

Strategez for Growth presents.....  
**Selling your Services!**  
**Kick butt sales course for non-sales people**  
**Landing clients and getting results!**

**Bonus Workbook**  
**Handling Incoming Enquiries**

# Contents

Bonus – Handling Incoming Inquiries .....	3
Introduction.....	4
Selling a Service .....	6
Telephone Communications .....	9
Email Communications .....	10
Responding to Price Enquiries.....	11
Maximizing Incoming Phone Calls .....	14
Answering the phone .....	16
Handling a general call .....	17
Speaking Styles.....	19
Handling Delays.....	20
Taking Messages.....	21
Handling Hostile Calls.....	23



# Bonus – Handling Incoming Inquiries



# Introduction

I recently contacted several companies about using their services. Admittedly, it was over the Christmas break, and here are some of the responses I received.

## Scenario One:

*"I'm on vacation at the moment; sure I can help you but, I'm moving into new premises and won't have my showroom office set up until the end of the month."*

*I replied, "That's okay, I don't need to see you in a showroom/office; what I need is to get an idea of time and costings."*

*The response, "I think it will be between \$800 and \$900."*

*"Thanks," I said, not feeling very confident.*

Several things they did poorly.

Firstly if they wanted the business, wouldn't it have been better to say, *"I am fully booked until January 18<sup>th</sup>; however, I am happy to make an appointment now. Let me have your email details and phone number....."*

Whether you are on vacation or not, let potential clients think you are working through it. If the prospect feels you are fully booked, it's an indication that you are well sought after as a service provider. Scarcity creates interest. I was prepared to wait for ten days if I had felt they were the right company for me.

Secondly, they failed to take my name, phone number, or email details. What is the point of advertising online or through your website if you have no intention of following up with prospective clients? Don't leave it for the client to contact you, be proactive, get their details so that you can follow up with them. It puts you in the driver's seat and gives you control over the sales process.

Thirdly, their complete lack of enthusiasm came across in their tone of voice. They were hesitant and didn't sound confident in answering the inquiry. Subsequently, it didn't give me confidence they were the right company for me. If you don't sound convincing over the phone, how do you expect potential clients to have confidence in you?



## Scenario Two

In doing my research, it quickly became apparent that many business people would be on vacation when I made my inquiries. Therefore, I had to leave messages online, which I did.

Out of the three companies I left messages for, only one got back to me that day and explained they weren't available until January 18<sup>th</sup>. We had a great discussion, and sure enough, on the 18<sup>th</sup> they called back, and we discussed the project further. In the meantime, they sent me relevant details concerning my inquiries, which I was able to consume before we touched base again. They were smart enough to take down my details and got back to me when they said they would, which gave me confidence in their ability to deliver the services I required. I didn't use them because they offered a Lexus solution and what I needed was the equivalent of a mini.

The third company didn't get back to me until six weeks after I left the message. You can imagine I felt about that. I not only had found another company to do business with, but the project was already completed. Not following through with hot leads is detrimental to your business.

This bonus training helps you handle incoming inquiries that result in sales. If you don't make a sale, you can start building a list of potential customers to add to your marketing emails by taking their contact details. By keeping regular contact, they may become paying customers in the future.

That first point of contact with an incoming inquiry, whether by email, phone, or something else again, will make or break your ability to land clients and get the results you want.

As always, if you have any questions, email me directly at [carolyn@strategizez.com](mailto:carolyn@strategizez.com) – here's to your success!

*Caro*

Carolyn Landesman  
Founder of Strategizez for Success



# Selling a Service

Unlike selling a product, selling a service is intangible. Prospects and clients can't necessarily see, touch, taste, or feel your service. It's not something they can try out or test in advance. In a prospective client's mind – buying your services is a perceived risk as they have to make an assessment based on their interactions with you. So before they buy, they want to know the following:

- ▶ Is the service going to give me what I want? (functional)
- ▶ Am I going to pay for something which will give me the outcomes I am looking for? (functional)
- ▶ Is this the right thing for me to do? (psychological)
- ▶ Should I do something else? (social)

What separates your services from another? It's you, your brand, and your reputation. A question a prospective buyer will ask themselves is, "do they trust you and your brand?"

## Your Brand

There are three aspects to developing you and your brand.

1. **Your value proposition** - by clearly articulating what you do and the results you get from providing your services.
2. **Differentiation** – creating a clear point of differentiation so that prospective clients can compare and contrast their options based on your unique approach, expertise, and personality.
3. **Buying experience** – how you interact with them and the opportunity for them to experience your values, expertise, and personality.



Simply put, it's creating a Circle of Trust so that people want to buy from you.

People buy from people, not companies.

Imagine that you weren't the one answering an incoming inquiry. How confident are you in your people that they will handle an incoming inquiry well?

Most people in business think that only salespeople need to know how to sell. Not so, everyone in an organization that is likely to have any contact with potential clients and existing clients needs to understand how to help people buy from them. In other words, understanding the buying and selling cycle along with buyer motivation. That includes the receptionist and the accountant! Why – because receptionists are front line people and often the first point of contact. Accountants need to follow up on payments and answer vendor questions. By putting everyone through sales training, you immediately increase your chances of making good impression during that first point of contact.

People will quite often buy a service based on emotions, not logic. It isn't easy to compare one service provider from another logically. People do not buy from people they do not like! This is why understanding how people buy is critical to your success.

When handling an incoming inquiry, you must meet them on the buying cycle before you start to sell your services. Remember, to successfully land them as a client, the buying and selling wheels need to turn together.

## The Seven P's of Marketing

The seven P's of marketing influence the buyer's mind because buying service is a high involvement decision. A prospective client will also consider the following when making buying decisions.

**P**roducts and services

**P**rice

**P**lace

**P**romotion

**P**eople



**P**rocess

**P**hysical evidence

Building confidence in your prospective clients is what will help you overcome those critical questions. They want to know that:

- ▶ Yes - your service will give me what I want. (functional)
- ▶ Yes - your service will give me the outcomes I am looking for. (functional)
- ▶ Yes - this is the right thing for me to do. (psychological)
- ▶ And yes – this is going to be accepted by my peers. (social)

After all – prospective clients want to deal with a reputable company. How you handle incoming inquiries will define if they trust you enough to want to talk to you about their problems and opportunities.



# Telephone Communications

## Be Prepared

When taking an incoming sales inquiry, be prepared.

- ▶ Have an objective in mind to form a relationship, make an appointment, send them a quote or proposal, get their contact details – make the inquiry count.
- ▶ Have any scripts, price lists, appointment diary, or anything else you need to help the inquiry go smoothly.

## Have a Process to Follow

- ▶ Answer within five rings if possible and smile.
- ▶ Have a standard greeting for everyone.
- ▶ Redirect the call quickly if appropriate.
- ▶ Listen carefully to the inquiry using active listening skills.
- ▶ Watch your tone and body language.
- ▶ Enter the buying and selling cycle if appropriate.
- ▶ Handle any objections if they arise.
- ▶ Remember what your objective is and ensure you meet that objective.
- ▶ Before hanging up – confirm what was agreed.
- ▶ Thank them for their call.



# Email Communications

When answering email inquiries, remember that most people use smartphones. If they are reading the email on their phone, also remember the screen is very small. Long, complicated emails will get lost in translation; therefore, how you answer incoming email inquiries will make or break the sale.

## General Considerations for Email Communications

- ▶ Don't use obscure fonts that prospects and clients might not have loaded on their computer or smartphone.
- ▶ Use a 10 or 12 point font size.
- ▶ Use black as the standard color for the text body.
- ▶ Use red sparingly, or it can be interpreted as being negative.
- ▶ Yellow, green, light blue, and orange can be hard to read.
- ▶ Highlight text in **bold**, underline, and *italics* to draw attention to key points.
- ▶ DO NOT USE ALL CAPS – this is deemed to be shouting.
- ▶ Break your message into bite-sized paragraphs.
- ▶ Use punctuation effectively to create tone – careful to overuse.
- ▶ Use your signature block like a business card.
- ▶ Be careful of using graphics and logos.

## Sending Effective Emails

1. Make good use of the subject line – make it compelling.
2. Keep your message brief.
3. Be polite – use semi-formal language unless you know the person really well.
4. Proofread before you send.



5. Be friendly with your greeting without being too casual.
6. Sign off with a closing line and your first name.
7. Match their VAK language.
8. Use their name in the body or closing of the email.
9. Never send an email when you are angry about something which doesn't necessarily have anything to do with the person making the inquiry.

Because the email is likely to be read on a smartphone, don't include too many links in an email. It is better to use one link and send several emails than three links in one email. Consider how you use your phone and how annoying it is to try to click on multiple links within an email.



# Responding to Price Enquiries

## Handling Price Inquiry Phone Calls

When asked how much you charge for your services, an average person would respond with...

*“ We charge \$500 for a basic one-page site, \$5,000 for a fully customized site but most of our clients usually pay around \$2,500 for a site. ”*

Handle this by taking away the focus from the price, and put the focus on helping the client buy by getting them to open up more about their needs and wants.

“Our prices range from x to y – tell me a little bit more about your situation so I can help you better.”

or

“We work with every budget – tell me more about your circumstances so I can help you better.”

The objective is to take them into the buying and selling cycle and to close by sending them a quote, a proposal, or an appointment. A better response is to bury to price and ask for more details.

“We build websites for all budgets. Our website design services range in price from \$500 for a basic website through to \$5,000 for a customised website depending on the results you are looking for.

Tell me more about what you are looking for so I can help you better?”



## Handling an Email Price Inquiry

When a prospective client emails the question – “How much do you charge for your services?” - you do have to send back a response? For example, the average person would respond to a price inquiry for a like this.

*"Thank you for your email. Our prices range from \$500 for a basic one-page site, \$5,000 for a fully customized site but most of our clients usually pay around \$2,500 for a site. "*

The prospective client then compares one quote with another, looking for the cheapest, not the company that provides the greatest value.

A better response is to bury to price and focus on the benefits.

“Thank you for your email enquiry about.....

We build websites for all budgets. Our website design services range in price from \$500 for a basic website through to \$5,000 for a customised website depending on the results you are looking for.

What we have found is a middle of the range solution gives you better results because the website is tailored to your business, makes it easier for your clients to navigate and find what they want quickly, increases page views and keeps them on your site longer.

What this does is give you a greater opportunity to engage with your customers resulting in increased profits.

I don't know if this will resolve what you are looking to achieve. Tell me more about what you are looking for so I can help you better?”



# Maximizing Incoming Phone Calls

## Consider What Phone Number You Will Use

If advertising or promoting a particular service, use a different number or extension to track where the call is coming from. Use a different number for each campaign. This serves two purposes; it allows you to measure the effectiveness of your advertising campaign. If you receive lots of inquiries, you know the campaign worked. Secondly, it will enable whoever answers the phone to know immediately what the call is about. They can be prepared – especially if you are making a special offer.

## Train Your People

Spend time training your people to take incoming calls, especially if you are running a promotional campaign. It saves "scaring off" prospective clients with a call that is mishandled. You want the person handling the call to be professional and able to assist the prospective client immediately.

## Have a Standard Greeting

Make sure everyone answers the phone the same way. Instead of saying hello, why not be different and say... "Welcome to .... you are speaking with ...

## Have Prepared Scripts

Don't leave anything to chance; prepare some standard scripts and train everyone who answers the phone to follow the scripts. Also, prepare scripts for standard objections and keep these near the phone and their computer.

## Keep the Call Positive

Even if you can't satisfy the caller 100%, keep the conversation positive. Wherever possible, refer them to another business that will be able to help them (only if you are confident in their ability to provide good



service). Your prospect will remember you are being helpful and perhaps refer you to others. Above all, get their contact details and ask if you can send them valuable information from time to time.

### Provide Accurate Information

Remember the circle of trust. Always provide accurate information even if you have to go that extra mile. Prospects may not always remember how much you went the extra mile, but they will always remember if they felt like you lied to them, which automatically breaks the circle of trust.

### Control the Call

Where possible, you want to control the call.

Remember you are helping them buy from you - not selling them your services. One way to control the call is to have an objective for the inquiry. Get their details, book an appointment or send them a proposal as an example. Be prepared to deviate from the topic a little – you can't be so focused on following a process that you are inflexible. If you know the buying and selling cycle inside out, along with handling objections, you should be able to control the call with positive outcomes.

### Have Prepared Objection Scripts Near the Phone

Remember, don't be bowled by the obvious ball. Have prepared scripts for the most common objections for whoever responds to the inquiry to refer to.



# Answering the Phone

Breathe. It's amazing how many people will hold their breath when answering the phone, especially if it's a sales inquiry. This is simply nerves – particularly if you are new to handling incoming sales calls. When you answer the phone:

- ▶ Use your company name
- ▶ Use your own name
- ▶ Answer with....

*Good morning (afternoon, evening) (your company name....)  
You are speaking with (Mary..John...)*

**or**

*Welcome to (your company name) this is (Mary....John...)*

## WHY

- ▶ The caller is more likely to give their name.
- ▶ Callers tend to remember the last word they hear (your name) not the words... Mary speaking!
- ▶ Callers are more likely to remember your name which helps build rapport.



# Handling a General Call

## Put the Caller at Ease

Your smile can be heard and felt. It shows warmth and interest and helps put the caller at ease. Be ready to help the caller establish why they called.

- ▶ Smile.
- ▶ Use a standard greeting.
- ▶ Make sure your voice shows interest and enthusiasm - don't use slang.
- ▶ Listen carefully and get involved by showing interest.
- ▶ Give out positive vibes & let the caller know you are listening.
- ▶ Focus on helping the customer.
- ▶ Repeat back and clarify how the customer wants to be helped.
- ▶ Use their name frequently AND get it right.
- ▶ Control any distractions around you.
- ▶ Before you finish – smile again.

A smile can be heard through an email or phone call – it comes across in your tone of voice.

## Don't Use Jargon

Every organization has its own jargon. Jargons are special words or expressions used by an industry or group that are difficult for others to understand. Jargon is an abbreviation or "internal speak" that outsiders have no idea about. Speak in a language you know your callers will understand.



## How to Close Off on a Phone Call?

Being courteous at the end of a phone call is just as important as the way you handle the call itself. Creating standard closing statements to a phone call ensures all staff knows what your expectations are at the end of a call. Consider the following examples of courteous closing statements.

- ▶ *"Thank you for calling (use their name)"*
- ▶ *"Feel free to call us anytime."*
- ▶ *"I am happy we were able to help."*
- ▶ *"Please call us again if you have additional questions."*
- ▶ *"It was a pleasure talking to you – enjoy the rest of your day."*



# Speaking Styles

The tone of your voice is very important in communication. Words alone only make up 8% of our communication; 37% comes down to the tone of our voice. Having positive body language, including smiling and sitting up straight, contributes to the quality of the tone of your voice.

## Slow Your Speech Down

When we are speaking normally, we speak at approximately 150 words a minute. If we use this pace on the telephone, chances the caller will miss part of the message you wish to convey. When you run sentences together quickly over the telephone can become unintelligible. Slowing your speech down will allow the caller to hear you better.

## Use Inflection in Your Voice

A change in the pitch of your voice is called inflection and can send a message to the caller that you are annoyed, indifferent, and lack respect. An upward inflection at the end of a sentence denotes interest, and a downward inflection at the end of a sentence denotes sincerity. Too much inflection gives a singsong effect, and too little inflection will make you sound too monotonous. Being aware of inflection can help provide the caller with the message that you are helpful and pleased to receive their call.

## Add Enthusiasm

You can start to sound monotonous if you speak in a monotone – it is helpful to add enthusiasm into your speaking style. Enthusiasm also sends a message to the caller that you are there to help. It also makes you sound confident.

## Breathe

This sounds obvious, but when we are trying to get a message across too quickly, we forget to breathe. Breathing helps to relax you and deal with the caller in a calm, controlled manner.



# Handling Delays

## How to Handle Delays?

A minute may seem like an hour to a customer hanging on the phone. If you need to talk to someone else, but the caller on hold. Resist covering the mouthpiece with your hand; this is not an effective silencer as you can still be heard.

- ▶ Thank them for waiting.
- ▶ Advise them how long you anticipate the delay will be.
- ▶ Give them the opportunity to hold, or you will call them back if the delay is going to take some time.
- ▶ Give an explanation as to why there is a delay.
- ▶ Thank them again for waiting.

If you are away from the phone for more than 90 seconds, return to the caller and give them an update on your progress. Check they are still happy to hold or if you expect further delays, ask them if they prefer you call them back. If you are going to call them back – let them know the timeframe of when you expect to be able to call them back.

Call them back when you say you will.



# Taking Messages

There will be times when someone takes a call and doesn't have the necessary expertise to answer the prospective clients questions. It may require someone else to call them back. If so, taking a good message is essential to keeping the prospect engaged.

## How to Take a Message?

Have you ever had someone call you and wonder why you didn't call them back? "I left a message..." they might say, but you didn't get it. This is not good for business as it breaks the circle of trust.

Here are some simple steps to taking a good message.

- ▶ Find out who the caller is – their name, company, job title.
- ▶ Find out who they want to leave the message for.
- ▶ Note the time and date of the call.
- ▶ Note the details of the message.
- ▶ Stop the caller if you have missed something.
- ▶ Ask when the caller is available to take a return call.
- ▶ Repeat the message back to the caller.
- ▶ Check the spelling of their name and especially their contact number/s or email address.

Knowing what the caller wanted to know, you may even be able to help them with their inquiry, or you may even be able to transfer them to someone else who could help them. If this is the case, then take action immediately after the phone call.

You could send the message to their email but no everyone checks their email in a timely manner. It is always better to text the person on their phone as most people will follow up on a text before an email.



## What Not to Say

If a person is out of the office or in a meeting, it is easy to give the caller a bad impression. Avoid saying things like ...

*They are in the toilet ....*

*They have gone shopping ....*

*They have gone to pick their kids up ....*

*I don't know where they are ....*

Imagine what the caller is thinking. A safer option is to say:

*"They are unavailable at the moment. May I take a message for you and have them return your call as soon as they can."*

or

*"Mr. Jones is out of the office at the moment, is there something I can help you with, or would you like me to take a message?"*

## How to Transfer a Call?

As soon as you recognize that the call is for someone else, politely interrupt them and let them know who you will be transferring the call to and why. Let the caller know the name of the person you will be transferring the caller to. Ask the caller to hold the line while you check if the right person is available.

When you reach the person the caller should be talking to, let them know who is on the phone and why they are calling. If they are not available, speak to the caller again and offer to take a message.



# Handling Hostile Calls

## How to Handle Hostile Phone Calls

- ▶ Let them vent and express their hostility, which usually will only last for around 2 minutes.
- ▶ Stay calm and smile.
- ▶ Use their name and listen with empathy.
- ▶ Take notes.
- ▶ Ask questions that do not require a simple yes or no answer.
- ▶ Apologize sincerely; they feel the way they do regardless of whether you think you are responsible or not.
- ▶ Revisit the problem with them by reading back from your notes.
- ▶ Will a solution help? If so, how long will it take?
- ▶ Take action.
- ▶ Follow up with the prospect or client.
- ▶ Always say "thank you" as their feedback helps to improve your service.



## How to Deal With an Aggressive Caller?

It is not pleasant having to deal with aggressive people, especially over the phone. It is natural to feel angry and get aggressive back or want to appease them.

An aggressive person may be immature or insecure, which means they will become even more aggressive if you react with the same level of aggression. On the other hand, by appeasing them with their unreasonable demands, it reinforces they were "right" to be aggressive in the first place.

An aggressive person violates your right, and by learning to handle them effectively, it protects your rights. So when dealing with an aggressive caller:

- ▶ Don't interrupt them - it only adds to their level of aggression.
- ▶ Encourage them to talk through what their problem is.
- ▶ If they continue to rant and rave, repeat one thing over and over ("if you continue to be aggressive, I will terminate this call." – "if you continue to be aggressive, I will terminate this call.")
- ▶ Remain calm and firm in your responses.



A decorative graphic consisting of overlapping teal and light blue shapes, resembling a stylized arrow or a series of overlapping planes, pointing towards the right.

## Remember Me

I'm the person who goes into a restaurant, sits down patiently and waits while the waitress does everything but take my order.

I'm the fellow who goes into a store and stands quietly while the counter staff finish their little chit-chat.

I'm the man who drives into a service station and never blows his horn, but waits patiently while the attendant finishes reading his book.

Yes, you might say I'm a good guy. But do you know who else I am?

I'm the fellow who never comes back, and it amuses me to see you spending thousands of dollars every year to get me back when I was there in the first place...

And all you had to do was to show me a little courtesy.

