

## WHAT IS ONE MORE CALL WORTH?

What is one more call worth? This is a perplexing question to answer, because the answer will always be different. Here is a quick story to explain the value of one more call.

I was waiting outside of the ConocoPhillips refinery for that one customer who could help me get in the gates. I stood there counting the cars entering and exiting, when all of a sudden, he finally appeared. It was Joe, the carpenter foreman, who recently placed an order. Although he only purchased \$400.00 worth of anchors, I felt there was more opportunity. Little did I know that this seemingly routine sales call would turn into \$945,000.00 worth of business.

It is important to connect with high-level decision makers, but building relationships with influencers is equally as important. Salespeople need to be strategic and tactical when approaching their customers.

High-level decision makers have clout and steer the direction of the organization. High-level decision makers approve the funds for your solution. Influencers don't have that kind of clout, but they do have information. These influencers have project intelligence, a lengthy rolodex, experience, and inside information. They point you in the right direction and facilitate the initial meetings.

Salespeople need to sell at both levels and act as the go-between. They must view their business strategically and execute tactically. They are the conduit from the top floor to the shop floor. In order to be that conduit, salespeople must leverage their current relationships. Salespeople need to leverage their relationships by asking for a referral, asking about current events, and current needs.

A referral is worth twelve cold calls. You can knock on twelve doors or ask the customer, "Who else should I talk to?" A referral legitimizes your message and it cuts the learning curve. It takes months to contact the decision maker, but a referral will substantially reduce that time. The next time you meet with your customer, ask them two questions, "Who else should I meet with," and "Would you please introduce me?"

Back to the opening story...

Joe and I started talking about his small maintenance project. He was installing new concrete anchors and he had a few questions. I demonstrated the installation process and he was satisfied. Before leaving, I asked him a couple questions, "What other projects are going on here?" He heard that ConocoPhillips was starting a \$3 billion expansion in a few months. I asked him, "Do you know anyone I could speak with regarding the project?" He mentioned a few names. Then it was time for the payoff question, "Would you introduce me to them?" He said, "Of course." The group he introduced me to started to buy. That group then introduced me to another group who started to buy. So on and so on, until I sold \$945,000.00 on that project—all because I worked with Joe, who had current information about an opportunity, and introduced me to some referrals.

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