



Point of View

Why Is Everyone Buying Lists?

by Joanne S. Black

Companies that sell lists of sales leads promise that if you use their list, you'll gain instant access to the right person in your target company. These companies imply that with their list, you'll learn more about your prospects before you pick up the phone.

But, in fact, lists are not leads. Lists are lists. They may be a way for salespeople to find out who's who in a company and possibly even pinpoint the exact person they are looking for. But they don't guarantee sales.

Successful salespeople are "make-it-happen" people, and they know that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Think about it: If making sales were as easy as buying a list, wouldn't we all be retired to an exotic island by now?

Our job as salespeople is to create business opportunities, not to harbor unrealistic expectations that real leads will be handed to us from a targeted list.

As the economy picks up, companies are resuming their former mass-marketing techniques. Let's send mailings, salespeople think. Let's entice prospects with a free offer. Let's pick up the phone and cold call our list. But that's all just a waste of time and money.

If you want to send a mailing... go ahead. But think about how many unsolicited mailings sent to you that you actually open. In fact, only 38 percent of adults read direct mail based on their current needs, while only 10 percent of adults read all direct mail.

I'm not against direct mail. I'm against people believing that using direct mail is a way to actively generate new business. It doesn't. It might contribute to your credibility and your branding, but that's it. Direct mail approaches are "cold." I define "cold" as any marketing approach in which the recipient does not know you and is not expecting to hear from you.

Cold calling just doesn't work. Sure, there will be people who will tell you they're good at it and get results. They might – if they're lucky – end up with a new client about 1 percent of the time.

I'm against people acting under the delusion that direct mail is a way to actively generate new business. It doesn't.



Make 100 calls, talk to 20 prospects, set 5 to 10 appointments, and close one deal. The actual results can be even more discouraging.

Even though the National Do Not Call Registry applies only to business-to-consumer calls, everyone has become wary of cold callers. To date, consumers have registered more than 58 million phone numbers on the registry, and organizations can be fined up to \$11,000 for each infraction.

There's a powerful alternative to "cold" prospecting: it's called referral selling. Think about the times you have received a qualified referral. That's a person who you want to talk to and who wants to talk to you. What percent of the time did you get a new client? If you're like most people, your answer will be a minimum 50 percent of the time, and more likely 80 to 90 percent.

Get the Referrals You Want and Boost Your Sales: Five Tips

- Define your niche and position yourself as the expert. Buyers will spend money on people with the expertise they need. Be specific.
- Network like crazy! Your goal should be to attend at least one event per week where you'll have an opportunity to meet potential clients.
- Translate what you offer into the business results your client will achieve. Be a "need to have" and not a "nice to have."
- Think of everyone you know as a potential referral source. It's not about who they are, it's about who they know. And you have no idea who they know until you ask.
- Always get an introduction. When you are introduced to a person you want to meet and who wants to meet you, your call will now be HOT!

Take the first step...

**Build a referral system that will leave your competition in the dust.
Call Joanne Black at No More Cold Calling™ NOW! 415-461-8763.**



Joanne S. Black

*Joanne Black is America's leading authority on referral selling and the author of **No More Cold Calling™ The Breakthrough System That Will Leave Your Competition in the Dust**, from Warner Business Books. She developed her No More Cold Calling practice in 1996 and now reaches thousands of people each year. Her Referral Selling System has increased the performance of many top companies including: California State Automobile Association, CCH Knowledge Point, Charles Schwab, Colliers International, KPMG, The Marlin Company, and The Mechanics Bank.*