# There are Four Key Differences Between the Skills Required to Set Initial Appoints and Those Required in the Normal Course of Selling.

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Many sales managers we talk to operate under the assumption that because their sales team, once in front of a Target, can move that Target through the pipeline effectively, they are also properly equipped and capable of getting a Target ***into the pipeline***. After all, selling is selling, isn't it? The sale, or objective, is just different in the case of trying to set an Initial Appointment, right?

Unfortunately, the answer is no. And this misunderstanding of the differences has created what we like to call the 'elephant in the sales bullpen'. It is apparent to everyone that enough Initial Appointments are not being set, but the root cause is not pursued. Instead, us sales managers all ignore the elephant and utter the old mantra, "Make more dials!"

This article explores the four major differences: the Beginning Repartee, the Pace of the Exchange, the Types of Responses heard from the Target, and Preparation to Succeed.

1. The **Beginning Repartee**. If our Target has agreed to an appointment with us, the opening moments of the call, although perhaps not yet openly friendly, are at least collegial or warm. That happens because our Target has already determined to invest time with us so they are open to the conversation and to us.

   On a cold appointment making call, the opposite is true. They have not yet agreed that there is value in even talking, let alone meeting with us (even on a referral call). The reasons for that are twofold.

   The first is that they don't think they need what we're selling yet, so why would they ***need*** to have this conversation? Reason number two is that we're interrupting them from doing something, so they don't even ***want*** to talk with us. The result is, they'll do anything, including ***lie*** to us, to get us off the phone. Hence, the term 'cold call' as the Target's behavior towards us is cold. What that means is that the call begins as being ***adversarial***.

On the Initial Appointment, the normal conversational skills we all have developed throughout our life are at play. Not so, on the cold call. The skills necessary to Counter that initial negative response and get the Target to open their mind for a moment to a conversation about how our value proposition has helped others–and hence potentially them, are not needed nor practiced in the pipeline half of the selling process.

2. The **Pace of the Exchange**. When in front of a Target in a sales call, the pace of the conversation is generally deliberate, calculated and measured. When the Target asks us a question, we can take a moment to think about the question before answering. It is totally acceptable to do so. As a matter of fact, it can be construed as a sign of disrespect if we don't ever seem to take a moment to think about what is asked and always seem to be quick with what could be taken as a *canned* response.

   On an appointment setting call, the pace is accelerated. Our Targets generally answer very quickly by falling back on their favorite *Conditioned Knee Jerk Response* – i.e., their typical way of getting sales professionals off the phone quickly. They don't need to think about it, it is a reflex.

   We must respond just as quickly, or risk being hung up on, or at least put on the defensive. The whole conversation is conducted at the speed of a Nolan Ryan fast ball. So, if we're not practiced at handling the few standard negative responses that we hear consistently, we'll not have near the results we'd like to or need to.

3. The **Types of Responses Heard**. Because a Target has agreed to meet with us, by definition, they are willing to hear our story and share theirs to help determine whether it makes sense for them to move forward with us. That means their responses to questions we ask are more apt to be based on logic.

   On a cold call, the responses we generally hear are more of a *knee jerk* response designed to get us off the phone. Those responses are many times not even true, although they may have a grain of truth. If you'll think about it, each of us has our own favorite we use when cold called.

Applying logic to their *lie* does no good because there is no logic in their response. Therefore when we call someone, we must give them a vehicle to retreat from that opening knee jerk response in such a way that they save face and open their mind to a short conversation regarding what we've done for others to address a challenge or supply a benefit.

We must ***Counter*** their negative response using a transition that provides them the ability to save face (a lot of our customers felt the same way) and then ask a question that will open their mind to a short conversation by asking one of our **Bridge Questions™**. (By the way, our Counter technique works just as well when the Target actually gives us a true response.)

4. The **Preparation to Succeed**. When in front of a Target during the pipeline phase of the selling process, our preparation for the meeting should definitely include some planning. However, we cannot plan for all contingencies. That means that much of our success is based on our ability to think on our feet as each situation is at least slightly different.

   On a cold call, there are only a few responses we'll hear if we deliver the same message each time we approach someone. To accomplish that, we must internalize, or memorize, our opening approach to limit the responses we'll hear. We must also internalize, or memorize, the responses we'll use to counter those. We'll also need to practice them so that they roll off the tongue like normal conversation.

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