

Telephone Follow-up Techniques

Overview: With all of today's technology and ways to market to prospects, the single best way, next to in-person, to follow up is with the telephone. By far the most cost and time effective, today the hardest part of using the phone to follow-up is getting someone to answer. There are a few thoughts to keep in mind when using the phone for follow-up:

1. **Place a mirror on the desk in front of you.** Monitor your smile factor, that is, if you see a smile on the mirror the prospect hears a smile on the phone.
2. **Use a hands-free headset with a cordless phone.** By keeping your hands free, you will communicate better by having your hands free to also "talk". Free hands also allow for you to take notes and update your contact management database. A cordless phone allows you to walk around or retrieve specific information from your model center.
3. **If possible, stand while you are speaking.** Studies show we communicate more effectively with more energy and clarity while standing. Try to stand as much as you can while on the phone.
4. **If you are calling a couple, talk to the woman.** Women make 84% of all household decisions. Unless you have determined the man is the dominant in the relationship, talk to the woman.
5. **Your goals of telephone follow-up.**
 - a. First and foremost, get an appointment.
 - b. Second, if you can't get an appointment, end the call with another phone appointment to deliver any "requested" information.

- c. Third, confirm contact phone and email and get permission to call at a later date, **more than one month out**. When you set a far out action item such as another phone call, most people don't think you will follow through and usually will give you permission to contact them again.
6. Remember to continue to build rapport while on the phone. Use the **F-O-R-D** system.
- **Family**- Make sure to ask about theirs.
 - **Occupation**- Find commonalities and compliment them on their achievements.
 - **Recreation**- Ask about their hobbies and what they do for fun.
 - **Dreams**- Remember it's all about lifestyle. Talk to them about how your community, neighborhood and homes will dramatically improve theirs.

7. Use the A-I-D-A-T formula to structure your conversation

- **Attention**- "Do you have one minute?"
- **Interest**- Build their interest with legitimate urgency. "I'm sorry I haven't gotten back to you sooner. We have been so busy serving other customers..."
- **Desire**- Once you have peaked their interest, satisfy their desire.
- **Action**- Go for the appointment only don't call it an appointment. Get them to commit to stopping by on a certain day during a certain time period. This is a real soft sell.
- **Thank them**- "Thank you the time you shared with me. I look forward to serving your housing needs."

Sample script

Attention: "Hi, This is _____ with _____. How are you today?" WAIT FOR RESPONSE. "Do you have one minute?" THEY SAY YES.

Interest: "We are in the process of launching a guaranteed sale program for our customer's current homes."

Desire: "The program gives people peace-of-mind knowing what their bottom line is before they begin building a home. Is this something you would like to know more about?"

WAIT FOR RESPONSE. If "yes" go to "action." **If "no" see below.**

Action: "When would be a good time to pop by our model home in _____ where we can give you some more information? Do weekends or weekdays work better?"

Thank you: "_____, it was great talking to you. I will send you an email to confirm our conversation and get together. Is _____ still your best email address?"

Possible objections:

1) **How does the program work?** "The program is fluid and depends on the situation. In a nutshell we'll tell you, up front, what we'll buy your home for. Then, we'll put it on the market. If it doesn't sell by a specified date, we buy it. When we get together I'll be happy to go over all the details with you."

Have a written script of you're A-I-D-A-T ideas in front of you when making calls!!

Other thoughts:

- ✓ When initialing registering prospects, always ask when the best time to talk to them and at what number. Suggest their cell phone during their commute or over the lunch hour. The second choice would be a work phone. The home phone is the last resort for trying to get a hold of the customer.
- ✓ You must always have a reason to call. Try to end any previous conversations with a reason to call them back.
- ✓ When calling at home, try Saturday mornings between 10-12. Usually people are home and relaxed, especially during cool weather times. By creating some urgency, you can get an immediate call to action and get them back out to see you over the weekend.
- ✓ Use the prospects name often throughout the conversation.
- ✓ Don't call people at home between 6-7. Be respectful of the dinner hour.
- ✓ Keep your information limited while on the phone. It must be to their benefit to come back out and see you.
- ✓ Don't forget to log all your new notes and the details of your conversation and next follow-up action into your contact management program.
- ✓ Make your calls from a cell phone so caller ID doesn't show a business line. More and more people have caller ID and will not answer if they see the phone number is any sort of business.
- ✓ If you leave a message, make sure the message has urgency and you "have some new information they would find valuable" and "I'll send you an email too if that's an easier way to get back to me." Every phone message should have an accompanying email.