

Cold Calling With Style

Do you hate cold calling? How can you ease the pain while getting better results? A TAB Member loaned me a tape series- *Cold Calling For Cowards* (available from Foot-in-the-door.com). While the whole series was pretty good, one particular tape stirred up one of my passions- "*Recognizing and Adapting to Different Personalities*". As I thought about this segment of the tape, I realized that I could write a whole series of articles and even prepare cold calling cheat-sheets using what I have learned from DISC profiles and behavior analysis. This month I will just give a brief summary of what the tape tells us about personality types and selling.

The tape, *Cold Calling For Cowards –Recognizing Different Personalities*, side 1 tape 4, breaks our prospects into four categories:

Drivers represent 15% of the people you call. They are the ones rushing you to "get on with it" or saying, "I don't have time for this. What do you want?" They will challenge you immensely, however, studies show that they will buy in just 1-2 contacts. Even better, they won't bicker over price.

Expressives characterize another 15% of the prospects. They love to talk about themselves and they engage you in their stories. They only take 2-3 contacts to sell.

Both *Drivers* and *Expressives* are influenced by *possibilities and opportunity*. The other two types are motivated by *problem solving*.

Amiables encompass 35% of the prospects. They are obliging and give you lots of time, however, they have trouble deciding on anything. They need solid guarantees. You need patience in dealing with them. They take 4-5 contacts to sell.

Analytics are the other 35%. You will know them because they will make up excuses to avoid you. They don't want to talk to you! They need lots of information at every phase of the process. They take 6-7 contacts to sell.

The tape cites research that shows that 92% of cold callers give up after only placing four calls to a prospect. Look at how many deals they leave on the table by quitting so soon! Notice that the last two categories, 70% of the population, require a lot more persistence and patience. Are they worth the effort? Yes. The later group represents the most loyal customers, perhaps because they take so much time for them to decide. The payoff in selling them is huge.

In the following series of columns, I will relate these four types to the four behavior styles of the DISC profile. I will show you how to recognize those styles, and how you motivate them to buy more from you.

Selling With Style - Closing the Driving, Directing High Ds

In the August issue I discussed how (according to *Cold Calling For Cowards*) "Drivers" could be closed in only 1-2 contacts. My experience is similar for the style that DISC calls "*The D*". These Dominant, Driving, Directing *High Ds* can be your quickest close. I regularly walk in and out with the door with the credit card numbers of *High Ds* in just one TAB interview.

However, I also recall chasing *Ds* for months too. Why is the most decisive style of all types avoiding me? I wonder, "*Does he hate me?*" However, through style consciousness I learned not to feel hurt. *High Ds* do not want you to be their new buddy. If I am chasing them they may be too busy for me. That usually means I failed to compel them into action with my presentation. They need to be quickly sold on bottom-line solutions to their issues and opportunities. If I do not achieve that, they are history.

The demonstration phase is critical. I used to hate it when *High Ds* looked at their watch during my laptop presentations. However, I learned that you must alternate between giving information and asking *Ds* questions. They do want to talk about their operations. Don't bore them with testimonials. They want facts. Give them practical logic. Talk in terms of increasing their profits and how you can help them reach their goals. Be professional and credible. Do your homework. BE PREPARED. Never ever ask for data that is available somewhere else! Here are other ideas for the demonstration phase:

- ❑ Appeal to the ego. You could say, "*You are the type of person who can make this work.*"
- ❑ Emphasize new products and innovation: "*There is nothing like this anywhere else.*"
- ❑ Stress opportunities for timesaving. Say, "*Increase efficiency by__%.*"
- ❑ Help them win, and challenge them. Say, "*Be the leader in your field. We will put you on the cutting edge of your industry.*"

As you approach the closing phase, they do not want to do the evaluating. You must do that for them. Their biggest fear is to get taken. Give them two options (options not opinions). However, respect their need to feel in control. Ask for the *High D's* opinion. Sum up the cost-benefits. Then ask the big question: "*Based on what we have discussed do you want to...?*" They will answer you directly. If it is "YES", then follow up quickly with a confirming letter reassuring your commitment to help them achieve their goals.

How do you know you are selling to a Dominant?" They have trophies, fish, and animal heads in their office. They are the direct, fast-paced, blunt, perhaps uncooperative ones. They say, "*Get to the point!*". They interrupt your flow to ask: "*What does this cost?*" They ask: "*Are you sure you know what you are talking about?*" However, my favorite is when they ask: "*Can I get it NOW?*"

Selling With Style - Selling to the Influencing High I

I love selling to the influencing, socializing *High I*. Like *The Expressive*, you can close them quickly, maybe even on the first try. They are easy to recognize. They may have pictures of themselves with important people. They are chatty, expressive, fun-loving optimists. They are long on ideas and short on follow-through. If you are dealing with an extroverted, open, people-oriented person you can almost be assured he/she is a *High I*.

As you establish rapport with this *Influencer*, appeal to their need for recognition, status and excitement. They want to be the first on the block with the newest, most prestigious, and showiest items available.

Display confidence and enthusiasm as you introduce yourself. Unlike the *High D* they might even want to be your buddy. Show genuine interest in them. Use feeling words not thinking words. Tell stories about yourself especially funny ones. Allow lots of extra time for them to tell their stories. They get bored if they are not talking.

Make the information-gathering phase revolve around them. The more you get to know them, the more willing they will be to focus on the business at hand. However, do not make the mistake I made a couple times when I let them talk so much that I had to clumsily rush the closing effort. When they get off track use their words to get them back in focus.

Your presentations and products have to look great. Style counts with *Influencers*. Show them how you can put them on the cutting edge and help them to lead the way into the future. When you progress to the commitment phase, just come out and ask them: "What is the next step?" Give them a choice of options. I just say: "You like both programs, which one do you think best meets your needs?"

The *High I* is spontaneous and likely to want to do what the others are doing. Give them testimonials and drop names. Support their dreams, use emotions, and put them "in the drivers seat" of whatever you are selling. However, do not oversell them. They are also the most likely to experience buyer's remorse.

Influencers forget details. Cover those facts in writing. They hate paperwork! I anticipate the sale and come in with all the forms already completed. All they need to do is write in their credit card number and sign the form. Make it easy for *The Influencer!*

Once they buy, you are not finished yet. Since they are vulnerable to buyer's remorse, remind them they made the right choice. Tell them that people feel good about their decision. Then keep the relationship alive with follow up visits. Buy them lunch or coffee. Keep them happy. Since they love to talk to others, make sure the things they are saying about *you* are good things!

Selling With Style - Selling to the Steady High S

The Steady *High S* is the most common style and yet many of us lack the patience and skills to sell to them. Are they worth the extra effort? They are if you want clients who place a premium on longstanding, loyal relationships.

How do you recognize a *High S*? These consistent, amiable, relating types prefer a relaxed pace and are indirect- not pushy. They are friendly, people-oriented, warm, but not necessarily extroverted. Their office is often homey with lots of family pictures.

The premise of this five-part series is that because people buy from people they like, we must adapt our styles. Well the *High S* places the highest value on buying from people they like. You can offer the best product in the world; however, they will buy from an inferior provider if they are more secure and comfortable with him than you.

In your initial contacts, be friendly but not too friendly. You must earn their trust first. Slow down. The best way to blow the sale is to close them too fast. Getting that appointment may be a challenge at first. They hate change, uncertainty, or risk. Act professional, and in a nonthreatening, pleasant manner you might ask:

"Could I meet with you sometime to lay this out for you? I can show you an almost risk-free way to improve your business. And if you go with us we guarantee that you will have a service person assigned to you 24/7."

In the interviewing stage, *The S* is the best interviewee I have ever seen. Talk warmly, tactfully, and sincerely, and ask open-ended questions to draw them out. Do not be shallow in answering their questions. Do not expect them to tell you if they do not like your product. They hate hurting people's feelings.

When I am selling TAB the commitment phase can be tough. I did all my homework and know that TAB is exactly what this *S* needs. I have given my best presentation and have the perfect Board for him. He appears to agree, and then here comes his response: *"Why don't I call you in a week. I'd like to think this over."* Ouch! This is where I used to blow it. But now I know better:

First of all do not assume they are telling you everything. They may just need more information but do not want to frustrate you by telling you.

Next, after showing them how your product can affect them and their team positively, gently try for a commitment by showing you care. I might say *"Joe I believe TAB is perfect for you. I would not personally recommend this to you and the Board's members if I was not one hundred percent convinced this will work for you."*

I find that my position in the commitment phase is much stronger if I have been getting smaller commitments along the way. Also I make sure *The S* knows they can call existing clients. In addition, you might say: "*I feel you are open to a number of possibilities and I want to recommend this plan of action__*"

I assure them: "*We own this office and have been an industry leader for __ years, so we will be here for you when you need us.*" Or I say: "*This is a proven product that has on the market for 13 years. This is something you can rely on.*"

The *High S* is motivated by guarantees and comprehensive warranties: They like to "*Try before you buy*". If possible, let them experience the benefits and then sell themselves. Some of us, such as with TAB meetings, cannot provide that option. With TAB, I get as creative as possible so they will feel like it is a TEST DRIVE while they still are making a commitment to the TAB members. I just make the process as risk-free as possible by laying out exactly what happens if it does not work to their satisfaction.

They may still need more time. If what you are selling will not be available later, gently ask for a "*Think About It Deposit*". You could say, "*Sam, you have invested a lot of time in investigating this and I want to make sure your ideal selection is available when you decide. You could help me out by placing a small refundable deposit while you give this more consideration.*" They value security. Stress the security they get if they buy now versus loss of security if they wait.

Finally, they make the final commitment. Congratulations. But, you are not finished yet. Nurture the relationship with lots of personal attention through visits and phone calls. If a problem appears, explain what happened, and comfort them by explaining how the problem will be avoided in the future.

Selling With Style - Selling to the Compliant, High C

Cold Calling For Cowards' research says that you must call an *Analytical* an average of seven times to make a sale. Unfortunately, the average salesperson gives up after three contacts. How many of these sales are you leaving on the table? *Analyticals* sound just like the *High C* in DISC. My experience mirrors the above. It takes me from several days to years to enroll the *High C* in TAB. However, they are loyal and dedicated for the long haul once they decide.

It is easy to recognize the *High C*. This accurate, precise, patient, fact-finder is guarded, passive, and indirect. This task-oriented thinker needs detailed information on how your product or service fits his/her needs. I used to really get mad when he responded to my best possible presentation by saying "*I need more information*". I am more patient now. I keep giving them data until the information is no longer moving them towards them buying.

One reason you may not even get an appointment with the *High C* is because they really prefer not to talk with you! They are usually not very talkative and

do not care for small talk. You cannot rush them. How do you get their attention then? Here are some things to say to get in the door:

- ❑ *" I have all the information you will need to thoroughly investigate our service and determine if it is right for you."*
- ❑ *" This is a proven product on the market for years, so you know you can rely on it".*
- ❑ *" Others have found this to be the perfect solution to their problems. With your high emphasis on quality, you will probably do better".*
- ❑ *"As you can see by this straightforward analysis researchers have come to the conclusion, backed by these numbers, that a firm like yours could improve profits by ___% if you put this program in place."*

I enjoy interviewing analytical types. They will talk your leg off if you ask questions that give them an opportunity to show their knowledge and you encourage them to question you. Answer all their questions. They may be suspicious. They expect you to be very knowledgeable and credible. Never give inaccurate information. If you do not know the answer set a time when you will get them what they need -and then follow through.

If you hard sell or use emotions, you will turn them off. Slow down and stick to facts, and explain details. Give them lots of time to study and verify data. Influence them with logic, data, and charts. Emphasize quality, cost-benefit analysis, tax advantages, maintenance costs, specifications, and efficiency improvement statistics. They will be the most likely style to find problems. You may have been trained to avoid mentioning your product's disadvantages, but it is better that you point it out than have the *High C* catch it later.

The commitment stage is challenging. The *High C* used to hurt my feelings when they put me off to do comparison-shopping. I have since learned that you might as well just invite them to do so. They must reduce their risk to a minimum. If your business can accommodate it give them free trials, guarantees, pilot programs, "safety nets". If they need references, have them talk to another *High C*.

Just when you think they are finally sold they may say: *" I need more information"*. Respond by saying, *" No problem, if I can get that for you will you have enough background to make a decision?"* Then emphasize losses caused by delay. Or stress security if they buy now and loss of security if they do not.

Once they buy you must carefully follow up. *High Cs* keep us on our toes. Find out how often they want to meet and for how long? Focus on what the product has accomplished and how it has performed. If there are problems ask, *"If you were in my position what would you recommend as steps to improve the situation?"*.

Note: This series is based on our experience in sales and observing behavioral styles and grounded in the groundbreaking research of Targeted Training International and TTI's book-*The Universal Language of DISC*.
