



The Powercore 10: Proven skills for telephone effectiveness

These communication skills are featured in the **TeleSmart 10- An Inside Sales Methodology**. They are 10 essential skills inside team members must have for telephone effectiveness. The **TeleSmart 10** skills are organized and designed to correspond with the sales cycle.

Take the time to review the skills and rate yourself on each:

Time Management and Planning

Time management sets the entire foundation for telephone communications. Listening to someone speak- their word choice, pacing and intonation- provides clues into the way they manage their time. Essentially, this skill breaks out into 7 components: (1) Strategy: Step back and think about the bigger picture. (2) Self-discipline: Practice daily discipline and maintain strong focus in your calling efforts. (3) Organization: Understand how to skill-shift and align your tasks based on their required skills. (4) Planning: Prepare tools around you to be more resourceful and effective. (5) Working Smart: Conduct pre-call research and integrate information into your calls to earn you more time. (6) Saying No: Understand how to distinguish the urgent from the unimportant and how to manage the myriad of interruptions and distractions we receive during the day. (7) Momentum and Pacing: Maintain a fast, steady and consistent pace. Time Management is a constant in your sales life and the more you can focus on this, the more effectively you will sell.

Introducing

Remember, the phone and email are non-visual medium. So when the visuals are non-existent, we rely on our words and our tone. In sales, the first impression accounts for over 80% of the importance of the entire sale. The first impression happens within the first 7 seconds on the phone and the first 3 seconds on-line. Whether you are leaving a voice mail message, sending an email introduction or delivering a live opening statement, it is important to understand the impact your voice tone and word choice has. Are you demonstrating an approachable, confident, articulate, and energetic voice tone? Are you carefully organizing your words, selecting strong words that are free of acronyms, techno-babble, and generic phrases? Investing in a strong introduction will open many doors.

Navigating

Are you feeling shut out? Are you stuck with gatekeepers who can't say yes but always say no? Navigating is an important skill to have when you are calling medium to large organizations where a hierarchy of decision-maker layers exists. The ability to travel into an organization, staying under the radar and yet eliciting trust from the screener/gatekeeper is truly a skill that can contribute to your success. If your efforts are sloppy and obvious, you will be perceived as an "outsider" and be immediately shut out. However, if you engage well,



TeleSmart 10- Skill Descriptions

establish trust, and create allies, you will be perceived as in “insider” and be granted access. Remember to always be building org charts so you understand the hierarchy and the decision-making process. This important skill will help you identify the power players, sell more efficiently and target the people who control the budget and who can say yes.

Questioning

When the visuals are non-existent, your questioning abilities act as your eyes on the phone. The more questions you ask, the more visibility you have into the prospect’s needs. We are have unique questioning styles and yet this critical component determines whether or not you can establish trust and rapport over the phone. There are 5 components to think about:

(1) Strategy: Where do you want to go on this call and what is your call objective? (2) Style and Pace: This includes the manner in which you ask your question and wait for the response. Are your questions asked in an interrogative, tentative, survey-style or authoritative manner?

(3) Formulation: Are your questions too broad or professional to encourage discussion?

(4) Qualification Criteria: Understand the difference between your qualifying and questioning efforts and utilize a qualifying criteria to help you better position your selling efforts.

(5) Specifics: Whether it is title-specific, vertical-specific or department-specific, your ability to align your questions in all categories will help you hold your weight over the phone.

Listening

Most salespeople have a difficult time really listening, and when you are selling over the phone, it becomes that much harder. Ideally, you want to listen 70% of the time and talk (or “sell”) 30% of the time. The listening skill includes demonstrating active listening techniques such as paraphrasing, clarifying, and recognizing the feelings that lie behind the facts. Also, your ability to capture information and document notes into your database is critical for your future selling efforts. Listening is also about identifying the prospect’s “pain” and what is driving them to want your solution. If their pain isn’t great enough or you haven’t established a strong enough need, there will not be any urgency for your solution. When we call on prospects where we think there might be a need, we tend to be swayed by our assumptions and listen with “happy ears” then wonder why it isn’t closing.

Linking

Many people call high into organizations assuming the highest level has the authority to buy. However, we must be aware of the political org chart within organizations. Within every organization there is an invisible power structure that has little to do with org charts. This power is dynamic and always changing; people gain power and lose power everyday. Identifying the power players who have influence and authority are the keys to your success. Not everyone that has authority has influence. Yet in order to get an opportunity to move faster, you want to align with the influencers in the organization. The intuitive and tactical skill of recognizing power and influence clues will save you time from talking with “no-po’s”, people who lack power and influence within an organization.



TeleSmart 10- Skill Descriptions

Presenting

This area includes telephone presentations and how to “package” your presentation for the greatest impact. A strong presentation includes preparation, development, delivery, and follow-up. Critical areas are planning, timing, and the closing of the presentation. A good presentation must influence and convince the customer, whereas a weak presentation lacks organization, timing, and substance.

Handling Objections

Objections haven’t changed in many years, and how you handle them can make or break an opportunity. This area looks at objections you may be creating as well as the resistance that you may fear. Remember, the telephone can be transparent and, often times, the objections you fear most are the ones you will attract. There are layers of objections that travel through the beginning, middle and end of your calls. Some are spoken and some are unspoken, some you receive on-line and some you receive over the phone. By identifying the 5 major categories of customer objections, you will learn how to effectively rebound, gain confidence and overcome their objections.

Closing

If you are doing everything right, the close will happen. This closing skill examines how you create urgency and manage your sales funnel and pipeline. It also observes your sales momentum to provide balance from the beginning of the month through the end. Closing needs to create urgency. Salespeople must realize that an opportunity is never dormant, and must never “wait” for the business to come in. Closing is about creating movement to push something through and make it happen sooner than later.

Partnering

Partnering means having great communication, trust, and rapport with field partners. It includes being proactive with leads and opportunities. It involves creating value for yourself and the territory you share with your field partner, so that you become indispensable. Ultimately, it’s about never being surprised and always staying one step ahead in terms of finding opportunities and following up.



TeleSmart 10- Skill Descriptions

TeleSmart 10- Skill Self-Evaluation

Please refer to the descriptions page. Rate your skills in each skill. Add comments on how applicable the skill is to what you do, or on your particular strengths and challenges in each area.

Time Mgmt & Planning

1 2 3 4 5
disorganized effective & efficient

Comments: _____

Introducing

1 2 3 4 5
inarticulate charismatic

Comments: _____

Navigating

1 2 3 4 5
shut out intrepid

Comments: _____

Questioning

1 2 3 4 5
interrogative consultative

Comments: _____

Listening

1 2 3 4 5
inattentive inviting

Comments: _____

Linking

1 2 3 4 5
unfamiliar strategic

Comments: _____

Presenting

1 2 3 4 5
confusing influential

Comments: _____

Handling Objections

1 2 3 4 5
apprehensive accommodating

Comments: _____

Closing

1 2 3 4 5
careless convincing

Comments: _____

Partnering

1 2 3 4 5
conflicting symbiotic

Comments: _____

