A Map of the World

Cold calls. These two simple words have always been and always will be the most hated words for most salespeople.

The prospect of cold calling, typically a telephone call to a stranger voice-to-voice, sends shivers up the spines of so many salespeople—and causes anger and frustration for sales managers convinced that their people are not calling enough. It has been said that death is the second most frightening thing (behind public speaking) for most people. When it comes to

salespeople, we think death is more likely in third place, with cold calling well ahead of it.

The question we ask when working with our clients is: "Do cold calls still work?"

The answer to this question is not an easy one. We would never suggest that cold calls flat out don't work anymore. They still do. But the secondary question is, "How well do they work, and is that success rate increasing or decreasing in the twenty-first century?"

Before we answer this question, we should give a little background. The two of us (the authors) have each been in sales for decades now. When we got our start in sales, there were three ways to get in front of new prospective clients: cold calling, networking events, and referrals. As is true now, when you were first starting out and trying to grow a particular territory or book of business, referrals were limited. There was value in attending networking events, but too much was left to chance as to which ones to attend and whether you would meet potential clients there. Guess what that left as the only way to have some level of control in trying to obtain new clients? Cold calling. Emails, texting, social media, and many of the other avenues available today did not exist back then. It is not that cold calling was ever that effective—it was just the only option salespeople were likely to be able to control.

We happen to think cold calling is becoming less and less

effective every day since the way people prefer to communicate is rapidly changing. This is a difficult thing for more senior executives and sales managers to hear. If they are like we are and grew up in the business world grinding it out on the phone with cold calling, they think their people should have to do the same thing—or at least should have to do more than they are presently doing.

There are two reasons executives struggle with this paradigm shift. First, if they have not done cold calling in a while, they may still think it works as well as it did, say, five years ago. If you as a salesperson do not monitor your behaviors through the use of a detailed prospecting plan or some other method of gathering real data, there is no way to prove you're doing the work your manager requires. Second, some leaders have a mindset toward their salespeople that they need to "cut their teeth" by grinding out cold calls, even if these calls are proven to not be very successful, simply as a way to develop the toughness required to be successful in sales.

We understand all that. But with technology distracting everyone throughout the day like never before, we need to acknowledge that this is a new era. One of the biggest complaints we hear from executives and sales managers is their people are not doing enough prospecting. We think it is imperative to determine the most effective ways to prospect and leverage those ways.

A NEW APPROACH

If you have found yourself frustrated with the diminishing returns from traditional prospecting methods; if you have tried and failed to use social media and email to develop a consistent stream of quality leads; if you have ever thought there should be a better structure to your prospecting strategy with a clear plan that turns leads into active business opportunities—you are the person for whom we wrote this book.

Full disclosure: We've been there ourselves. Transitioning from the cold-calling era of sales to today forced us to rethink our methods. Over the past few years, we have overhauled our entire prospecting approach.

In this book, we are going to discuss the most effective ways to prospect using email and social selling interactions as the initial point of contact with the prospect. This approach is not meant to replace cold calls. It's meant only to give you the tools you need to evaluate which method makes the most sense given your unique situation. We believe what we have to share here is of interest to front-line salespeople and to the executives who train, supervise, coach, and mentor them.

For many sales professionals, prospecting via email and social selling is a whole new world. We'd like you to think of this book as a map of that world. There is a clear reward for learning to navigate it. At the end of this book, we will share a double case

study of two companies who have implemented the processes and strategies we'll be sharing with you in the chapters that follow. Here's a little preview:

DIGITAL OUTREACH: THE BOTTOM LINE

Over a four-year period, Company A showed a 47% increase in revenue, 73% of which was generated by the combination of the outreach processes explained in this book. Company B had an even more impressive increase in revenue over those same four years: 311%. The percentage of its revenue generated by the very same digital outreach processes was 71.1%.

How did they do it? We're glad you asked. That's what we're about to find out—together. Here's a brief summary of what you'll find in this book.

Chapter 1 gives you an overview of the email prospecting program we've developed. If you're skeptical about whether such a program could possibly be as effective as the cold-calling techniques with which you're familiar, we ask only that you keep an open mind as you read.

We will share ways to frame your emails to increase the chances of a response. These are not suggested theories on what could work, but actual templates and scripts that have given us

a much higher rate of success than when we used to cold call. In addition, we will discuss how many emails is the right number, how often to wait between emails, and many other best practices around prospecting with email.

In Chapter 2, we will teach you how to "maximize the passive." There are many ways to harness the power of technology to assist in prospecting efforts rather than simply wasting precious time. We will share new ideas on who should be doing the lion's share of email prospecting, where high-powered salespeople should be focusing their time, and how to leverage the power of the various CRM tools that are out there.

Many salespeople have had the experience of starting down the road with prospects and getting past the initial meetings only to have the process go dark or stall. This is part of selling. In Chapter 3, we will share with you some emails that have proven to be very effective no matter what stage of the funnel they are in, whether it be to follow up on opportunities, get another meeting, find out the status of a proposal, or before you present the proposal.

We will also share some email scripts that can be leveraged to maintain highly accurate pipeline information and quickly get prospects who are too nice to give you a *no* to respond by email to allow you to move on quicker.

Chapter 4 shows how to communicate effectively with

different behavioral styles using social technologies. This is an important piece of the puzzle that too many people overlook.

Chapter 5 relates some best practices centered around referrals. We will also provide scripts on how to ask for referrals via email, and we'll help you identify how often is too often to ask and how many referrals you should ask for at one time. We will also share how to leverage the power of LinkedIn during the referral generation process.

Pipeline and territory management is a topic that we are constantly asked about by clients. How should territories be divided? Does geography still work as a method of division? What are some of the ways to clean up a pipeline that is full of prospects who don't represent real opportunities to do business? In Chapter 6, we will share with you a paradigm shift in the way territories should be thought of, managed, and turned over.

Chapter 7 shows you how to put everything together into one coherent process, shares some real-life results, and gives you important guidelines for staying on the right side of U.S. federal regulations. (An important side note: The system in this book is intended for use by sales professionals based in the United States who are targeting prospects based in the United States. Since the international laws on email marketing and data privacy vary widely and since the laws are, as of this writing, considerably stricter in Europe and Australia than

they are in the States, we advise that, if you are not based in the United States, you check your own jurisdiction's legal requirements very closely before using any of the strategies outlined in this book. The system we outline here may not be relevant to your marketplace.)

We realize that some of our observations, specifically those on territory design and process development, will be relevant mostly to sales leaders. But please note that we've designed the preceding chapters to lead up to the process outlined in Chapter 7, which won't make much sense without the earlier sections of the book. Whether you are a salesperson or a sales leader, we strongly recommend that you read this book from beginning to end.

Let's get started!