

# Sandler Brief<sup>®</sup>

Your monthly thought leadership newsletter.

VOLUME 22 – ISSUE 8

## You Don't Have to Like Prospecting... You Just Have to Do It

The salesperson who claims to “like” prospecting hasn't ever done it. How can anyone “like” a process that produces such an arena for rejection? When salespeople say they like prospecting, what they might mean is this: “I don't mind paying the price of prospecting to reach my objectives.”

Many salespeople haven't reached that stage. If you're still at the stage where prospecting means dialling a number and hoping the line is busy... don't worry. You're okay. You just haven't learned to focus on the end result. Instead, you are focused on what you have to do to get the end result.



Prospecting is simply the act of finding prospects – those people who need your product or service – while they are hiding in a sea of suspects. You must keep your focus on the goal: finding prospects. You can't let your attention become diverted by the many suspects you will encounter along the way. When you're prospecting, you're like the Coast Guard's Search and Rescue team, looking for a small raft of shipwreck survivors in a vast ocean. The work may be long and tedious, but the goal is certainly worthwhile and rewarding.

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Of course, the Coast Guard team may encounter all kinds of interesting crafts – colorful sailboats, magnificent yachts, even an ocean liner or two – in their search for the survivors' raft. That doesn't mean they call off the search!

Similarly, you will encounter many interesting suspects, but you never want to call off your search for the prospect who needs you. Keep your focus on those people who qualify as prospects. The goal is not to convert suspects to prospects, any more than it is to convert an ocean liner to a life raft. Your goal is simply to weed out the suspects who don't qualify as prospects as quickly and efficiently as possible.

You will encounter many more people who don't need your product or service (or won't admit to the need) than people who do. There will be many more people who won't want to talk with you than people who will. This is the nature of the job of selling, not something to regret.

Admittedly, reaching out to start conversations with people you don't know yet is not the most glorious of all selling activities. This may be because it takes place at the beginning of the selling cycle, with the payoff from the effort still comparatively far off in the future. However, whether it's glamorous or not, it's a strategically essential activity that gives you control over your selling efforts and adds predictability to them.

All prospecting activities are about separating prospects from suspects, nothing more and nothing less. When it's time to prospect (and it usually is), think of yourself as being like the fisherman who, upon pulling up the net, must sort through the catch and throw back all the fish that are too small. Some days, you'll throwback many small fish. Other days you'll only throw back a few. The one thing you must do, however, with a consistency that borders on obsession, is cast your net. After all, that's your job!

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