



**SKODA MINOTTI**

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## Kill the Cold Call! Utilize Marketing to Grow Your Customer Base

By Desiree Gordon

**YES.** I said it. Kill the cold call. Bury the hatchet. Put it to rest. Use any phrase that helps defeat this archaic sales technique known as “cold calling.” You may have noticed the recent controversy building among marketing-minded and sales-savvy teams. How many webinars, white papers and infographics have you come across lately with the topic “linking marketing to sales?” In fact, I have attended a number of these webinars with such a subject. I have also come across various articles where marketers argue that “content is king” or sellers argue, “Marketing doesn’t provide high-quality leads.” So why is there such a divide?

Throughout this blog, I hope to demonstrate how the cold calling tactic is ineffective and acknowledge how your marketing and sales members could be converting more quickly if they work together.

Let’s use a simple example and take technology out of the equation. You walk up to a stranger in a grocery store. This individual is picking their favorite cereal. You approach them, act like you know them, talk about the weather, and start asking questions about how they purchase Cheerios. How likely is this individual going to buy your brand of cereal? Who does that? How many times have you done that? My educated guess would be zero. This is a cold call. This example shows a seller working in silo.

Now let’s use a referral approach: You go to that same grocery store with your friend and they see their co-worker in the cereal aisle. Your friend presents facts to their coworker on your cereal brand—how it has helped them be a better person, tips on how they create snacks from your cereal, and how your cereal cured a rare disease. Their coworker needs cereal but now has an interest in your brand. Your friend began the conversation and allowed you to explain how your brand of cereal outweighs the others. This simple introduction elevates your brand and speeds up your sales cycle. In this example, your friend is a referral who demonstrates the marketer and seller working in unison.

While this may be a simple example, why should anything change when software (emails, phone calls) enter the picture? Is it now acceptable to approach a stranger? A handful of sales professionals would defend this tactic, but I openly accept the discussion and would welcome the disagreement.

These two techniques have been used interchangeably as sales approaches and should now be achieved with the help of your marketing team. When we put technology back into the equation, this “word of mouth” can be accomplished through content creation, automation and inbound marketing. Among the clients we work with, the people I have spoken with and my own personal experiences, many customers in the professional services industry still

come from word-of-mouth referrals. Despite all the technology, word of mouth is still the most powerful source of marketing, especially when dealing with an individual's financial and business objectives. If referrals are still number one, why are we still cold calling? The question becomes, how do we incorporate that referral base digitally? The answer: through the marriage of marketing and sales.

If you have read my previous posts on generating relationships, you know I condone picking up the phone and having a dialogue with a customer once an interest has been established. It's important to get out from behind the screen. I also agree with the sales naysayers that marketing collateral does not produce the best quality leads 100 percent of the time. With that being said, if your teams are working together, the quality of leads and campaigns will improve.

Marketing will improve the content from a seller's feedback. Once the content is relevant and timely, the leads will be more qualified. More qualified leads will speed up your referral and sales cycle and, ultimately, convert website traffic into loyal customers. Like a well-orchestrated machine, one needs the input for output.

Our orchestra at Skoda Minotti produces an average of 40 qualified (meaning no spam or solicitations because sometimes that happens) leads a month from inbound, word-of-mouth traffic, with a 30 percent appointment-setting rate and 23 percent close to customer within the first year of their initial encounter. Guess how many converted from a cold call? Zero. Marketing can help provide engagement, amp sales and grow your customer base.

We have achieved this through innovation, trial and error but above all, through transparency. What is your firm doing to kill the cold call? If you are have a well-oiled machine at your firm, I would welcome the opportunity to hear your success stories. If not, let's talk about some ways that your team can be functioning better together and accomplishing your goals.

If you have questions, want to discuss this topic further, and want to kill that cold call, please contact me immediately at 440-605-7235 or email me- You may also be interested in learning about The Business Relationship Master Class, offered by Skoda Strategic Marketing to help businesses learn 20 relationship-building strategies for winning new business.