

A Consultative Approach to Improved Appointment Setting: Ten Key Steps

By Thomas Baskind

If handled properly, your telephone appointment setting efforts can lead to long term recurring revenue and personal income. There's more to it than a canned "script" or "talking points"? Here are ten building blocks to assure a comprehensive appointment setting strategy:

- 1. Start from a place of curiosity.** The more you show an interest in the prospect's issues and concerns, and less about trying to talk about your product or service, the more likely you will gain trust and develop a relationship.
- 2. Have a clear objective, state it, and ask for what you want.** Before you call, be clear about your objective. Clearly state it in the first few minutes of the call. Ask for what you want.
- 3. Do not be tied to the outcome of the call.** Be willing to accept that this might not be the right time for the prospect or even the right proposed solution for the prospect. The less you are emotionally tied to the outcome of the call, the more relaxed you will be, and the more you will come across from a position of integrity.
- 4. Get to the point.** Prospects are attuned to routine "needs analysis" questions. Best to expect that your prospect is a "bottom line" type and be responsive to his or her information requests.
- 5. Focus on creating a long-term relationship, not just making a quick sale.** Don't be in a hurry. Relationships require trust. And trust takes time to build.
- 6. Show genuine interest in your prospect's situation.** Remember to *shut up and listen*.
- 7. You're a consultant, not an account executive.** Establish your role to help the prospect accomplish his objective more effectively.
- 8. Don't claim to have a solution.** You don't know enough yet.
- 9. Focus on the prospect's situation.** What does he do and how can you help him do it more effectively? The more you think of your role as trying to support your prospect the more effective you will be in explaining the value of your product or service in malleable terms.
- 10. Respect the prospect's time.** If you ask the prospect in the initial cold call for five minutes, honor that time commitment and don't run long. The prospect is engaged and interested, ask for permission to talk a little longer.