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Boost Your Callback Rate in Three Steps.

by Keith F. Luscher
Author, *Prospect & Flourish*

Okay, I am going to start with a confession here—if you are reading this article thinking that you are going to learn how to increase the rate at which prospects call you back, then I have deceived you. First, let's re-emphasize a point from a previous article (“Accept it Dude, She’s Not Gonna’ Call”): if you wait for a call back, you will wait forever. The ball will forever remain in your court.

So whose call-back rate are we talking about? You guessed it...Just as the headline read: It's yours.

We have all been there, especially when it is a part of our prospecting routine. Whether we are making that first phone call to a prospect, or the tenth, making the necessary dials is something many of us sometimes put off until it is too late. I am just as guilty.

The block scheduling approach is one technique to overcome this problem—to have your weekly/daily schedule set up in blocks of certain kinds of activities. Phoning activity is one of them. One very experienced sales trainer once told me that he recommends no more than two hours per day to make phone calls—so that two hours should be set aside and nothing else is done but making phone calls for setting appointments.

When following up on an email, a previous phone call or a pre-approach letter, here is one suggestion that may very well increase your own call back rate exponentially:

First, have your week set up so that there are blocks of time (such as two hours) set aside for nothing but calls. That is marked on your calendar just like any other appointment.

Second, when we send out a pre-approach letter, email or any other communication, most of the time we just say that we will “...follow up by phone in a few days to schedule a visit.” If you are telling the recipient that you are going to call, why not take it a step further? Tell them when: “I will call you next Wednesday, August 14, at 10:20 a.m., to schedule a visit.” Mark it in your calendar, within that time block, accordingly.

You have just scheduled an appointment. If you do not show up, you are going to look pretty foolish.

Third, when making your call, have your next call back tentatively scheduled. This way, if you do not get through to your prospect, you will be prepared to announce in your voicemail (or to the person taking the message) that if you do not hear back from them, when you will be following up. If that is the case, schedule the activity and follow through **CONSISTENTLY** until you make a live connection, and get a clear cut answer on an visit: Yes or No (If the answer is no, as my manager says, wait six months!).

This gets back to an age-old adage about congruence: do as you say; say as you do. By committing yourself to following through in a very intentional manner, you will increase your accountability not only to your prospect, but to yourself.