

How to Convert Hot Prospects to Customers

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Have you ever found it difficult at times qualifying and selling to prospective customers on the telephone? If it is, this article is designed for you. Novice and expert telemarketers will appreciate the advice about increasing their conversion rate, customer satisfaction and repeat business.

Your Goal

You want to generate more business from prospects who telephone you for information about your product and services. It is a worthwhile objective, especially when considering how often you may be unprepared for incoming prospect calls and fail to focus on the natural sales opportunities they present.

When you're busy, answering the phone tends to become a lesser priority and that will result in lost opportunities. There are some smart ways to maximize your time with a prospect and capitalize on their interest in your products and services.

Your Approach

The end result for any salesperson is getting the prospect to buy. They must meet the following minimum criteria:

- Demonstrate a need or want to purchase your product or service
- Have the authority to buy what you are selling
- Have the money to purchase your product and services

If they meet the criteria, they are potentially good prospects. Do not waste time and effort if they fail this simple test.

Answering the Telephone

How often do you let incoming calls roll over to voice mail? Sure, you can always call them back, but if you don't pick up the phone when a potential client is interested and ready to make a decision, you're missing out on a possible sale. Try taking as many incoming calls as possible in order to benefit from the 'readiness' of the call to buy.

Be Enthusiastic!

This may seem a bit obvious but after a long, hard day, it may be difficult at times to get in state. Actors and vocalists are masters of getting in state. After all, if you paid hard earned money to see your favourite singer perform, they had better sing like a bird on a stick no matter what their disposition before the performance!

Sound enthusiastic when speaking to a prospect. Enunciate clearly and choose your words carefully trying to paint a clear mental picture of the opportunity to the prospect. This is the ideal time for you to get to know the prospect. Make sure to keep their interest on the telephone and make it a welcome experience for them.

Gather Basic Information

There is standard information you should collect from every caller but sometimes it may be difficult to remember all of the questions to ask when on a live call. This is why having a caller information sheet or checklist is vital.

Your checklist should include:

- Date of the call
- Name and address
- Telephone Numbers
- Email Address
- Details about current wants or needs
- How the caller discovers your business
- Products and services of interest

Prepare a Loose Script

While each call is usually different from the next, you can prepare a general outline for how you envision a prospect call to progress. It prepares you to answer most questions, get important details and make sure you are giving the caller the information they need to make a decision. Your script may be incorporated into your caller information sheet so you have everything in one place.

Ask Probing Questions

Don't wait for the caller to volunteer the reason for their call and the details about what they need. Ask questions from the start of the call to help it progress smoothly and to begin building rapport with the caller. Guide the caller as they provide the information you need, sharing details about what you do and how you work to determine if you are the right person to work with them.

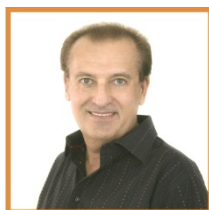
Listen Closely and Remember What You Have Learned

Do not ask questions for the sake of filling the silence. Listen closely to what the caller is saying and respond accordingly. While you may have a loose script in front of you to help guide the call, avoid being tied to it. Let the call flow naturally.

Outline the Next Steps

Before ending every call, discuss what will happen next. This important step cannot be over emphasised.

Will you send the prospect a summary of the call by email, reiterating the key points discussed? Do you need to schedule a time to talk again? Make sure you identify exactly what will happen next and then **follow through**. Don't let the time you spend on the phone be wasted by lack of follow-up and confusion about who does what next.



About the Author

Bob Hoffman is a [SEO Digital and Print Copywriter](#). He has more than 30 years business experience in management, sales and graphic arts and is currently the director of Pebble Ridge Corporation Pty Ltd trading as PRC Marketing.

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