



Michael A. Brown's

Business To Business By Phone[®]

Fourth Quarter 2005 Edition

TELL ME ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS

Lead qualification calls are not about the data. The business premise for LQ calls is to find out, by asking, what the prospect is trying to accomplish that might make what you sell viable and desirable and, if there appears a matchup, to advance the process.

That is why lead qualification calls must include questions about **implications** ...

- What are the business **implications** of what the prospect is trying to accomplish?
- What are the **implications** of failure to accomplish? Of success?
- What are the **implications** if they keep doing things as they presently do?

However, I hear relatively few LQ callers ask implication questions. The three big reasons ...

- Such questions are missing from call guides.
- Callers are directed to keep calls short so they can make lots of them. (Not wise.)
- Callers do not ask because they don't know what to do with the answer. That is, they do not understand the business circumstances in which their products might be relevant. For example, what are the implications of outdated server architecture? If the prospect wins a new export order, what will that imply for production machinery requirements? What would a merger imply for a firm's accounting software?

The absence of implication questions and answers produces a "many trees but no forest" effect that can cost you a fortune in missed opportunities. Also, failing to ask about implications can make the call sound like a data collection exercise more than a meaningful dialogue about the prospect's business requirements and preferences.

Best Advice: Ask implication questions and listen carefully to the answers. Ask the prospect to elaborate as warranted and desirable ... do not rush to the next data point. Once you have the whole story, you can propose the matchup and ask about the prospect's willingness to consider your products or services, the process for doing so, the participants, budget, next step, and so on.

CAVEAT EMPTOR!

From Deloitte Consulting, reported in *CRM* magazine: "Forty four percent of respondents indicated that as a result of outsourcing (contact centers) they did not realize cost savings."

SPHERICAL ORGANIZATIONS

The earth is not flat and companies should not be flat either. The concept of the company as a *sphere* makes a lot more sense. And although it's tough to do three-dimensional modeling in .PDF, I invite you to consider this vision.

Customers are at the center of the sphere and they also surround the sphere. Marketing seeks to bring the "outsiders" to the inside. Sales handles the transition. Operations such as production, installation, customer service, technical support, etc., care for customers once they're inside the sphere.

Each of the company's functions resides on the inside surface of the sphere, in contact with the marketplace outside and equidistant from the customers inside the sphere. Therefore, departments relate not bilaterally, but *multilaterally* in terms of how they affect customers. Organizational levels are defined by their customer interactions, not by internal hierarchy.

However, *there is no matrix management!* Managers have clear responsibility for specific functions and people. As a result, the organization



Michael A. Brown's

Business To Business By Phone[®]

Fourth Quarter 2005 Edition

isn't "flat." It is shaped like, and works like, a ball rolling quickly and smartly around the marketplace.

How can we and why should we adopt the "spherical" model? We *can* do so by orienting every company function to the acquisition, servicing, and retention of customers. We *should* do so because it's profitable both short- and long-term. Indeed, many of the economic and operational problems stemming from linear two-dimensional business models go away. Plus, the inclusive sphere environment is much more pleasant and less political than rigid corporate pyramids or unmanageable "flat" wastelands.

THE MEDIUM MAY NOT BE THE MESSAGE

The medium by which a sales lead arrives at your company is interesting, but may not be very important. For example, the fact that a respondent inquires by e-mail does not, in and of itself, indicate great urgency. Conversely, slow BRC response does not necessarily de-value an opportunity. The proof is in your inquiry response call and the qualification process. Net: don't rule 'em out or in based mainly on how they arrive.

"SOLD AND HIRED!"

A phone marketing applicant has surprised and delighted a client in a creative and fun way. At exactly the right time in his interview, he reached into his attaché case and took out his own personal headset, already adjusted to work with the phones at his potential employer! He put it on and demonstrated his excellent phone techniques. He won the job!

WHAT THEY DO > WHO THEY ARE

Some years ago, a client who sold computer supplies and accessories pursued what they believed to be a great opportunity at a large GM facility near the old Denver airport.

Every day hundreds of cars were parked outside the GM building. Lots of cars must imply lots of people and lots of computers and a big need for supplies, right? Well ...

The client couldn't get to first base with the GMs. Many calls, many promotional mailings ... nothing. One night, the client's sales manager happened to sit next to a GM guy at a Colorado Rockies baseball game. They struck up a conversation and the salesman told the GM guy about his dilemma.

The automobile man replied, "Cars? We have thousands ... our facility does the emission testing in this part of the country. Employees? We have hundreds ... most are drivers or technicians. Computers? We have four and all are networked to headquarters in Detroit ... we don't do any computing on our own."

Bottom line: it's not who they are, it's what they do or don't do that makes them a viable prospect or not.

GREAT LOCALES, GREAT EVENTS!

If you are involved with sales leads, you need to attend one of this fall's *Lead Generation Summits*.

- Boston, October 24 and 25
- San Francisco, November 17 and 18

These are *terrific, substantive* conferences! Plus, you get to experience *everything* because the sessions are sequential rather than concurrent. Visit www.marketingsherpa.com for all the details and to register. Tell 'em I sent you! See you there!

PHONE PHUNNY

"Is this the pet clinic?" the caller asked. "It's Business To Business By Phone[®]," I replied. "Oh! Well, my dog doesn't know how to use the phone."