

# How to Make a Successful Cold Call

by Ceri Ruenbeck

While there are plenty of ways to get sales leads, sometimes you end up having to call people you've never met. This process, known as "[cold calling](#)," is actually easy—but only if you know how to do it. Here's a step-by-step guide.

1. Introduce yourself. When you get through to a prospect, say: You: Hello [prospect's first name], this is [your name] from [your company] ...

2. Obtain permission to continue. Without waiting for the prospect to respond, immediately ask the following question: You: ... Have I caught you in the middle of something?

So, the whole opener should sound like: "Hello, Jim, I'm John Doe from Acme. Have I caught you in the middle of something?" Exactly like that.

In most cases, the prospect will respond one of three ways:

"It's always a bad time, but what's this all about?"

"No, this is not a bad time. What can I do for you?"

"I'm in the middle of something. Call me later this afternoon."

If you get the third response, go to Step 3. Otherwise, skip Step 3 and proceed directly to Step 4.

3. Reschedule the conversation. If you get that last response, say: You: Thanks, I'll call you then.

Make a note in your calendar to call again at that time. Call back at the time that you committed to do so. If your prospect answers the phone, proceed to Step 4.

However, if when you call back, you land in voicemail, leave this message: You: Joe, you asked that I call you around this time, but it looks like you're out. Call me at XYZ number, but if I don't hear back from you by this Friday, I'll call you on Tuesday.

Then call back when you said you would. When you get finally through, proceed to Step 4.

4. Continue the conversation. If in Step 2 you got one of the first two responses, say:

You: I know I'm calling you out of the blue, but sometimes if I don't know anyone at the company I'm calling, this is the only way to develop a relationship. All I want to do right now is quickly introduce myself, my firm, and my offering.

As I mentioned, I'm with [your company] and we help companies [what your company does] and I was wondering how to best position myself to determine if our product may be a fit for you?

Most of the time, the prospect will either continue the conversation or point you at somebody who is more appropriate. In either case, you've successfully made the cold call and are moving the sale forward.

Congratulations!

