

News & Notes
by Larry Zavadil,
Chairman of the Board/CEO

Is Cold Calling Dead?

There is a new theory that if it is not “dead,” it should be. That “theory” states too many salespeople waste their time and energy cold-calling for new business, when they could be using technology and the “invisible web” to warm up potential customers.

Sam Richter, president of SBR Worldwide and senior vice president and chief marketing officer at Actifi, is an expert on taking the chill out of cold-calling. His book, *Take the Cold out of Cold Calling* (Beaver’s Pond Press, \$19.95), shows how being in the “Value Age” is even more central to salespeople than being in the “Information Age.”

The goal has always been to learn as much as you can about your prospects and their companies. When you do that, you’re going to have a warm call, where you position yourself and your company as credible.

You capture the interest of your potential customer and ask pertinent questions because you already understand what’s going on in the customer’s world.

A cold call isn’t as cold at the start. It leaves you cold at the finish.

A value-based warm call defrosts the doorway. It turns practical research into an enticing opportunity.

In his book, Richter shows how to use free or low-cost tools to gather information about companies, industries and people. The information that you need for warm-calling is out there, if you know where and how to look.

Start by visiting www.takeofthecold.com. Visit Sam’s Warm Call Resource Center for an updated list of business information Websites and search tips and download the ‘Warm Call’ tool bar for access to business information resources directly from your browser. Some of the search tips you’ll find:

- **Google Filetype Search:** Imagine finding a competitor’s sales proposal, an association’s membership list or a high end research report online.
- **LinkedIn.com:** This business-networking site helps you create connections at companies, learn about people and ask for referrals. Once you’re registered, invite people into your network.
- **ZoomInfo.com:** ZoomInfo uses sophisticated Web search tools to find information about people and then automatically creates an online profile using different information sources.
- **Your Library:** Most libraries subscribe to premium databases that you can use for free. Want Dun & Bradstreet or ReferenceUSA to research companies, their competitors, executive biographies and more? Find out which library databases you can access directly from your computer, saving a trip.

With the amount of information available online today, there is absolutely no excuse for not knowing something about your potential

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Human Resources
by Sam Triplett, VP of HR

The Building of American, A Unique and Kinder Workplace

This year marks American’s thirtieth anniversary. I know that my 15 years here have flown by. It seems like just a

couple of short years ago when I met Larry and took a chance on what I thought was probably something very special. It was. Even through significant trials and tribulations, I’ve never looked back, and never will. One of the factors that contributed to my decision to join American was our workplace culture. It was unique then, and remains unique today.

As American continues to grow and evolve, we risk losing some of those “small company feelings” that I experienced early in my American career, but we can keep many of them by working together to maintain a unique and kinder workplace. Try the following:

1. As Larry says, “Plan your work and work your plan.” I know you’ll achieve better results.
2. Promise only what you can deliver. If what you deliver falls short, explain why.
3. Say what you mean, and mean what you say. There’s no substitute for authentic communication.
4. Widen your social circle. If you always go to lunch with the same group, invite someone new.
5. Involve more people in weighing options and making decisions. There’s incredible brainpower all around you, so why not put it to work?
6. Try going a whole day without making judgments about people. It is hard, but I’m certain you can do it.
7. If you’re overdue in showing gratitude, make up for lost time. Contact everyone who is owed thanks from you, and let them know how much you appreciate their help.
8. Be less inclined to give advice - and more inclined to seek it.
9. Go out of your way to say thank you. Sincere appreciation is powerful stuff – it is feedback, recognition, and respect all wrapped in one.
10. If you tend to send emails to colleagues who are an easy walk away, give the computer

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customers before you meet or call. Your prospects couldn't care less about you. What they do care about is whether you can help them achieve their goals.

We all know that information is power. The Web is another tool to help you find, understand and get customers.

Thank you for being a part of the American family.



Sales Resource Report by Justin Zavadil, VP of Sales Resource Team

Are You Pricing Out Your Business?

This week I received an e-mail from a long time sales associate that went like this:

I must have too much time, but I priced out 50,000 3 1/4 by 7, 24#WW, printing one color/one side drive up envelopes. Here is what I found out:

- Vendor A - \$27.01/m
- Vendor B - \$25.50/m
- Vendor C - \$24.76/m
- Vendor D - \$30.08/m

I contacted vendor D and said they were 20 percent higher than everyone. She came back and lowered her bid to \$21.69/1000!

I asked, "How could you lower your price 30 percent?" She said that if you ask, they can give better pricing. Not sure how I feel about that, but if we don't ask, our competitors will. If we can't sell more, we have to start shopping...that's my new motto.

By the way, the bottom two suppliers only had 3 1/8" wide by 7, but can be up to \$266 less and I can save my customer \$100 and make \$166 more.

This is a common theme that I hear about quite frequently and I always stress to call your vendors for pricing and get at least three quotes. We do all that we can from the home office to get you the best price, but you are the actual customer and only you can make sure it's the best price they can give.

This is especially true in the promotional products industry. Our vendors do not always publicize the fact that we get EQP pricing, but more often than not we get pricing that's good or better. There seems to be some confusion out in the field regarding promo product pricing in the industry. Some of our competitors are making blanket statements in their marketing campaigns about how they get the best pricing in the industry, such as 5-15 percent off of EQP. These statements are only partly true. They do receive a variety of discounts off of EQP, but not from all suppliers. For the most part, these discounts are based on volume and any customer of these vendors that hits that volume level receives that pricing. We receive the same pricing from most of these suppliers because our volume is just as high. The rule of thumb is to ALWAYS call and verify your pricing regardless of what ESP, SAGE, or any other published price you may see. Often times you will only get the best pricing if you make the phone call.

It is important to focus on getting the best price for your customers, but where you can really separate yourself from the competition is to work with our suppliers on self promo and spec sample deals. These are the important leave behinds that turn into orders. We at ASB get

a rest. Get up, walk over, and have a no-tech conversation.

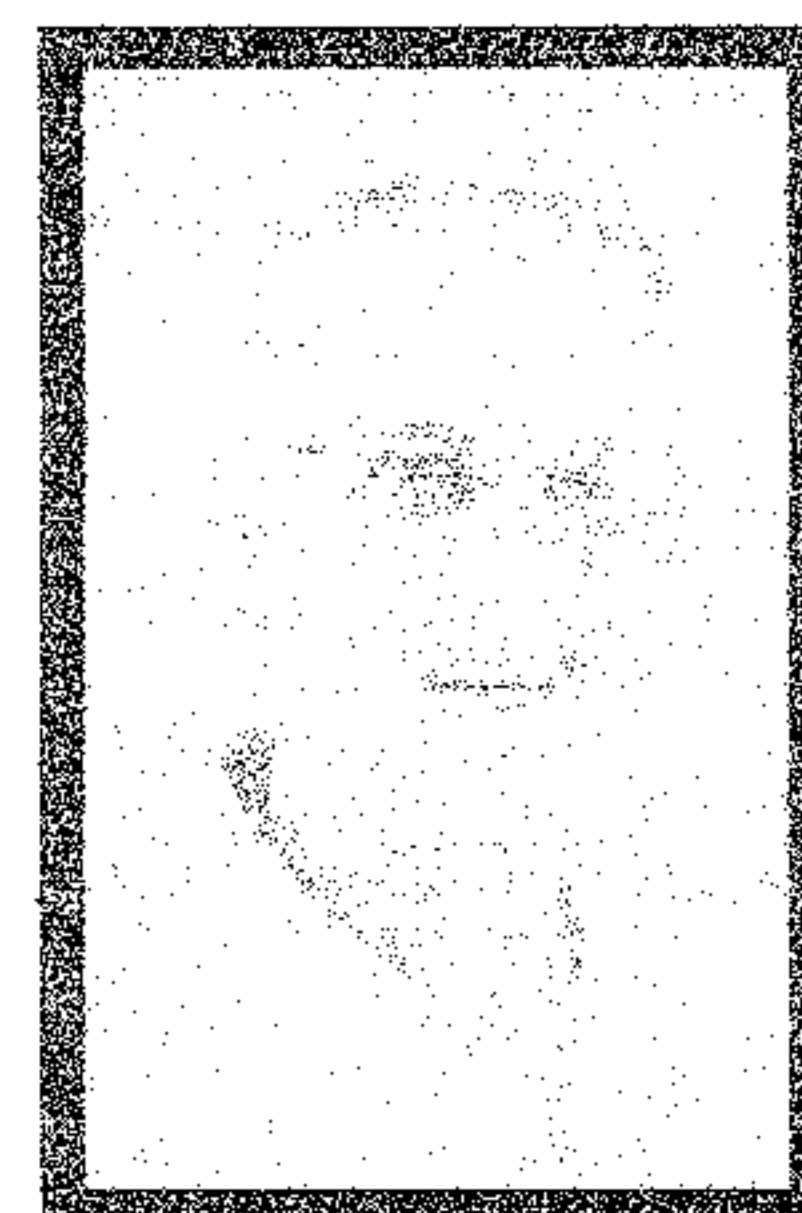
11. When you take a stand and later realize it's the wrong stand, be honest enough to say so.

12. When credit and compliments come your way, spread them around to all who helped. And if you think you're solely responsible for that honored achievement, think again.

13. When things go wrong, resist the urge to assign blame. It's the system that usually fails, so fix the system, not the people.

14. When a rumor reaches your ear, let it go out the other.

15. Don't wait for kindness to come your way. Gandhi had it right: We must be the change we wish to see in the world.



Sales Corner by JP Shea, Sales Coordinator

Add Strength to Your Foundation

Review your customer history file and look hard at the activity, the actual sales and the commissions generated by each one. Did you give each one enough time? Did you have to over service and then come up short on actual profit? Are you providing all the services that the customer needs and wants? Have you shared marketing pieces that we have available to better communicate about events coming or product offerings?

Make sure to have consistent conversation or communication with each of your customers so they are aware of the products and services that you can offer. Do not find out they bought from someone else because they did not know that you could have taken care of them.

Our best customers are the ones we have and we should all remember what it took to earn their respect, their trust and their business. As people struggle to regain volume and profits, don't forget to appreciate what customers you have. Thank them for their loyalty. Don't be shy, ask them for another order and introduce them to something you know they use, but you have not sold them. Have each of you shown a demo on our eStores? Why not? They are a wonderful tool. Most customers would like to take 5 minutes to see something new to them and you will get better with each presentation. Don't forget to anchor your customer base by adding strength to the foundation.