

## Effective Handling of Inbound Calls

**The following represents the process for the effective management and handling of inbound telephone calls. This process is tried, tested and proven to deliver significant results and confidence improvement at all levels, whilst improving customer service and sales opportunities into the bargain!..**

### What would improve your performance?

Any incoming call could be a sales enquiry or opportunity. The problem is you don't know which may be sales opportunities and which are more general inbound calls?

Also, unlike if you are making the call, when receiving them, you are never at your best in terms of preparedness.....

This is often reflected in a poor qualification of the real opportunity and a less than satisfactory handling of the enquiry into the right area of the business to deal with it.

### Result – a lost opportunity!

When dealing with inbound sales or enquiry calls that could lead to sales, there are a few general principles to follow;

1. Despite a lack of preparedness, readiness or willingness to take the actual call, stop what else you are doing and concentrate on listening to the caller.
2. Let the caller outline the nature of their call – no interruptions.
3. When they have finished, ensure that as a result of listening and making any notes, you are fully aware of their requirements.
4. Start from a position of agreeing with them and not starting off as dismissive or defensive, whatever they have said..... Assuming that they are not right for your business through receipt of a short burst of information, or from their telephone manner is dangerous.

### Result – a lost opportunity!

5. They may have a number of requirements, a headline – “I want someone to come and meet me to discuss....” and a subplot – “I have a number of things I would like to discuss with someone” or “I may be interested in...”
6. Deal with the headline first in a positive manner with phrases such as “I am sure that we can sort that out for you”, “I would be happy to arrange that for you”, etc, etc....



7. The purpose of this is to put the caller at ease on the assumption that they will be getting what they want. Clearly this is not always, or even anywhere near always the case, but remember, non-defensive and non-dismissive at this early stage.

### **Now is the time to establish what happens next?**

8. Now, with the caller at ease you need to establish if their request is valid or whether they are not for you or the business. You do this by stating "in order to establish who would be best to deal with your requirements (meeting request, points of interest, enquiry, whatever), I need to ask you a few short questions and then we can arrange (whatever their headline or sub-plot is).
9. Even if you think they are a time waster by their tone, manner, nature of their call etc, you cannot assume so unless you have asked the questions. To do so would potentially lose a valuable opportunity just because the caller had an unusual manner or approach.

### **Questions**

These are non-standard depending on the nature of the call, but could and should cover some of the following (not necessarily in this order);

1. Can I ask why you thought of (our company) for this particular enquiry?
2. Can I ask if you have spoken to anyone else at (our company) previously?
3. What are you looking for from us today (apart from the meeting request)?

Then, and only then will you be best placed to respond to the caller's headline and sub-plot either by;

"Thanks for the information – on the basis of what you have said, my colleague, Mr A or Miss B will be best placed to deal with this. I will just put you through to them".

Here, you MUST precise the call and the nature of the enquiry to your colleague to avoid the caller having to repeat themselves.....

You may even make a recommendation to the colleague regarding the headline request for a meeting etc if appropriate.



The alternative is a kind and polite.....

“Thanks for ringing (name of company) with this opportunity, however on the balance of what you have told me, I regret that this is not one for us”.

There is little or no need to have to justify your decision (especially to a time waster) but if you have to it is likely to be on the nature of what you provide or do against the nature of their actual requirements and not having a meeting of the two.....

**Remember – It is not combat.**

Agree with their request at the outset, however strange it may seem.

It is easy to say no later on, but always from a position of knowledge not assumption.

Stop and listen and be ready to make notes!

**Good Luck & Remain Positive!**

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