**Getting through - Warm calling  
- How to handle common obstacles in your selling**

1. **FINDING THE RIGHT CONTACT**

One of the questions I get asked all the time is “How do I find the right contact? Who is the right person for us to speak to?”. We can speak to the purchasing department, we can speak to the engineering department and we can speak to the sales department. But we should be trying to speak to as many people as we possibly can. Now we have many tools available to us that can help us find the right contact person.

So the first one would be LinkedIn. At the push of a button I can go onto LinkedIn, type in a company name and it will list all of the employees under that company. It will show you their position, their experience and will help you identify any connections to your existing customers. LinkedIn is widely used but we can’t rely on that being our only option.

In the past, we’ve got quite creative when trying to find the right person to contact and actually if you phone up companies, potential customers, and be honest, they will often give you the information you require. So for example, in the past we have phoned up companies or customers and have told them that we are new to the market, we’re updating our system and would like to know the person in charge of buying their printed circuit boards. It’s quite direct, but actually you’ll find that not many other people are doing this. Seven times out of ten, they happily give a name and on many of those occasions they will also give you a contact email address. So let’s be bold and ask the questions that we really want to ask: who are the people that buy their printed circuit boards?

So what should you do on the three other occasions when they don’t give you a name? Well then we should rely on our network. Most electronic industries are quite small. Many of the times there’s a lot of crossover between networks i.e. with people moving between companies. So if we’re struggling to identify a person to contact, now I think it’s important that we ask our network whether they know who the person is that they should contact.

1. **THE GATEKEEPER**

During this lesson, we’re going to focus on some of the challenges you may face during the warm call itself.

Once you have identified the person that you would like to contact, the next challenge you’re going to face is the gatekeeper. Now the gatekeeper is someone that refuses to put you through to the person that you need to contact. This will typically be the receptionist and the reason being is because they receive many, many cold calls a day with absolutely no solution offered. There’s no need that’s been identified, which makes it incredibly painful for people to manage these calls on a daily basis.

So I want you to remember that we are warm calling here. There’s a big difference, but unfortunately the gatekeeper cannot tell which one is a warm call and which one is a cold call. So there’s some handy tips to overcome these challenges moving forward.

The first tip is to always provide a name. If you provide a name to the gatekeeper this will automatically provide confidence that you are not a cold call. Should this approach fail, it’s important that we do not give up. Through the validation process, I would hope that we have more than one contact that we should be targeting whether that’s in purchasing, engineering, sales, technical etc. So should you hit an objection – call back and try another contact. And remember, 80% of sales are made on the fifth to twelfth contact. The soft sell is the best sell.

Tip number two is not to focus on the purchasing team. Before the purchasing team receives a project, that would have gone through technical and engineering and most of the design and stipulations have already been set out by the engineering team. And what’s incredible is very few people actually target these departments. So we’re trying to differentiate ourselves from our competition. So let’s think bigger, let’s think wider, let’s look at the technical teams, and obviously the sales teams – because you never know where the opportunity might come from.

The chances of your success are that much smaller if you’re focusing on one area. If you reach an objection there and you cannot overcome it, you’re stuck. Whereas if you are targeting multiple different avenues into this company to tell them about the solution that you have for their need, then your chances of success are that much greater.

Tip number three is to overcome the electronic gatekeeper. It’s often when you call a company that you’ll hear “Please press 1 for sales, 2 for purchasing, 3 for engineering” etc. Now everyone will fall for the same thing. Everyone will press 2 for purchasing because they believe that’s where the contact lies. In many instances there is no one at the end of the purchasing phone. It will just ring and ring and ring. The only option that is actually taken care of is sales. So if you face an electronic gatekeeper, don’t press 2 for purchasing. Anyone but purchasing, because 90% of the time the purchasing box will not be answered.

1. **OBJECTIONS**

Once you’ve got through to the person you would like to speak to, this is when the fun really starts. This is the part that we can get creative, we can start discussing the solution that we have come to present and we can discuss the need that we have identified for that particular customer. But you will always come up against objections when the customer says they are happy with their incumbent supplier.

So what should you do then? Quite simply, you should ask them why they are happy with their incumbent supplier – open questions – and this is important because this then strengthens your understanding of their need.

And for this, I’m going to take some inspiration from Steve Jobs where he stated “People don’t realize what they want until you tell them“. And the reason why I say this is because actually whilst you’re listening to why their incumbent supplier is so good you can analyze and suggest where we can add value on top of what they’re already getting. And this is something they may not have considered. And this then should lead on to further discussions about the USPs of NCAB, what we do to control our factories and what makes us unique as a company.

So when you consider, the biggest challenge you can get is when someone says they have an excellent supply chain and you can still overcome that adversity to offer them a solution that they may not be aware of – anything is possible!

So be brave, be bold, be confident and push the boundaries even when you feel that there may not be an opportunity for us. Be persistent. It may happen on the first call, it may happen on the tenth call – the soft sell is the best sell.