

Not Interested Does Not Mean Never Interested

by Valerie Schlitt, President of VSA, Inc.



I am always surprised when what should be an old calling list, still has so much life left - and produces valuable results and connections!

- Last week Ryan spoke with a physician who wanted to learn more about a specialized medical billing program. This normally wouldn't be odd, but last year this same physician practice, with a different decision maker, flatly refused to talk to us.
- Today, Lori set an appointment with a bank marketer whom we had called 8 previous times - periodically leaving messages, but had never reached. This time he was interested in our risk-free marketing program, and wanted to make time to talk further.
- Michele set an appointment with a senior level marketing executive for our client's research program even though we had been trying to connect with this prospect for almost a year, unsuccessfully.

Did these individuals suddenly "cave" because we were stalking them? Or is there another reason?

I would love to think our repeat calls encouraged these prospects to talk to us and set appointments. In many ways, I know our ongoing contacts open doors, keep our clients' names top of mind, and make the initial conversations a bit easier.

Mainly, I know that it's all about timing. If these prospects had no need or interest, they would not have taken the time to talk and set meetings. This time, they needed our services. We called them at just the right time. We clinched the appointments because of our persistence.

Whenever we call repeatedly on large lists, we prove to ourselves that "Not Interested" does not mean "Never Interested." "No Contact" does not mean "Never Will Contact."

So, what can you do knowing that prospects change their minds?

- Keep on calling! Space out calls over longer periods of time.
- Change up the lists. Start with one list for one or two months, and then move to another. Then, possibly another. Finally circle back to the original list after 6 - 8 months.
- Identify the highest priority prospects. Call them often, but don't leave voice messages all the time. Call them early in the morning, later in the evening, after work hours. Try odd hours and see if you can get through.

- If you have email addresses and cannot reach someone on the phone, send an email immediately after your attempt. Say, "I tried to get you, but we didn't connect." Do this periodically over a 6 to 8 month time frame.
- Intersperse mailings and emails with your calls. This reduces the cost of staying in touch, but keeps you top of mind.
- Never, ever consider a prospect completely dead. Perhaps they are sleeping for a while, but in many cases they will wake up and connect with you.

When we started calling people again who had initially rejected us or had never connected with us, we felt awkward. Then came the "ah ha" moments. Prospects who we thought were "dead" suddenly needed us.

So, what did we learn? "Not Interested" really doesn't mean "Never Interested." "No Contact" doesn't mean "Never Will Contact." A prospect is never really dead - just taking a long nap!

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