

OPENING

Statements



attention

`uh-ten-shuh

1 : the act or state of applying the mind to something 2 : a condition of readiness for such attention involving especially a selective narrowing or focusing of consciousness and receptivity

Nothing is more important to prospecting (other than actually doing it) than the quality of your opening statement. In person or over the phone, windows of attention are typically slammed shut in less than 10 seconds.

OPENING STATEMENTS

What you can do...

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Nothing is more important to prospecting (other than actually doing it) than the quality of your opening statement.

In person or over the phone, windows of attention are typically slammed shut in less than 10 seconds. This means you have to maximize the impact of every word, syllable, and pause in your lead off statements. They need to be works of art – compelling to the extreme degree. To minimize the importance of preparing a solid opening statement is to potentially short circuit your entire sales effort.

Fortunately, opening statements can be prepared and practiced before a sales opportunity is ever pursued.

Below are some guidelines and thoughts for creating your opening statement(s) as well as some samples for you to rework into your particular sales world.

Remember, it's likely the people you're trying to reach are also being approached by many others each day (competitors of yours and not). A powerful, compelling, and practiced opening statement can launch many sales opportunities for you where a competitor's lack of preparation can leave them standing still.

YOUR OPENING STATEMENT

Your objective: create immediate interest for further discussion – engage the prospect.

What do I sell?

Answer this using as few words as possible. Avoid words or phrases that mean nothing to outsiders (e.g., industry acronyms, fluffy corporate communication language, etc.).

YOUR OPENING STATEMENT, continued

How do my customers benefit when they buy my product/ service?

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

If you sell to consumers, include the potential emotional added benefits of being liked, respected, more attractive, etc. (if they exist).

If you sell to businesses, be sure to include the emotional benefits to the buyer/ decision maker in addition to the more specific benefits realized by the company (a good buy or product implementation can be the road to promotion or status within an organization). You're looking for several **true benefits**, not simply features.

Make your opening statements mean something

Build several opening statements for the different scenarios you might face.

Address each of the following in whatever order seems most appropriate for your particular sales world (just make sure the benefit to your prospect is mentioned within the first 10 seconds and it's real... not fluff):

- Who you are
- Who you're with (company name)
- What you sell (in very simple terms)
- How your prospect will benefit from your product or service
- A question to gauge interest of the prospect

YOUR OPENING STATEMENT, continued

Keep in mind...

- Opening statements aren't meant to close a prospect (they're meant to get attention and engage someone).
- Maximize every word, syllable, and pause.
- Never leave a misleading or vague voice mail message – hit them with your complete and prepared opening (it should be short enough). If it was worth dialing the phone, it's worth leaving your opening statement. You will not trick someone into buying something because you "caught them."
- Never use industry jargon or unnecessary thousand dollar words.
- Avoid being vague.

WORDS TO CONSIDER USING:

- Maximize, increase, grow [sales, customer retention, productivity, etc.]
- Minimize, reduce, decrease, eliminate [expenses, customer service challenges, diversions, etc.]
- Profit from
- Specific, specifically
- Save, conserve
- Accumulate, acquire
- Prevent
- Fully, immediate, now

PHRASES TO AVOID:

These phrases may be used at other times during the sales process but they have no place in the opening statement. They don't create immediate attention or encourage the prospect to engage with you and therefore can take away from the initial attention allotted to you by the prospect.

- How are you today?
- I'd like to learn a little more about your business to determine...
- We're the leading provider of...
- We work with several of your competitors.
- I'd like to see if there are some ways we might work together.
- Is now a good time to talk?
- Did I catch you at a bad time?

SAMPLE OPENING STATEMENTS

“Hi, **[first name]**. We provide **[product/ service]** in order to help people **[take advantage of, minimize, maximize, prevent, etc.] [something of importance]**... I’m calling to see if this might be helpful to **[you/ and of your clients]**.”

“Hi, **[first name]**. This is **[sales name]** with **[company name]**. We provide **[product/ service]** in order to help companies minimize their **[whatever]** expenses and maximize monthly sales revenue. I’m calling to see if this might be valuable to you and your team.”

“Hi, **[first name]**. **[sales name]** with **[company name]**... We help companies fully profit from their existing resources through our **[product/ service]** that **[does/ has/ have whatever differentiating point or feature]**... I’m calling to see if you’d be interested in discussing how it might help your **[whatever]** efforts/ initiatives...”

“Hi, **[first name]**. **[sales name]**, **[company name]**. We deliver **[product/ service]** which might be able to save you more than **[specific percentage]** on your **[whatever]** expenses. Would you be interested in discussing how it might fit into your environment?”

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be happy. do something.™

***smover ('smoov-er) noun:** 1. a person who smiles and moves 2. someone who matters to the world, all with a smile

BE REAL. Try to do what you say,
say what you mean, and be what you seem.

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN (1939 –)
American activist
founder of the Children's Defense Fund