



Define the ‘Chase’

Understand how the prospect feels about follow-up

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Q: *When does excellent follow-up with a prospect turn into “chasing” them?*

—Stephen Heiner, GetSmarter Prep

A: Great question. Let’s start with the word “chasing.” The definition of chasing differs depending on whom you ask.

You may have your own limit as to when it feels like you are chasing the prospect. More importantly, when does it seem like chasing to your prospect? We want to be careful not to project our definitions on to them.

Assuming you have talked to the prospect at least once, ask them how they feel about salespeople chasing them. In their minds, when do multiple phone calls, emails or texts transition from exceptional follow-up to chasing?

Let’s pretend they say after two times. One of our Sandler rules is if you are going to fight, fight up front. Then the obvious next question is, “How do we make sure that doesn’t happen between us?” or “How should I handle it if you promise me certain information by a certain date and I don’t have it from you?”

If you haven’t been able to communicate with them, then you need to decide how many times you are willing to leave a voicemail before it’s over. Some of my clients say 10, others say three. There are no wrong answers here.

But when it’s your last voicemail, you need to communicate that to the prospect, so they know you will not be calling back.

Otherwise, there is no sense of urgency for them to return your call.

Q: *How can I overcome call reluctance?*

—Mike Lampton, Mission Critical Supplies

A: I wish I could give you a pill and everything would be fine. If I had that, I would not need to work! Seriously, I would suggest you take a mental inventory of why you don’t like to prospect. Now, that might seem obvious, but people tend to have different reasons. Here are some of the common ones: fear of rejection, fear of failure, I don’t like to interrupt, I don’t talk to strangers, I don’t know what to say, I might sound stupid—the list goes on.

Many of these excuses have more to do with you than the prospect. In other words, you are being “me-centered” rather than “prospect-centered.” Again, it’s important for us not to project our “head trash” on to the prospect.

Let’s use the example of not wanting to interrupt. Ask yourself, “When have I interrupted people in the past and they thanked me?” You may say, “when they really needed my help, but they didn’t know it or when they were ready to make a big mistake and I asked them a great question.” Focus on those positive answers to help you think differently.

How about fear of failure? When it comes to failing, one of our Sandler rules is the only way to fail at prospecting is to

not do it. There is something to say about not waiting until you feel like prospecting: Do it. If you don’t feel like it, do it anyway. The next thing you know, you will become more comfortable with something that is currently uncomfortable.

Q: *What is a good technique to get past the “gatekeeper” on the phone and not sound so much like a sales person?*

—Jim Mellon, JE Mellon Associates

A: As you know, gatekeepers have a tough job. They can get in trouble with their bosses if they send someone through whom he or she does not want to talk to. Additionally, many sales professionals attempt to manipulate, threaten or trick gatekeepers into doing something they could get in trouble for.

My experience is to be yourself and ask for help. A Sandler rule is: 98 percent of the population wants to help someone who is in need. So to make it easy for the gatekeeper to help you, you might want to say, “Mary, I have a problem and I need your help. Many CEOs of companies tell me they are glad they discovered how our product [fill in the blank]. How do we help your boss learn more about this without getting you in trouble?”

The conversation above has transitioned from working against each other to working with each other. Often, you’ll be surprised what great ideas they have. **KCB**