

## A Cold Caller's Personality

*by Valerie Schlitt, President of VSA, Inc.*



When it comes to cold calling success, it's all about the list..... It's all about the numbers..... It's all about the process. That's what I normally say.

I want to change my tune a bit.

Yes, all of that is true. In fact, a good list is the biggest foundation for success when you're making cold calls. And determining the right process of repeated calls and emails absolutely contributes greatly, as well. But these are not the sole ingredients to successful cold calling.

I don't often talk about the quality of the caller and that's what I'm going to do now. And, that's what we focus on at VSA.

A great cold caller has a fantastic combination of tolerance, perseverance and tenacity PLUS the ability to be assertive, proactive and positive. A great cold caller is intuitive. She hears the slightest hesitation in her prospect's voice and is able to ask the right questions to keep the conversation going. She knows when to hang up and go to the next record, and when to keep pursuing a particular prospect because she senses an opportunity.

Let's repeat the qualities: tolerance, perseverance, tenacity, assertiveness, proactive behavior, positive outlook and the icing on the cake is intuition.

How many people do you know with this combination of qualities? And if you do know someone with all these qualities, have they chosen "Cold Calling" as their profession?

It is absolutely not easy. No, let's say, it's downright difficult to find good cold callers today.

We have a staff of outbound callers who are particularly great, and we do whatever we can to keep them.

We allow for flexible schedules. We intersperse calling time with some off-phone work to give callers needed breaks. We acknowledge successes and challenge callers who are underperforming.

Repeatedly, I have witnessed that this special kind of personality can turn a mediocre program into a successful one.

Here are two examples (names and products are changed to keep them anonymous):

- Sally is making outbound calls for a building maintenance service. She begins talking to a prospect. She is creating camaraderie, but the prospect says he doesn't need our service. Then, out of the blue the prospect announces, "but I have another location that might be in need." And, Sally sets up a sales appointment.

At first glance, this is nothing special. But, an average cold caller would not have made the conversation so easy. The prospect's reaction would have been "I've got to get off this phone." Sally made talking easy and fun. Just the few extra seconds on the phone,

because Sally was positive and engaging, changed our prospect from a flat "no" to a viable opportunity.

- Jenny has been calling prospects for hours and has rarely spoken to a decision maker. This is her third time calling the same list of senior-level executives. Neither they nor their administrative assistants answer the phone.

When cold calling, you cannot get practice unless someone talks to you. Jenny knows that although she has spoken to no one, she must appear totally relaxed and knowledgeable when a decision maker eventually picks up the phone.

Jenny is determined. All of a sudden a C-level executive answers his own phone. Jenny begins a conversation. A moment ago she was feeling desperate and defeated because she hadn't been able to reach anyone. Now, she is upbeat, positive and confident. To Jenny's delight, the prospect decides to listen for more, and Jenny is able to set a phone appointment with our client's sales rep for the next day.

I bet that cold callers with less experience would not have been able to move from "perseverance mode" into "conversation mode" as quickly as Sally and Jenny did. I also believe the positive attitude and intuition both Sally and Jenny possess helped greatly.

We work hard here at VSA to attract people with the underlying talent, and then to keep them with us by building a positive environment. Our clients benefit directly from our efforts to hire and retain the best cold callers.

Yes, lists, numbers and process are critical to a solid campaign. But, if you don't have a solid calling team you cannot fully optimize results.

Never underestimate the benefit of an excellent caller!

**Reach us at 856-240-8100**

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