

HOW TO MAKE A SUCCESSFUL MARKETING CALL

There is a general consensus among big billers that telephone marketing is THE KEY to their success. And I think most of us who have a few years of recruitment experience acknowledge that fact. So, why do I constantly read about “*alternative*” (read that as “*easier*”) approaches to marketing? Does our continuing love affair with all things electrical and computer-driven really help us that much? Or is it because we managers and educators have forgotten how to correctly teach our business? I think it is a combination of all of the above. So, with this in mind, let’s look at how to build an effective marketing campaign and make a successful telephone marketing call.

The Human Voice

Some years ago, I read in a promotional piece that IDC put together to discuss new phone systems that “*voice communication is, and will continue to be, the most valuable part of the communication ecosystem, especially in the enterprise. With all the hype surrounding convergence, content, mobility, and multimodality, the single most powerful application that unifies and clarifies all forms of communications is the sound of the human voice.*”

The intro continued, “*With its ability to add context through tonal subtleties plus the ability to glean feedback in real time, voice has an advantage that is practically unbeatable when compared to other forms of communication. When communicating with family and friends, voice is the first choice and provides an intimate sense of connection that cannot be conveyed in an email or IM session. For example, voice can relay concern from a grandparent or express the joy of a newfound relationship that goes beyond the meaning of the words used in the conversation. The demands on resources and time also amplify the value of a voice conversation.*”

In recruiting, the subtleties achievable in voice communication allow us to establish rapport. That is, our clients and our candidates must like us, believe us, trust us, and understand us. Once that happens, we can influence their behavior. But keep this in mind...you can’t establish rapport through keystrokes. No matter how often you tweet or how many folks write on your Facebook wall, the human voice wins every time!

Why Market

A free economic marketplace is constantly correcting itself. While some companies fail, other companies will rise to take their place. Some win. Some lose. And so we market on a daily basis to ‘vector in’ on the winners because they are the ones that need our placement services. And often, we find some of our best candidates among the losers—the companies that are downsizing, experience lay-offs or simply going out of business. In a sluggish economy where there are more companies failing, big billers might double or triple their marketing activity to find the few companies that are flourishing. But they continue to find them!

Now, we can’t call everyone in the world, so the big billers figured out that you need to set parameters around your specialty—to delimit your niche. Since, no matter how “marketing challenged” we are, most of us can make 25 marketing call connects in one 8 hour workday. Now just multiply it out: 25 connects per day equals 125 per week; equals 500 per month; equals 1500 per quarter. So ‘1500’ became the magic number. Once we determine those 1500 client contacts, we want to recycle these folks four times per year.



Then, based on the 4% placement rule, we will place with 4% of the 1500 or make 60 placements per year; multiple that 60 by an average fee of \$10,000 and you have your \$600,000 yearly desk; multiple that 60 by an average fee of \$20,000 and you now have your \$1,200,000 yearly desk. It's all in the numbers.

Of course, in this difficult economy, there are not as many of these top billing desks anymore—at least not as many as in the past. There are two reasons for this:

- First, most of us don't make nearly the number of calls that I just suggested. Then we compound that error when, after stumbling on what we consider a workable Job Order (JO), we immediately stop marketing (something we were not in love with anyway) and start recruiting on the new JO—because recruiting is so much more fun!
- Second, the 4% rule fluctuates—unfortunately sinking in a tough economy—so today it is probably below 4%, but probably above 2%. The numbers and ratios also change with the individual recruiter. One set of numbers does not make a 'universal'.

Choosing Your Vehicle

I came out of a system that encourages the use of a Most Placeable Candidate (MPC) as the vehicle they recommend weaving into their marketing presentations. This system's MPC approach contributed to its growing into the world's largest, and most profitable, contingency recruitment firm—a title they still own to this day! Obviously their marketing approach works.

The MPC usually possesses five qualities:

1. They have a marketable skill.
2. They are realistic about everything—title, salary, commute, etc.
3. They are reference-checkable.
4. They will interview when you say and start within 2 weeks.
5. They exhibit mutual respect with the recruiter.

Once we identify this individual, who admittedly is hard to find, we can prepare to attack our marketplace, but first we need to have something to say and this is where the FAB comes into play.

The FAB

Here's the 'Reader's Digest' version of the Feature-Accomplishment-Benefit presentation—The FAB. The definitions are:

FEATURES — Facts about the candidate.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS — Significant “measurable” results the candidate obtained for their current and past employers. These are “concrete” and can consist of numbers, fractions, dollars, and/or percentages.

BENEFITS — Educated guesses of what the candidate can do for a new employer based on their accomplishments.

The Target of Your Call

I am often asked how “contingency” recruiters can act more like “retained” recruiters? I always answer the same way, “ACT more like retained recruiters”. Retained recruiters always “enter” a company at the highest level. This means, if you want to be treated like a CEO, you need to call at the President/CEO level. A critical rule of thumb to remember is: You will always be treated at the level you penetrate a company. If you penetrate at the CEO level, you will be treated like a CEO and will receive JOs at the VP level and below. If you penetrate at the VP level, you will be treated like a VP and will receive JOs at the Director level and below. If you penetrate at the Director level, you will be treated like a Director and will receive JOs at the Manager level and below. If you penetrate at the Manager level, you will be treated like a Manager and will receive JOs at the “worker bee” level and below. And if you penetrate at the HR level, you will be treated like a clerk. When you complain that you are being treated like a clerk, it is because you are acting like a clerk. Sorry, these are just the recruitment “facts of life”.

The ‘Triplicate-Triplicate’ Entrance to the Call

OK, you now have your MPC and your FAB presentation. Now it’s time for the rubber to meet the road. No more delays. IT’S TIME TO MARKET! And it’s time to meet the Gatekeepers.

Every “gatekeeper” is eventually going to ask you the same three questions:

1. “What’s your name” or “Who are you?”
2. “What company are you with?”
3. “What is the nature of your call?”

So, you might as well address this (using the first Triplicate) by answering these three questions before they are asked.

1. “My name is Bob Marshall.”
2. “I am with TBMG, International in Atlanta, Georgia.”
3. “And I am actually calling for three reasons.”

Now you go into your second Triplicate.

1. “First, I am calling to introduce myself to the CEO.”
2. “Second, I have something of a confidential nature to discuss with him/her.”
3. “And finally, I have just recruited a top-notch candidate who ...” (go into your FAB, if appropriate).”



At this point you can get your first objection from the gatekeeper who might say, “Oh, you are a recruiter. You need to talk to Tom in Personnel or Sally, our In-house Recruiter.”

You, say, “OK, I will. What is that extension? Now can you pass me through to the CEO, because, you see, I still want to introduce myself to him/her and I still have something of a confidential nature to discuss with him/her.” By the way, these confidential items can include the name of your MPC and, of course, your fee/guarantee agreement.

Don’t be surprised if this takes the gatekeeper by surprise. You will be the first recruiter who agrees with the objection, yet still asks to be put through to the person you were calling in the first place. This will be confusing to the gatekeeper. But after she collects herself, she just might put you through.

Even if you get voice mail, the key is to make sure that the CEO hears your voice when you record your message and makes the connection to what you do. You might not be successful on this call, but remember, you are going to call this CEO four times per year. Eventually you will get through.

The Call

Bob: “Hello, is this John Hopkins? John, you are the CEO of IGT, aren’t you? Terrific! John, my name is Bob Marshall. I am a recruiter in the Atlanta area and I called you for a couple of reasons. First, I wanted to meet you over the phone, and second, by way of introduction, mention to you that I have just recently surfaced a top notch sales talent (Feature) who last year developed a brand new territory into one of the top 5 producing territories out of 200 in the country for his current company—one of your competitors—(Accomplishment) and there is no reason why he can’t bring that talent to bear with a new company like yours (Benefit). This candidate has been asked to relocate and wants to stay, if possible, in the Atlanta area, and so I am calling local companies to determine interest and also to introduce my recruiting service. John, if you would like to talk to my candidate, I have arranged for him to be available next Monday morning or Tuesday afternoon. Which one of those days would be good for you or would you like more information about him (Close)?” (60 seconds elapsed time)

John: “We have no openings.”

Bob: “Oh, I guess I didn’t make myself clear. I am a recruiter. I would venture a guess that 90% of the companies I place with don’t have openings when I call, but do want to be kept apprised of top-notch talent as that talent surfaces. One of the reasons for my call was to see if you wanted to provide yourself and your company with this unique service.” (20 seconds)

John: “Well that’s fine, Bob, but we just don’t have any openings.”

Bob: “OK, but let me ask you two more questions and then I will let you go. First, which companies do you suggest I call with this sales talent in mind (indirect marketing call)?” (10 seconds)

John: “Well, you could call Lift Engineering and Lion Manufacturing.”

Bob: “Great. And second, what kind of person would you like to hear about should I uncover that person in a subsequent search (this is the Lost Sale close—see below). Remember, I am a ‘contingency’ recruiter, so that means that it costs you nothing to look at my candidates. Only if you make them an offer and they accept and start to work does my service charge come into play.” (20 seconds)

John: “If you ever have a Director of Engineering, I would definitely want to talk with you.”

Bob: “OK John. It was a pleasure speaking with you!” (2 seconds)

John: “Thank You.”

The Exit from the Call

After you have utilized your Triplicate/Triplicate approach, and then made your FAB presentation with no effect, you now need a graceful and profitable exit from your marketing call. So, let’s say this call is going nowhere and you are ready to get out of this presentation and on to your next presentation. Before you leave this hiring manager, say this, “OK, I understand that you have no openings right now, but let me ask you one last question. What kind of person would you like to hear about should I uncover that person in a subsequent search?” We call this the “Lost Sale” approach. You are not selling anymore. You have given up. You are symbolically waving the White Flag. But, before you go, you are going to ask for information to help you sell this hiring manager on your next marketing call. Your next call can now be more precise, more targeted and more successful.

The Goals of the Call

I believe that the main goal of the marketing call is to engage the other side in conversation and to reach the magic 2-5 minute window where rapport building takes place. Less than 2 minutes and the call is not long enough for rapport building; over 5 minutes and you run the risk of not being able to call all of the companies you need to call in order to recycle 1500 per quarter. Don’t get me wrong – I like the idea of arranging a send-out for my MPC, but also want to start the rapport-building process, fashion optimum length conversations, avoid the “no openings” objection, and obtain alternate Job Orders and additional ‘client needs’ information I can utilize down the road.

So there you have it. There’s your effective marketing presentation. Do 25 of these per workday...doctor’s orders!



Bob Marshall

This article series originally ran in The Fordyce Letter. Bob Marshall began his recruiting career in 1980 when he joined MR Reno, NV. In 1986 he founded The Bob Marshall Group, International, training recruiters across the nation as well as in the United Kingdom, Malta, and Cyprus. In 1996, he returned to working a desk full-time, while continuing to train recruiters. In late 2011, Bob will begin licensing his proven training system in selected U.S. and international territories. To learn more about his activities and descriptions of his products and services (including the ‘Double Production-guaranteed’ program), contact him directly at: 770-898-5550, www.TheMarshallPlan.org, or bob@themarshallplan.org.