



The Utter Truth About Telemarketing Scripts

“This telemarketer phoned me the other night, and it was obvious he was reading from a script. He sounded so CANNED!”

You’ve probably heard this complaint in casual conversation, or even uttered it. I’ve heard it in countless seminars I’ve conducted, as well as from readers of my best-selling books: *Reach Out & Sell Someone* and *You Can Sell Anything by Telephone!*

Scripts and telemarketing go together like Mother and apple pie. Well, not exactly.

We LIKE Mom and apple pie!

But we love to hate telemarketing and those that do it, especially the ones who struggle through their poorly crafted presentations.

I’m here to tell you that scripts (and telemarketers who use them) get a bad rap. Working well together, these can be pillars of your overall sales success.

Why Do We Use Scripts in Any Walk of Life?

Actors follow scripts because they lead to better performances that reliably produce positive effects in audiences.

Companies, and their managers, use scripts in selling because they’re supposed to produce consistent and profitable sales.

When management sage Peter F. Drucker studied doctors as they performed medical diagnoses, he stumbled upon a cruel fact of life, and death. Some practitioners buried their patients much more frequently precisely because they DIDN’T USE SCRIPTS, i.e., systematic procedures for deciphering maladies.

Like the simple washing of one’s hands before surgery, when the proper protocols for diagnosis were introduced, survival rates soared.

In a word, physicians became more productive in achieving their main mission: the prolonging of life.

If Scripts Are So Vital, Why Do They Suffer From Such a Bad Image?

Most people don’t object to the use of scripts if they are INVISIBLE and INAUDIBLE.

As a rule, we don’t leave a movie or legitimate theater singing the praises of the screenwriter or playwright. Their well crafted lines are essential, but the better they are, the less noticeable they tend to be to the audience. Moreover, actors and their directors are expected to make the words they’ve been provided sound natural, as if they’re being uttered spontaneously.

When a script is well written and performed well, it tends to rise above the ranks of the “canned” talks that so many of us disdain.

But audiences and customers are unforgiving when subjected to poorly constructed and delivered scripts that sound “phony.” When scripts don’t ring true, they compromise the suspension of disbelief or light trance state that is vital in a smooth theatrical performance and in sustaining a productive sales or customer service encounter.

Hearing a bad script is a lot like crunching down on an eggshell in one’s breakfast.

Suddenly the mystique of eating a wholesome meal vanishes; and with it, our appetite.

The Script That Made 100 Million Customers Sing

When I was in college I had this daydream about coining a word that would be completely new.

Later, when I would see it in print, hear it in conversations, and especially when a dictionary picked it up, I could boast, “Hey, I invented that!”

I didn’t create a single word, but I accomplished something even more influential.

I crafted a Call Path, a script for handling customer service and inbound sales calls that has spread like a virus. I’m hearing it everywhere, and so are you.

Let’s say you call your cell phone provider and you ask them a question or to straighten something out, and they reply, “Sure, I’ll be happy to help you with that!” you’re being treated to part of the script.

If after getting the information you need, they volunteer, “And is there anything else I can help you with?,” they’re simply moving to the next step in the sequence; and if they end the call with, “Well, thank you for your business!” or something similar,

they’re trying to make you sing and get you to pledge to come back and to do yet more business with them.

At my own clients’ sites, my Call Path has been tested and proven in several million conversations, and by now a conservative estimate is that it has proven its merit in at least 100 million conversations.

But it could be a billion or more, if you add in the legions of imitators that have been mimicking parts of it.

When done correctly, the Call Path should shorten conversations and cut costs by 25 percent. It should also tell you how well you did with a given customer before the transaction concludes, and it should, above all, make customers SING!

Nice and Humble Scripts Do Better Than the Bombastic and Boastful Variety

Scripts that call undue attention to themselves, and seem less than authentic, often fail because they’re simply too bombastic and boastful.

“Companies, and their managers, use scripts in selling because they’re supposed to produce consistent and profitable sales.”

Sometimes it pays to sound as if you don't know what you're doing, that you're in over your head, and to come across as an utter screw-up.

For instance, when you're negotiating, playing the fool can get your counterpart to reveal lots of vital, strategic information to you, simply because he thinks you are harmless and just a little dim-witted.

Playing dumb, or at least coming across as humble, also pays off in making cold calls, especially if you fret over them.

You could be one of zillions of people who would rather endure a root canal than to dial and smile. You break into a cold sweat, your words fumble from your lips like boulders, and you're acutely aware of your every flaw.

If this sounds like you, then REJOICE!

You're just a hop, skip, and a jump, or if you like, just a hobble and a pratfall away from your next victory.

Possibly you've heard the adage that "The Almighty looks out for drunks and small children." The list is longer than that.

The Almighty also comes to the aid of THE MODEST. If you come across to a prospect as genuinely guileless, then gargantuan forces will come to your aid.

For example, one of the most powerful opening lines in the annals of cold calling starts this way:

"Hello, I'm Gary Goodman with Customersatisfaction.com and I have a little problem on my hands, and I was hoping you might be able to help me out."

Then, without ceremony, the caller stops and waits, while silence enters the call. Typically, the gap, the pause, the nothingness dissipates quite quickly as the prospect replies,

"Well, uh, sure, I will if I can..."

What's the problem? How can I help? These questions course through the listener's mind, and suddenly, he wants to be a hero, to be of service to another human being.

And this necessitates that he listen to the next part of the presentation.

Wow! If that's not A MIRACLE in a sales context, I don't know what is!

You've taken a stranger and transformed him into an avid, sympathetic listener, all within the compass of a single line.

How did you pull this off? You took off that heavy expert hat, and bowed in humility.

You said, "I can't solve this by myself; I need your help."

Before You Jettison Scripting, Try to Improve It!

I was brought in to consult to a major manufacturer of consumer electronics.

One of its products consistently broke, and this evoked thousands of calls per day from irate purchasers.

To their credit, the company executives asked me this question:

"Is it possible to turn conflict calls into selling opportunities?"

After giving it some thought, I said it was, and I undertook the development of a script that would: 1) defuse the anger, and 2) sell an additional product, all during the same inbound call.

My strategy, and the training program I devised to implement it, resulted in add-on products being sold in 50 percent of the conversations in which the script was used. This turned the customer service function, a cost center, into a profit center.

So, before you dismiss or derogate the idea of scripting your sales and customer service calls, think again.

You, too, might make 100 million customers sing! **N**

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