

ALEX GOLDFAYN

Wall Street Journal Bestselling Author of 5-Minute Selling

PICKUP THE PHONE AND SELL

**HOW PROACTIVE CALLS
TO CUSTOMERS AND PROSPECTS
CAN DOUBLE YOUR SALES**

WILEY

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*To my mom, Jane Goldfayn, who makes proactive
calls to me every single day.*

She was the first writer in the family.

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**PICK UP
THE PHONE
AND SELL**

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

THE LOST ART OF PROACTIVE CALLING IN THE SALES PROFESSION

This is the most obvious book I've ever written.

You're reading my fifth book on sales growth, but none has been as clearly necessary and important to write as this one. Especially now, in a post-pandemic world, where we cannot see our customers nearly as much as we previously could.

In the selling profession, only the phone is so universally understood to be *the* key to success and, at the same time, so widely avoided. A surprisingly large number of salespeople even dread it.

In the 1980s and so many of the decades that came before, if you wanted to sit in your office and communicate with a lot of people quickly, the only option you had was the wired landline telephone.

So a lot of salespeople had no choice but to be really good at using the phone.

In the late 1990s, we got email. It was faster. And easier.

And, over time, many of us moved to email as our preferred method of communicating with customers and prospects.

Then we got cell phones.

And text messages.

And then social media rolled in:

We could have Facebook pages.

And LinkedIn connections.

And we could tweet at people.

All of these things were also faster, easier, and far less threatening than the phone.

So we went to them.

Because on these platforms, rejection is usually simply silence, whereas on the phone, it's intimate and personal and spoken directly into our ears.

Of course, we still have meetings, and we're good at them because we never really stopped having them.

But how many meetings can you have in a day? About as many as an hour's worth of phone conversations.

And so, over the last few "Internet decades," the entire sales profession has moved away from what so many used to excel at: proactive phone calls to customers and prospects.

What's a *proactive* call?

Communicating by phone with customers and prospects when nothing is wrong.

I run a large solo consulting practice, working with business-to-business organizations to grow their sales. My clients average 10–20% in additional new sales growth annually directly from our work together. Even large companies, in mature industries. Even companies that have been stagnant and have not added significantly to their sales in years. Even these companies add 10–20% in new sales.

Individually, many salespeople double and sometimes even triple their sales when applying the techniques I teach them – techniques I lay out in this book.

How would doubling your sales numbers improve your life?

Or maybe “only” increasing them by 50% . . . what would that do for you and your family?

How do my client salespeople achieve this kind of growth?

Centrally, with the phone.

By letting customers and prospects hear from them proactively.

By being present.

By being interested.

By demonstrating that they care.

How?

Almost entirely with the phone.

Before the pandemic, I did 75 to 100 speeches and workshops each year focused on my techniques for sales growth.

When the pandemic besieged us, I continued doing live sessions virtually, but because salespeople couldn’t see their customers any more, I doubled down on how to use the phone to grow sales.

Many of these sessions were in multiple parts – often a series of three sessions, with the same audience each time.

By the third webinar, after spending at least two hours exploring the ins and outs of telephone selling, I would ask the attendees what they’d like me to focus on. I like to go where my audiences want me to go.

I would even give options:

Do you want to talk about selling more to existing customers?

Or asking for referrals?

Or following up on quotes or proposals?

What about asking for the business?

Or do you want me to go over phone selling some more? (Keep in mind, this was the dominant topic of the previous two sessions these same people had attended.)

Via the chat function, people made their requests. The vast majority of topics salespeople wanted to cover centered on selling over the phone:

When should we call?

Who should we call?

What if we don't have the customer's cell phone number?

Do I leave a voice message?

How many times should I try before giving up?

And then, inevitably, these kinds of comments would be raised:

I don't like selling on the phone, but I know I need to.

I hate getting cold calls.

I don't have time to call people.

Nobody returns my calls anyway.

These questions and comments illustrate the obvious: there is a hunger for instruction on how to sell with the phone. And there is discomfort about doing it.

We've gotten away from using the phone as a selling tool, but innately, we know how useful and effective it can be.

To complicate matters, there is a dearth of resources on this topic.

Search for books about social media selling, and you'll find hundreds of them – and thousands of blogs and podcasts, and tens of thousands of “experts” on the subject. (Ironically, since business-to-business selling success over social media is extremely challenging.)

But try to find a recent book on phone selling, and you will have very few choices.

In fact, you can count on one hand the phone-selling books that have been written in the last decade.

And not one of them looks at selling with the phone in combination with the digital tools at our disposal: virtual meeting tools like Zoom, text messaging, email, and, yes, social media like LinkedIn.

Want to look for a blog or podcast about phone selling? When I Google “phone selling,” I get “selling old cell phones for cash.”

So, I wrote *Pick Up the Phone and Sell*.

My goal is to arm you with a quick and simple guide for attaining significant sales growth by proactively calling your customers and prospects.

Get good at using the phone, and you will be in rare air in the sales profession.

Because the great majority of salespeople are not very good at using the phone.

I'd say 90% of salespeople are reactive in our work.

We're very good at *answering* the phone and solving problems.

But not many of us regularly pick up the phone to call customers and prospects proactively when nothing is wrong.

This is where relationships are built.

This is where trust is formed.

This is where you get to help your customers and expand your business with them.

This is where the money is made.

The rare salesperson who regularly and systematically makes proactive calls gets to *stack* these successes one on top of the other, with customer after customer.

Among my clients, the salespeople who most often proactively call customers and prospects are the most successful salespeople in their organizations.

Ninety percent of salespeople are reactive and don't call.

Want to launch yourself instantly into the top 10% of all salespeople?

Follow the approaches you're about to read, and leverage the power of proactive calls.

There's a book for that now!

DOWNLOAD YOUR *PICK UP THE PHONE AND SELL TOOLS*

The tools, forms, planners, and trackers that appear throughout this book are available as a free download at my website, www.Goldfayn.com.

You can also get various tools there, like my sales growth instructional videos and free weekly email newsletter.

Go to Goldfayn.com and arm yourself with the resources to pick up the phone and grow your sales.

2

C H A P T E R

AN
EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY:
HOW TO
PICK UP
THE PHONE
AND SELL

Here is a lightning-fast executive summary of the approaches laid out in this book:

In my experience with tens of thousands of salespeople, clients, and workshop attendees applying my sales growth approaches, the single most effective – and avoided – selling action is the phone call.

I believe that we salespeople should **lead with the phone**.

That is, it should be the first action in our selling day and also the first effort in our selling sequence with individual customers. At the start of your week, make a quick plan of who to call.

Call first. The reasons why are in the next chapter.

Create your Target 60 list of customers and prospects to focus on for the coming month. This planner is presented in Chapter 7.

Next, lay out your Simple Proactive Call Planner for the week, identifying current and past customers you will

call, and current and past prospects. This planner is also in Chapter 7.

Aim to call three to five customers or prospects per day, first thing in the morning.

Who should you call? **First, call people who you know** – current and former customers, and current and former prospects. Call people who recognize your name or at least your company name. Too many people assume proactive calls only mean cold calls. In fact, you can grow your sales dramatically by *only calling people you know and offering to help them (more)*.

We will revisit this in Chapter 23, but for now, these are the people you should be thinking about calling proactively, with the groups in order from right to left – always focusing on the people who know you or at least recognize you or your company.

If you prefer, **send a quick text in advance to set a time to speak.**

When you call, you will frequently need to **leave a voice message** (scripts are in Chapter 19), which you should absolutely do.

After leaving the message, send a short text to let the customer know you called, and invite them to get back to you by text or phone, whichever is easier for them. This gives them a *choice* of how to communicate with you.

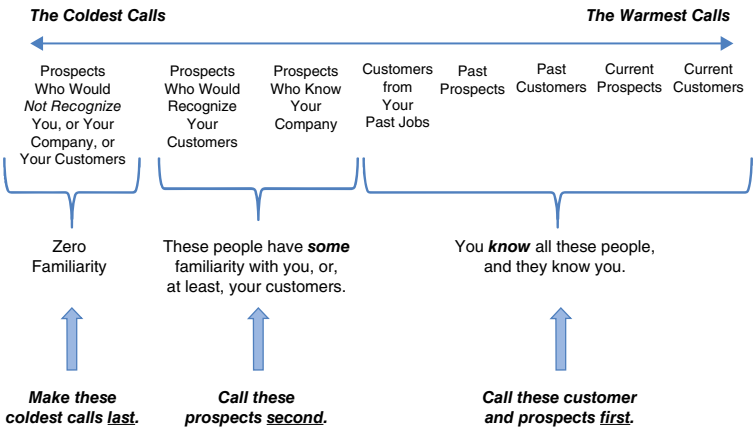
With this voicemail-text message communication combination, you will find that about two-thirds of your customers and prospects will get back to you.

On the off chance that the customer picks up the phone, great; you will have a nice, positive conversation. (Simple scripts are throughout Parts 4 and 5.)

Log your communication in the Proactive Call Tracker featured in this book or your own action-tracking or CRM system.

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Who to Call:
The Warmest & Coldest Proactive Calls



Log the return communications as well, so you remember who you have reached out to and who got back to you.

Update your pipeline daily, because this approach will create countless opportunities for you, as well as a daily progression of customers and prospects toward a quote, a proposal, or a close; and, of course, you'll be securing a lot of new business.

It all starts with a proactive call to a customer or prospect when nothing is wrong.

Make that the tip of your selling spear.

Make it the first action.

And then start making plans for a sudden and significant influx of new business, because the floodgates are about to open.

3

C H A P T E R

LEAD
WITH THE
PHONE:
MAKE IT THE
TIP OF YOUR
SELLING
SPEAR

DEFINITION: WHAT IS A PROACTIVE CALL?

The *proactive phone call*, for our purposes in this book, is defined as calling customers and prospects when nothing is wrong.

Your call can be scheduled with a text message.

While many salespeople only talk on the phone when the customer calls them, this generally focuses the conversation on problems you need to resolve. But this book is about calling the customers proactively, which almost always becomes a conversation about opportunities for you to help the customer.

PROACTIVE CALLS FEED THE SALES MACHINE

Proactive calls feed the machine of your business growth:

- They flood your pipeline with new opportunities and advance existing ones.
- Specifically, proactive calls expand your pipeline by
 - Uncovering new leads
 - Turning leads into prospects

- They move prospects toward a proposal or quote.
- They move quotes and proposals toward a close.
- They close new business.
- They *expand* your business with existing customers.
- They build relationships in less time than any other communication pathway we can utilize.
- They make you stand out to the point of making you singular, simply because nobody else is calling.
- They make it clear that you care about your customers and prospects and that you are thinking about them.

Nothing else is this effective.

PHONE FIRST: LEAD WITH THE PHONE

The key activity in this book is making the proactive phone call (as defined above) the *first* interaction in your sales process with your customers and prospects.

Not the email inquiry without a call.

But the proactive phone call, when nothing is wrong, for the sole purpose of trying to help the person you are calling.

You can set up the call with a quick text message. That's okay.

You might even send a text or LinkedIn message in combination with a voice message, if you leave one.

But I want you to consider the proactive call the first effort in your selling process.

Before emailing.

Before sending your marketing materials.

Before dropping off your business card with the receptionist during an in-person drop-in with somebody you don't know.

Phone first, rather than waiting until you have a call scheduled much later in your selling process, perhaps to discuss a quote or negotiate.

Lead with the proactive phone call.