



"How do I handle prospects that interrupt me within the first few seconds of my presentation and tell me they are not interested?"

- By Kathy Sisk

Before sharing with you on how to handle this early resistance for which I call, "silence and guttural utterances", I want to first help you by identifying the source of the problem. Having a clear understanding of why this happens will help prevent this early resistance from your prospect altogether. Let's face it most people don't want to be solicited; therefore you need to know ahead of time what the prospects fears are. Once you know what their fears are, you can incorporate techniques to overcome them ***before they occur as a premature objection.***

The prospect has three primary fears and they are:

1. The Approach: When they know you are a solicitor, they are asking themselves or sometime they verbalize this openly, "What do you want?" "What are you selling?" In your presentation you need to have in place steps that will overcome this fear before it surfaces in to a premature objection such as, "I'm not interested" or "Take me off your list" These steps include, telling your prospect who you are, the company you represent, how you acquired their name, you need to respect their time, and give them the purpose of your call. This needs to be accomplished in less than 20 seconds, otherwise you risk losing your prospect altogether. The second fear is:

2. Pre Purchase Insecurity: This is when your prospect resists you later on in your presentation after you have gone through your features and benefits of your product or service and you are asking for a commitment. Before you ask for a commitment you first need to ensure that you have established a want and created a need for your offering. You cannot move onto to the selling step of your presentation without accomplishing that first. Next you will need to clarify their needs, get a confirmation of them and then in your selling step you need to fulfill their needs. Once you have fulfilled their needs then you get a reaction and if it is positive you attempt to trail close, but if it is negative you must go through the rebuttal process before you can move on. Often when an agent is selling they are always selling and closing but never fulfilling. After you have successfully closed and ended the call, there is one more fear, and that is:

3. Post Purchase Remorse: Your prospect has bought into your product or service, or have made an appointment to meet with one of your sales reps, but then moments later they think about, "What have I just done?" and then they talk themselves out of the sale or appointment and end up canceling. You can reduce this fear by incorporating what I call the, "Post Close". This added close will strengthen your prospects commitment and encourage any hidden objections that may occur after you disengage the call.

...Now that you have an understanding of your prospect's three primary fears, allow me to tackle your initial concern of a pre mature, "I'm not interested".

Your prospect's resistance could be one of the following reasons:

1. You may have interrupted them in the midst of an important activity such as: a meeting, feeding the baby or they are simply *not in the mood*. Instead of your prospect going into details with you, it's just easier for them to say, **"I'm not interested"**. You can avoid this by *respecting their time*. I suggest after you introduce yourself and company and told them how you acquired their name that you use an assumptive statement such as, **"Thank you for taking my call"** or **"I appreciate you taking my call"**. If your prospect is truly busy, they will allow you to call back. However if they are not busy and were trying to gracefully "blow you off" by saying to you, **"I'm busy"**, then you can qualify this by saying, **"Why don't I call you back in about an hour, would that be all right with you."** Be sure use voice inflection on the **"with"** so that it sounds like an assumptive statement and not like a question. Your prospect who is really not *that* busy will simply respond by asking, **"What's this all about?"** or **"I have a few minutes"**. Now you can move on with the *Purpose of Your Call*.

2. Prospects also do not want to be "sold". If your presentation sounds like a typical sales or solicitation call, your prospect will "tune off" by turning *you* off. This turn off is usually communicated when the prospect says, **"I'm not interested"** before the heart of your presentation is ever presented. When this occurs, most agents will terminate the call without making attempts to overcome it. I suggest you try updating your style of delivery. The following is an easy tip called, "The Easy Close" which will help you to try and regain your prospect's attention and your chance to deliver your presentation in full. When your prospect says, "I'm not interested" you say, **"I respect that, I would like to provide you with information about..... (offer interesting and informative examples of what you could provide information on) would that be all right with you."** (assumptive statement)

Using this easy close technique will give you an opportunity to use approach and hook statements in your examples to arouse the prospect's curiosity or give a little "positive benefit statements" that pertains to your call objective. In most cases, your prospect will respond by saying, *"Well... I'd be interested in"* or *"Go ahead and send me your information."* When this happens you need to qualify their interest level by saying, **"In order to ensure I provide you with all the information you'd have an interest in, I need...> to ask you just a couple of quick questions if you don't mind."** (Assumptive Statement) Remember we never said "send" you information, we said **"provide"** and that is exactly what we are going to attempt to do, but over the telephone!

Now you can begin going to your next step called the "Probe Step". You now can ask questions designed to qualify, establish your prospect's wants and create the need for your offering. With some prospects, once you've gone this far, you should be able to continue with the remainder of your presentation. However, based upon your prospect's responses, you may want to do a "two call close" by sending your information first then conducting a follow up call within 3-5 days and then attempt to close. When conducting a two call close, be sure to schedule a day and time with your prospect to make your follow-up calls. This will reduce playing "telephone tag" with your prospect and strengthen their commitment with you.

3. You could be dealing with the 10% of prospects who say "no"

to everything. Don't worry, this is not your fault, it's just a statistical reality! It's best to gracefully back off and leave this prospect with a positive impression about you and your company. You can accomplish this tactfully by using the easy close technique. When you do, either your prospect will decline your offer or say they will call you if they are interested. In any case, you have weeded out the 10% who will most likely *never* do business with you!

"I have a difficult time getting through the secretary. How do I tactfully get by without red flagging who I am?"

For years salespeople have tried tricky maneuvers to get through the "gate keeper" when cold calling businesses. Some would even go as far by saying, "He's expecting my call" or, "It's personal" when it isn't true. Not only have these tactics alarmed secretaries to screen more thoroughly, the majority of these secretaries know exactly how to screen these callers out and ensure that these type of callers don't get through.

My company deals with getting through the gate keeper on a daily basis. Most of our calls are to the VP of Marketing and Sales or the VP of Training and Development. The higher up the ladder your prospect is, the more challenging it is to get through. One of the courses I've developed is teaching secretaries and receptionists how to answer, facilitate and screen calls without sounding like a typical screener. Now you can clearly see that not only do I understand this dilemma, I am behind the scenes learning what secretaries' think and how they react to the typical approaches used by salespeople. Knowing the inside of a screener's mind has made it easy for me to develop a gate keeper script for sales people to get through more easily. But please don't tell my secretaries what you have learned; they'll only be the wiser!

Although a half day is required to effectively teach you on this subject, the following are just a few techniques that will help you get through more easily, especially on the first call!

The best way to try and get through what I call, "The Gatekeeper" is to appeal to gatekeeper's instincts, which is *facilitating calls*. That is what they do all day, facilitate calls. It is vital that you do not use canned methods that have been around for years, doing so quickly identifies you as a sales person and you have very little chance of getting through at any time now or in the future. Instead, your introduction should sound more like the following:

"Good morning, I need to speak with Ms. Johnson please and I'll wait, while you direct my call thank you." (Be assertive but smile when you say this or it will sound rude.) The secretary's first instinct is to do as he or she has been instructed which is to... "Direct the call". Why does this appeal to their first instincts? Because secretaries are accustomed to directing calls all day long. However, when asked, secretaries usually deny the effectiveness of this approach. They don't want to admit it is as simple as *this* to get through. Whenever the secretary asks you a question, only answer back precisely what has been requested, then proceed to ask them a question such as, **"And your name is" or "Mr. Johnson is in isn't he?"** (be sure to use a concerned tone). Again smile at all times. The key is to gain back your control without sounding rude.

When the secretary asks you, "What is this regarding?" you can answer one of two ways, **"I made a commitment to call him today, he is in isn't he?"** (use a concerned tone). Now don't laugh and I am not contradicting myself, this is not tricky it is just clever. You are not lying but

only telling the absolute truth. Isn't it true that when you came in to work today, didn't you set aside your list of calls and made a commitment to call each and every one of them today? An alternative response is, and only use this if you are selling something: **"This is regarding a purchase, he is in isn't he?"** (use a concerned tone). Again this is a clever response, because it is regarding a purchase you just did not share with her who was buying from who!

For more refreshing ideas on how to get through the "gate keeper" or other call handling techniques, call or e-mail us your questions.



Kathy Sisk Enterprises Inc.

1-800-477-1278

1-559-323-1472

Fax: 1-559-323-9151

sean@kathysiskenterprises.com

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