



Michael A. Brown's

Business To Business By Phone[®]

Second Quarter 1998 Edition

THANKS FOR THE GRAND DOZEN!!

On June 20, we celebrate Redwood's 12th anniversary. Thanks to each and every one of you for making it not only a reality, but fun as well. I appreciate your trust, your business, and your friendship.

NEW BUSINESS DIRECT MARKETING CONFERENCE TO DEBUT IN CHICAGO

Mark your calendars now: Nov. 1-4 at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare! I cordially invite you to join me and many of your other direct marketing favorites at this exciting new event!

Business Direct Marketing will help you take phone, mail, e-commerce, database, and integrated marketing up to the next level. Not merely a reformulation of old "consumer" stuff, *BDM* promises the freshest business-to-business thinking along with real-world techniques for bringing the strategies to life profitably.

Visit the web: bdmc.com. Brochure? Phone or e-mail and I'll send you one as soon as they're available. 800 373-3966.

FLASH FROM EUROPE: TELEMARKETING POLLUTES OFFICES!

According to *DM News International*, several overseas publishers at a recent conference criticized European phone service bureaus' high costs and poor calling results. One quoted publisher, however, offered a different viewpoint: "Where you may want to use a service bureau is in the making of programs. They already have a pool of talent and are a way you can get good results. And you don't have to *pollute* (italics added) your offices with a telemarketing department." Pollute? I can't recall a stronger verb applied to telemarketing.

More revealing in the story, and more egregious, are another publisher's comments: "We find the best time to approach people is during the day while they are still at work, as Europeans are still too polite to get rid of a telemarketer in front of someone else."

When are these publishers going to "get" that abusive, deceptive tactics are wrong on both sides of the Atlantic? It seems to me the publishers' problems are self-imposed. Their complaints ring hollow because of their inappropriate strategies and practices, not because of an inherently difficult marketplace.

Best Advice: Business or consumer, do unto your customers and prospects as you would have them do unto you.

INBOUND INQUIRY HANDLING

Always make your first qualifying question open-ended. I recommend, "Mr\Ms Prospect, of all the mail you received, of all the web sites you visited, of all the ads you read, of all the exhibits you could have stopped at, *how* did you decide to respond to ours?"

The "essay" answer to this question provokes conversation, not interrogation, and usually provides the information for at least a few data-capture fields.

SPEAKING OF DATA FIELDS

Designate a user-definable field in your database or contact management software for the *phonetic pronunciation* of each contact's name.

Because phone is an audio medium, the phonetic field lets your reps know how names *sound*, which is more important than how they



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look. And if there's any doubt, politely ask the customer to say his or her name again, and to spell it also.

Pay special attention to pronouncing names correctly. Never joke about customers' names or their origins. And if a *rep's* name is hard for customers and prospects to pronounce, consider adopting a "radio name." Example: Shevardnaze (sheh-var-NAAD'-zeh) could become Shepard.

YOU HAVE TO WRITE, TOO!

The educational sales division at one Redwood client is conducting more than 40% of all its business via e-mail. No phone. No field. Only the written word. The client predicts that e-mail sales and marketing will increase in their commercial and government sales divisions as well. The implication: reps must be able to write as well as they talk!

Best Advice: Have your reps compose their own fulfillment cover letters. Edit the letters for context, composition, syntax, grammar, spelling, and call to action. Your own writing not so hot? Find a grammatically correct colleague and learn along with your reps. Also, acquire and use a journalistic writing style guide, such as *Associated Press* or *New York Times*. Compare and contrast your reps' writing with examples in "best business marketing and sales letters" books.

FRESH RESOURCE LIST FOR DOING BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS BY PHONE[®]

- *Teleservices News:* This supplement to *DM News* covers the business issues which are receiving diminishing coverage elsewhere. A welcome addition! 212 925-7300
- *Direct:* Good features and columnists. Strong on multi-facet direct marketing. 212 683-4364

- *Sales & Marketing Management* magazine. More sales than marketing, but a "must-read." Helpful supplements on automation, demographics, compensation, etc. 800 821-6897
- *Teleprofessional* magazine: Loaded with call center technology, some phone strategies and techniques. Still worthwhile. 800 338-8307
- *Sales & Field Force Automation* magazine: Wise strategic and tactical management-level guidance, with a business (v. "techie") focus. Honest software reviews. 800 332-5264
- This newsletter! 800 373-3966
- *Direct Marketing Association.* DMA offers phone marketing and business-to-business interest groups, plus regional and national conferences. 212 768-7277

I do not recommend organizations, conferences, or publications with the word "telemarketing" in their name.

WHAT I DO

- Advise and train your marketing and sales groups to use the phone effectively to find, land, and keep customers, and grow your business.
- Favorably differentiate your calls from consumer "telemarketing" and from your competitors.
- Help you build and ramp-up your in-house phone team, or recommend the best outsourced call centers to conduct telemarketing and telesales for you
- "Fine-Tune" your phone operations, steering you away from the money-pits and toward profitable best practices.

800 373- 3966 www.michaelabrown.net