



Michael A. Brown's

Business To Business By Phone®

2004 Holiday Bonus Edition

HOLIDAY WISHES TO ALL!

In this wonderful season, may the blessings of peace be upon you, your family, your friends, the less fortunate among us, and our brave troops overseas. May our many faiths ennoble us in loving and caring.

CALL TIMING OPTIONS WITHIN THE MARKETING-SALES MIX

- **Direct marketing > phone.** The phone call follows a mailing, e-invitation, event, or similar effort, either with or without the prospect's request for live contact.
- **Phone > web and/or fulfill > phone.** A phone call precedes other marketing elements to provoke a "yes" to consideration of the next element. Another call follows the element to hear reactions and arrange the next step.
- **Web site click-to-talk (reactive).** The phone dialogue results from a real-time request from the site visitor.
- **Web site response (proactive).** The call follows a visit, either with or without the visitor's overt request.
- **Phone > web interaction > ongoing multi-media.** The phone call initiates a real-time collaborative web site visit. More calls and/or e-mail come later, as arranged with the customer.

Best Advice: Base your call timing choice on 1) the specific account and campaign strategy, 2) the communication history with each prospect, and 3) your company's level of ability to execute the desired contact sequence. For counsel and training, call **800 373-3966** or e-mail michael@michaelabrown.net

ON NETWORKING

At a recent association meeting, a woman asked me, "What's the best way to network?" "Own and operate the network," I replied. She looked puzzled so I explained.

The main purpose of networking is to locate business opportunities or a job, both of which are perfectly valid. But seekers of business opportunities may or may not have, or even know of, opportunities to suggest to others. And job seekers seldom bring business opportunities or other jobs to the party. So being an affiliate in the network may be pleasant and reassuring but usually is not a high-payout activity.

However, if you produce and conduct the gathering, you are the *network executive!* You determine the event's strategic thrust, topical content, and invitation list. And you usually know something about the business opportunities and jobs likely to be floated. Your affiliates find value because the network is purposeful and focused rather than a social game of chance. You become known as the enabler of good things!

Of course, you need some influence and power to run a network successfully. If you don't have those things yet, work smart and hard to acquire them. Focus on and strive toward specific objectives rather than expecting a social network to anoint or promote you. While you are building your influence, attend "networking opportunities" where you can be distinctive rather than merely an exchanger of business cards. If you *are* in a position to own and operate a network, run it like a friendly business. It is fun, gratifying, and can grow nicely and profitably.

Sidebar: If you ever find yourself being "networked" overzealously, politely remind the offender that good, proper networking takes a long time. It is selling on a very personal level and it is OK to do. But networking is a terrible medium for pretense and deception because it is transparent. It is a great medium for honesty and ethics because it showcases one's true values.

JEVVER WONDER?

How did the word "syllable" get three? How did "monosyllabic" get five? Plural of "caboose?"



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LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT WEBINARS

When webinars first became practical, many business-to-business marketers embraced them as wide-dispersion, low-cost alternatives to traditional events and in-person product demonstrations. And for a time, webinars could attract targeted, qualified, attentive audiences. But now that webinars are commonplace, content and expertise alone won't ensure success. To make your webinar successful, attend to *positioning* and *timing* as well.

Positioning Marketers can position a webinar as:

- A “dog and pony show” to show the marketplace and the trade press that the company is a “player”
- An introduction and opener to get the dialogue started with prospects or customers and preview the highlights of the product or service
- A focal-point for drumming-up collective support within a large prospect organization
- A proof-of-performance closing tool for a committee of decision-makers

Make the choice *deliberately*, depending on and matched to your true intent and the business premise behind it. Then, communicate those elements to all concerned. Otherwise, would-be prospects don't participate at all, or they bail out early, or do nothing afterwards. And of course, invite only pre-qualified participants to assure the best possible ROI.

Timing Some marketers offer webinars too soon in the selling and buying cycle. Nowadays, prospects are reluctant to invest an hour (the most common webinar length) on speculation. Indeed, most prefer to begin their foray into a product or service category by researching web sites or printed materials. That's because on the web and in print, they can jump around and see exactly what they want in their own time-frame. Especially early-on, they like to “operate the remote control” themselves. But in webinars, the marketer controls the schedule, content, and flow. So it usually is better to run webinars later, not earlier, in the process.

Best Advice: Never offer a webinar simply because you can. Start by carefully elaborating the *real* reasons for wanting to do one and the desired positioning and timing. Clarify who you want to participate, and specifically what you want them to do afterwards. *Then*, build your list, invite the selected participants, and put on a great show! **800 373-3966**

ON YOUR PHONE, SOLDIER!

In army basic training, the five-foot-tall, tough-as-nails Sergeant First Class Manzanal drilled us about “preparatory commands” and “commands of execution.” Preparatory commands mean, “get ready, we are about to do something.” Commands of execution mean “do it NOW!”

There is a powerful parallel for callers and their managers. The preparatory command is “Prepare and rehearse!” The command of execution is “Call!” Not “begin to get ready to commence to start calling.” Not “re-visit the database.” Not “read your e-mail.” “**CALL!**” As in NOW, soldier!

Best Advice: Callers ... no malingering allowed. Prepare and rehearse diligently, then make your calls with vigor and intensity and without delay. It is your duty. Do it. Managers ... part of your duty is to be the sergeant and see to it that your callers call. Do your duty.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY SUGGESTION

Invite a member of the active armed services, reserves, or National Guard to your holiday dinner and festivities! It is a great and fun way to show appreciation for the difficult and important job our military people do on our behalf.

Don't know anyone in the service? Contact the public affairs office at your nearest military installation. They will invite for you and you can share your celebration with a genuine hero!