

E-LESSON #2: Getting More Appointments

GENERAL AGENDA



HOW TO GET MORE APPOINTMENTS

By Paul Weyland

The first “close” you must make in the selling process is to get an appointment with your client

They say the average person, including your client, is exposed to a minimum of 2,500 commercial impressions per day. Your sales call is just one out of those 2,500 impressions. Will your call stand out or will it only blend in with the other hundreds of impressions that your client is being exposed to in a single day?

One of the biggest problems in the broadcast sales business is getting the initial appointment with a prospect. The first words that come out of our mouths, either over the phone or in person, are critical in whether the client will allow us the opportunity to make a presentation. The purpose of this exercise is to discover better, more effective ways to “close” on getting more appointments.

Big Problem when you “Wing It”

Getting more appointments is the first close you must make in the broadcast sales business. If you can’t get an appointment, then how could you ever make a presentation and then ask for a contract? Asking for the appointment is such a critical part of the sales process that there is no room for error and certainly no room for “winging it”.

To get a meeting with a prospective client, you **MUST** use a headline to break through the clutter. Cliché openers such as, “I just wanted to take a few minutes to talk about your advertising” or “My name is _____ with station XYZ and I was wondering if I could come in and ask a few questions about your business” just don’t cut it any more. Your client has probably heard these kinds of non-compelling and uninteresting approaches from other media salespeople before. The client has usually heard these kinds of non-compelling and uninteresting approaches from other media salespeople before. And it’s *easy* to say no to a cliché opener.

Cliché Chiquita questions bring cliché answers

When I was a Chiquita in my first years in media sales, I felt very comfortable with trying to get appointments with, “Hi, my name is Paul with KVET and I just called to talk to you about your advertising.” But most of the time, I heard in response, “Well, we’re not doing anything right now, but if you send us some information on your station we’ll get back with you.”

And then, all encouraged, I’d send them all kinds of information on the station. But guess what? Nobody EVER called me back. So, I changed my pitch to, “Hello, my name is Paul with KVET and I just wanted to see if I could visit you and learn more about your business.” Well, the first time I tried that one I tried it on PRECISELY THE WRONG PERSON. The client screamed in the phone, “IF ONE MORE MEDIA SALESPERSON CALLS ME AND SAYS THEY WANT ME TO TELL THEM ABOUT MY BUSINESS, I’LL KILL MYSELF. IF YOU DON’T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MY BUSINESS THEN I DON’T HAVE TIME TO TALK TO YOU!” And, he hung up.

So, I went back to the old reliable, “Hi, my name is Paul and I just wanted to talk to you about your ADVERTISING.” And, the clients continued to blow me off.

Then one day I had a huge revelation. I went to a department store and a clerk immediately walked up to me and said, “May I help you?” and immediately I said, “No, I’m just looking.” And the salesperson walked away. Then I realized that the clerks at stores always use the same cliché openers and it’s so easy to tell them the cliché answer and then watch them go away. You see? We all know this script when we visit a department store. Cliché openers for getting an appointment with your client aren’t likely to be any more effective.

Just because “It’s the way we’ve always done it,” does not necessarily mean it’s the best way to do something. So, I re-evaluated the opening line I was using to get an appointment and I realized that my opening line when trying to get appointments to sell broadcast advertising was just as cliché as the one the clerks at the stores are using. I finally had to come up with something different and more effective to get appointments.

Use more effective openers

A better, more logical way to get an appointment would be to use an immediate attention-getting device, just like we do when we write an effective spot. Think about it this way: Why do newspapers use headlines? To get your attention, right? It also makes logical sense to use headlines to break through the clutter and get your client's immediate attention.

Here are some examples of headlines you might use to get more appointments with potential clients. Some of these "openers" will become much clearer as you continue working with the E-Lesson system.

- A. "I think I've figured out a way that you haven't thought about yet to get more qualified traffic into your store. Is there a good time this week when I could show you what I've discovered?"
- B. "I have a great idea for a broadcast commercial for your company that could have a big impact on your revenues. I've sketched it out and I'd love to show it to you. When would be a good time for me to come by?"
- C. "I've learned a logical way to calculate return on investment on any advertising you do. It will make it much easier for you to track your newspaper, direct mail, any advertising you do. It will save you thousands in advertising costs and I was going to come by on Wednesday at 9:00 to show it to you."
- D. "I've been studying your business and I think I've discovered a marketing problem with your store and a way to overcome it. Perhaps I'm overlooking something important but if I'm not, I think I can quickly help you identify and fix a problem. When could I come by and show you what I've found?"
- E. "I believe I've discovered a glaring weakness in _____'s (your client's competitor) advertising and marketing effort and I have a logical way for you to quickly take advantage of it. What would be a good day to come and show you what I've learned?"
- F. Here's my favorite way of getting an appointment and I love it because it almost always gets me in. "I've seen (heard/read) your spot (commercial/ad). Mr. Client, there is no problem with the medium you've chosen. All media are good. But in about twenty minutes I could show you a way that I could increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the advertising you're already doing by EIGHTY PERCENT, whether you advertise on my station or not." Good headline, wouldn't you agree? Clients seem to think so. Most of the time they'll cross their arms, raise an eyebrow and say, "Okay, SHOW ME." Can I really make that claim? Yes. And so will you after we cover CREATIVE in a future E-Lesson.

Obviously most of these approaches assume that you've done some homework first and have actually learned something about your client's business. *Please make sure that you have actually done your research and that you have actually come up with a way that your client would really benefit from seeing you and hearing about your idea.*

It is logical that working on better headlines to get appointments will have a big impact on your ability to close more appointments. And remember, if you can't get an appointment then you can't make a presentation. And, if you don't make presentations then you can't answer objections and close sales.

There is an on-line companion video provided with this lesson.

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