysis.”** Again, there is no relationship and no trust established so from the customer's perspective, this notion sounds ridiculous. Ultimately, you may want to say this to a customer but it would certainly be at the end of your conversation, not at the opening.
7. **“I am wondering if you would have a few moments to talk about...”** Busy executives almost always say “no.” On the other hand, if your opening statement had strong value points, the customer would have taken time to listen or would have suggested another specific time for you to talk.

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Cold calls do not have to end badly. If you avoid these default openers, have a good understanding of your customer's business and plan what you want to say very carefully, you can generate interest and actually make the customer happy that he or she picked up the phone. The key is in making it worthwhile for the customer to listen.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. When you have to have impact phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.