

# White Paper

## The Prospect Dilemma – No One Ever Returns Calls



## Prospect Focus and Nurturing

The problem with today's sales and marketing environment is that our prospects are being inundated with information, especially marketing messages, from vendors. It is extremely difficult to get prospects to answer the phone, even if they know you, let alone if you are cold-calling. Even self-proclaimed experts of the "cold call" say it takes approximately 100 to 150 calls a day to get to talk to just five people. If you sell professional services, or cold-call executives, this number can drop drastically.

Just six years ago, business-to-business email read rates varied from 50% to 60%, depending on the message. Now you are lucky to get a 10% to 12% read-rate. Email remains one of the most effective and least costly communication tools, but its effectiveness is evaporating. Just imagine what is happening to other media, such as direct mail and print advertising. The cost of marketing communication tools is increasing and their effect is decreasing. This is posing a real problem for many business-to-business marketers.

A recent study showed that business-to-business marketing expenditures for events and tradeshow have, for the first time, exceeded expenditures on print advertising. It is clear that marketers are trying to get face time with prospects, but events are expensive and, by nature, sporadic. What is needed is a better way to get the prospect's attention.

### So, what is the answer?

#### *Relevance and Interest!*

How many times have you hit the delete button on your voice message machine when the caller started the message with "I am Jane Doe with XYZ Company and we are the best...?" Click. How many emails have you deleted from a company you didn't know, without even reading them, that had a subject line such as: "XYZ, Inc., has a new website!" Click.

However, if the call or email came from Brad Pitt or Angelina Jolie, you would be more apt to open the email. That's because they have spent many years and millions of dollars (billions if you include the cost of movie productions) on building their brand. They are interesting and relevant to you. I recently received an email from [Leonardo DiCaprio](#) and I opened it, knowing it was a plea for something or other since he doesn't know me. And guess what? I followed through on what he was asking, which had to do with global warming, a topic of interest for me.

Unfortunately, most of us don't have the budget to spend billions on branding or hiring top stars to send emails for us. However, we do have the means to be relevant to the prospect's needs, and to address and communicate information in an interesting manner.

Relevant messaging, however, can only happen if you have solid knowledge of your prospect or client. I am not talking about just the standard targeting information like industry, revenue, title, and location. I am talking about being saturated with details about the prospect's company, their issues, marketing direction, and their hot buttons. I am also talking about learning all you can about the people who make, influence, and approve the buying decisions for your offering.

### **That's a salesperson's job!**

"That's a salesperson's job," you say. "No," I say. A salesperson's job is to develop a personal one-on-one relationship, present proposals and then close sales. It is marketing's job to deliver as qualified a lead as possible. After all, aren't sales and marketing both on the sales team? A qualified lead is not a name you obtained at a tradeshow because you were giving out free foot massages, nor is it a prospect's email address you found on the internet. That may be a start but it is a long way from a real lead.

### **Thinking big sucks!**

Typically, marketing feels that, if they deliver 100 contacts to a salesperson, they have done their job. They have not. In fact, this type of big thinking sucks. It sucks money from the profit line and it sucks time from the selling process. One hundred contacts are only names on a spreadsheet. The salesperson knows nothing about the contact and most likely does not even know much about the contact's company. Sure, the salesperson can call 100 people in a day, but only because they are not talking to anyone. Nothing is sold and the natural result is the salesperson says the leads suck. And you know that they are right.

**What if** marketing took those 100 contacts and built a program that nurtured them, provided them with relevant and interesting information, and moved them through the sales funnel? **What if** marketing targeted the hottest prospects and then created complete dossiers on the prospects, their companies, and their burning issues? **What if** marketing created personalized messaging designed to address those burning issues and build rapport with the prospects? **What if** the sales force could spend 80% of its time meeting, proposing, and closing sales, rather than 80% of the time being spent on **TRYING** to communicate?

I am not saying you should give up print media, email or even cold calling. What I am suggesting is a tandem effort that focuses on the prospect's needs, circumstances, and personal desires, managed by the marketing department.

The following is an outline of such a program:

**Target** (see the chart at the end of this document)

**Demographic:** *Industry, location, and size of company*

**Psychographic:** *Company state of affairs that best fit your offering*

**Circumstance:** *Current conditions that make your products or services attractive*

**Personal:** *Decision makers, influencers, and validators. This includes demographic information as well as background and current circumstances.*

**Timing:** *Monitoring situations to identify opportunities based on timing. For instance, the changing of an executive might signal an opportunity to displace an incumbent vendor.*

## Story Creation

**Overall story:** *Create an explanation of your company history, vision, and mission. The more interesting the story, the more memorable it is.*

**Personal stories:** *Create personalized messages based on the information you have gathered about the prospect and the prospect's company.*

## Message Deployment

**General Messages:** *Use traditional methods to deliver this message and create a filter process to determine interest. Follow up with messaging that uses this interest to help build rapport with the prospect.*

**Personal Messages:** *Use creative methods to deliver very specific messages that include solutions and ideas based on the information you have gathered about the prospect.*



VISION

GOALS

ACTION



404.664.5664 [info@hallman.com](mailto:info@hallman.com)

## White Paper

If you would like to explore the possibilities of a prospect-nurturing program for your organization, you can contact me on my direct line at 404-664-5664.

**Harry Hallman**  
**Hallman & Associates**  
6099 Millstone  
Stone Mountain, GA 30087  
Direct Line: 404-664-5664

Website: [www.hallman.com](http://www.hallman.com)  
BLOG: [www.hallman.com/blog.htm](http://www.hallman.com/blog.htm)

# Prospect Universe



Demographic Filter

Psychographic Filter

Circumstance Filter

Persona Filter

Timing Filter



Ready for the Sales Force