



By Carl Davidson

About the Author

Carl Davidson is president of Sales & Management Solutions, which provides sales and management training designed exclusively for the water equipment industry. For more than 13 years, he has helped more than 1,400 companies in seven countries. For a free demonstration tape and catalog, contact the company at 800-941-0068; www.salesco.net.



But How Much Is It?

The phone is ringing. Your advertising brings in another call. But, don't you hate it when the caller wants just a price? You give it and they say, "thanks" and hang up, never to be heard from again. What a waste. Could it go better? Could we get more of those people to allow us into their home for a demonstration? Here are a few tips from veterans of the phone wars.

You Made Me Love You

Remember that you can't give the price early in the conversation. A bald price before you establish need or make them love your product kills the chance of an appointment. Before you get to the price, thank them for calling. Tell them a few good things about your company. Get them to talk about themselves by asking questions such as, "Why are you thinking of improving your water?" If you warm them up first, the rest of the call will go much better.

Remember Your Goal

Remember that you aren't going to get a sale on the phone. Your goal is to get an appointment in their home. That means that if you tell them everything you know on the phone, they don't need to see you. You need to use the call to ask questions and establish their need and your credentials as the person who can solve

their problems. Don't run down a list of your inventory and prices. I know they want you to but it will kill your chances of an appointment.

Questions Are The Answer

How do you keep from blurting out the price and answering their questions? By asking questions right back at them. Here is a sample call using questions and ranges to put off discussing price.

Caller: How much are your softners?

Salesperson: That depends on what is in your water and how much water you use.

Caller: Yeah, Yeah, Yeah. How much?

Salesperson: We have water treatment products from \$49.99 to \$6,432. Our prices are excellent but, more importantly, our service is the very best.

What is your TDS?

Caller: Huh?

Salesperson: That's the measurement of all the dissolved solids in your water.

Caller: I don't know.

Salesperson: If you want to save money and get the equipment to do the job, the best thing is to have me come out and do a thorough test of your water. Then I can recommend several options that will solve your problems and save you money. Would Thursday evening be convenient or is another day better?

Use BIG Ranges

Notice that in the example above, when we had to mention price, we used a range. Not a small range but a big range. Ranges allow you to honestly answer their price questions without giving so much information they are done with you. The low price in the range might be a counter top carbon filter and the top might be a whole house system. Make sure the range is so big that it makes no sense without further information.

Enthusiasm and Manners

Enthusiasm sells. Make a few calls to companies and you will see what you need to stand out from the crowd. Enthusiasm is becoming a rare quality on the phone, so it's something that can separate you from your competitors. Also, be extra polite. People only want to invite people to their home who they feel are polite.

Say Something Nice About Your Company

Remember that if the caller called you, they probably are going through the Yellow Pages or newspaper and will be calling other companies, so say some nice things about your company that pre-disposes the caller to want to deal with you. You might say, "Thanks for calling us. Our company won the service excellence award for on-time service for the last six years, so I know you will be happy with our work."

Why Should I?

It helps to get the appointment if you give them a reason why there is something great in it for them if they invite you out now. In other words, give them a reason why they will benefit by having you out to their home. It could be, "It's good you called now since we have our special anniversary pricing in effect until the end of the week, so I can save you money if I can come out before the 10th. Would the 8th or 9th be better for you?" It doesn't have to be money. It can be fast installation, finance specials or many other factors. Whatever you use, make sure it gives the caller a good reason why they will be better off by having you come out to their home now.

Get Them To Write It Down

If they write it down, there is a better chance they will be there for your appointment. Ask them to. "Do you have a pen and your calendar? Let's write it down."

Practice new approaches until your appointment rate increases. You'll learn to look forward to that ringing every day.

WQP

For more information on this subject, write in 1010 on the reader service card.