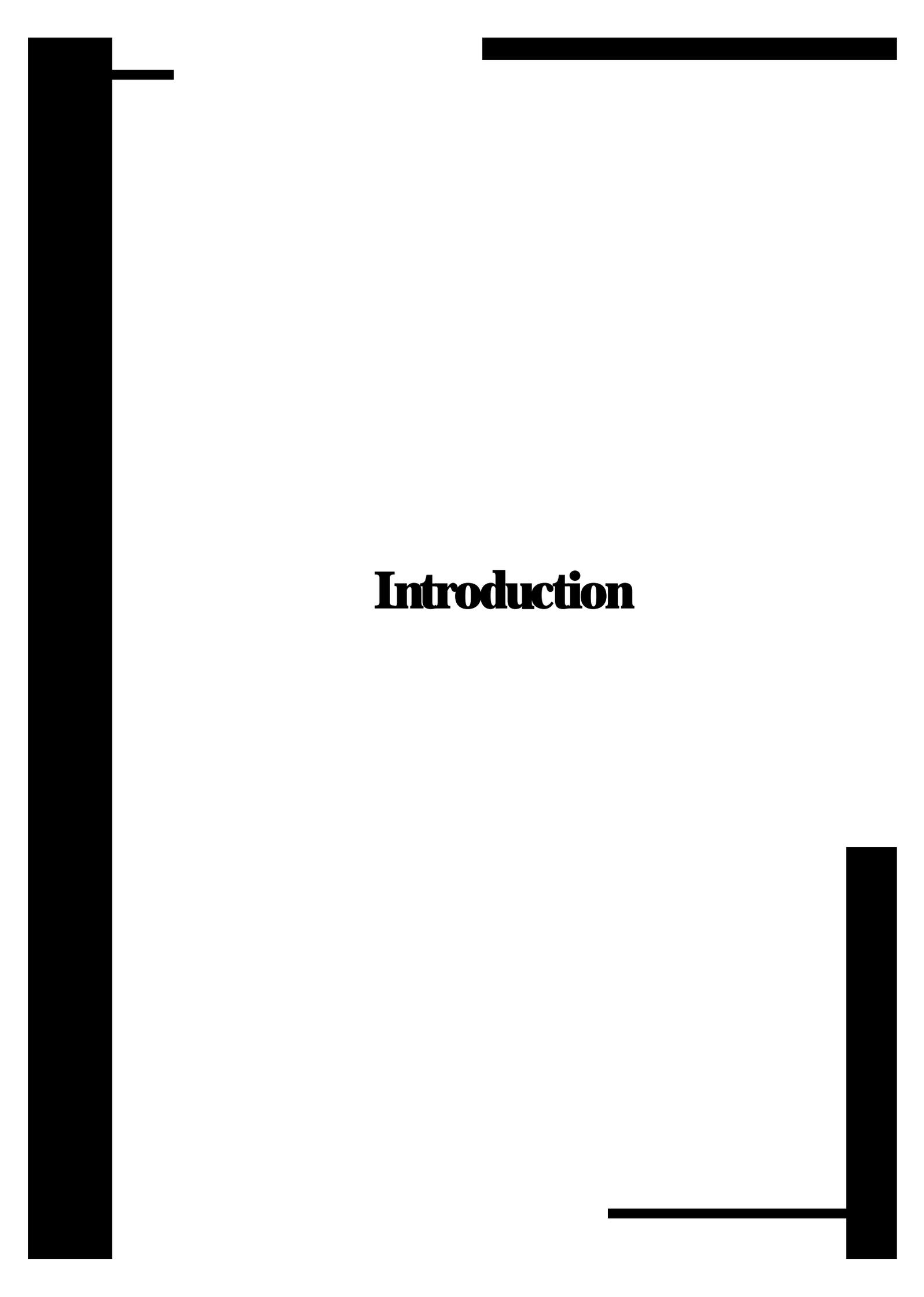


Instant Quotes



Introduction

Congratulations!!

Welcome to Instant Quotes, your do-it-yourself guide to winning more jobs, especially those where you're quoting against your competition.

Once you've been through this guide, you should know exactly how to put together quote forms and follow up scripts that beat the pants off your competitors (and anything else you've ever tried). More importantly, you'll have a new process to start testing.

This is the next step in your marketing success story. From this point on, you'll have the skills to make quoting work for you.

How To Use This Guide

After reading the introduction and background, jump straight in and start going through ‘The 5 Steps To Winning The Job’.

Each step covers an important aspect of the quoting process - these are things that you must give careful consideration to. Each step represents a cornerstone of a great process.

You might be surprised by how much this exercise reveals about your business. It may get you thinking about important issues that have never crossed your mind. If some of this information is new to you, don’t be concerned - there’s never been a better time to start seeing some real results from your quoting procedure, and your business for that matter.

Make sure you make notes in the spaces provided. When you come to write your new methods, you’ll need to refer back to these scribbles.

Section 4 contains examples of powerful quote forms, some of which may directly apply to your business.

Now, it’s time to get moving - there’s never been a better time to start using powerful quotes and reeling in more sales.

Important: A Note About Testing & Measuring

The greatest business people and marketers are not necessarily the smartest or most innovative. Most simply understand the concept of testing and measuring.

When you are testing and measuring, there is no failure (except the failure to record your results and analyse them). Every step brings you one step closer to the right formula, and the right approach.

If you approach your marketing expecting everything to work first time, you'll be bitter and twisted when you discover it doesn't. You may give up before you should.

Remember this: marketing has certain rules, but it's still largely trial and error. You give it your best guess, then find out for sure.

It's essential that you meticulously record every result. It's extra work, but you'll be glad when you have a marketing strategy which you know will produce results. That confidence only comes from testing and measuring.

The Nature Of Quoting

What is a successful quoting procedure?

Some business people tend to be unrealistic about the response to their quotes. Whilst some people expect a response rate of 90%, the reality is that even the best quotes usually only return half that (of course it depends on the industry, and the number of competing companies).

No matter how good you are as an organisation, or how good the deal you're offering is, there are some factors you can't account for - personal relationships with other suppliers, cash problems etc.

So is a 40% conversion rate unsuccessful?

Not usually. Basically any quoting process that pays for itself can be considered successful. Here's a more in-depth guide judging the success of your quoting procedure ...

1. Work out your costs. This includes the cost of advertising, staff, phone calls, offers etc.

2. Know your margins. You need to know the net profit you make from anyone who buys your product or service. By understanding how much you actually make from each sale, you'll be able to work out how the % response required to cover your costs and make a profit.

3. Lifetime Value. Don't view each new customer as a once-off sale. Depending on the industry, you may lose money on the first sale to a new client. The average business will need to sell to a client 2.5 times before it begins to make a profit from them. Of course, if you're selling larger items, it can be a different story.

Response rate is largely irrelevant - in some cases, a 1% response rate is something to be proud of. Here's an example that shows you why. Let's say you run an ad that costs \$400 - it gets you 100 calls. To sell to those 100 people, it costs you \$200 in phone calls and letters. Let's also imagine that the product you're selling is priced at \$23,000, with a margin of 40%. You'd have to be pretty happy to convert 1% of those 100 calls, wouldn't you. That means, for every \$9200 you earn, you have to spend \$600. That's a pretty good return on investment. At the end of the day, that's all that matters.

What makes a successful quote process?

The actual specifics of how to write a great quote process are covered in the next section, but let's get a broad overview now.

The most important thing to consider is this: you are not giving quotes, although that's what people will ask for and expect. You are providing a Plan of Action (nothing to do with Action International) - an outline of what will be happening from here on in. The revised title assumes that there will be action, and that's a positive assumption to make.

Once you understand that, then it's ok to move on. To start winning more jobs, you need to think outside the box - you must do things differently if you want to achieve better results.

Now, it's critical you take care of the big issues before worrying about little things like 'what's the best word to use?'. Here are the 4 main things to consider when planning a quoting process ...

Targeted Lists ... You don't want to quote to anyone who would not be interested in your product or service. This may sound obvious, but you'll save a lot of time if you qualify your prospects better.

Process ... You need to plan your process. It's unlikely you'll sell large expensive items in one step, and you're really kidding yourself if you can't close a \$500 sale in two steps or less. You may need to add an extra step to get better qualified leads, or more leads, an extra phone call to make sure you close a couple more.

Urgency ... People can put off buying forever - if you don't give them a reason to act now, your quote will be unlikely to work.

You-Focus ... Your process must be focused on the customer. Forget about what you can do - think about what they want and how you can provide it. Be realistic - they want high quality, a great deal, good service, someone who takes an interest in what they want, something customised and a whole bunch of little things you'll need to find out during the process. Don't be pig-headed - find out what they want then do it (assuming it's reasonable).

A successful quoting process is based on a successful idea. It doesn't matter which way you try to sell something that is uninteresting, unappealing and un-affordable - it'll still sound like rubbish. Likewise, if you've got a great offer and product, and you've really targeted the market, there's not much you can do to go wrong.

Give some thought to the overall picture first - is what you're offering really worth the trouble of marketing? Perhaps you might have to face the hard reality that the reason your business is not succeeding is simple - it's a bad business.

Remember, if your business seems impossible to market, perhaps it is. By the same token, you never know until you try.

The 5 Steps To Winning The Job

1. Who (Are Your Target Market)?

Before you do anything, you need to identify exactly who it is you're trying to sell to. Precisely who is your target market?

A failure to answer this question will definitely lead to a poor conversion rate. Imagine a company who sells in-ground swimming pools quoting to someone renting in a block of high-rise rental apartments. You need to know who your potential customers are before using your script.

Knowing your target market will also enable you to speak in a way that your prospect will relate to. Using terms and phrases that are commonly used by your prospects will greatly increase the effectiveness of your Plan Of Action.

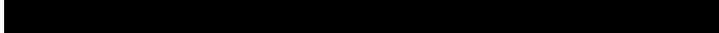
So let's get specific - who are the people most likely to be interested in your product or service. Here are some guidelines ...

Age: How old are they? Don't just say 'all ages' or 'a variety'. We want to create a mental picture of your average customer. Think of an age that symbolises most of your customers.

Sex: Are they male or female? 'Half and half' is too broad. Practically every business is split one way or the other. Give it some real thought - which gender does business with you currently, and more importantly, what role do they play? Are they the influencer, information gatherer or decision maker. Often, you'll have an information gatherer and influencer (stereotypically a wife) and a decision maker (even more stereotypically, the husband). Of course, things are often different these days.

Income: How much do they make? Do they earn a great living, meaning that quality is the big issue, or are they scraping for every dollar, always looking for deal. It's essential that you find this out.

Where do they live: Are they local, or do they come from miles around to deal with you? This will dictate how you communicate with them.



Education: How do they speak - what do they read? It's important to speak in the way they do. If you quote to a bunch of bricklayers sounding super officious and high-falutin, they will wonder what planet you're from. You need to tailor your process to suit.

2. How (Is Your Process Structured)?

Beyond anything, you need to develop a system for winning the job. You need to go through a set procedure.

If you're just freestyling every time, you'll quickly fall into a trap. You'll never be able to employ anyone to take your place, unless they know everything you know and can do everything you can do (good luck!!).

You also need to test and measure your system until you're 100% confident it works, and you can predict the results for every month. When you can say 'we'll get \$54,000 worth of sales this month - I can afford that new BMW', you've made it. That's the real value of testing and measuring.

Basically, your process can be made up of the following elements ...

Lead Generation: Either Yellow Pages, advertising, personal contact, referral or something else entirely. You need to test and measure this aspect also - you need to be certain you'll get a reasonable number of leads per month from each marketing strategy. Of course, you should be simultaneously testing a variety of strategies. The other consideration is targeting and qualification - you need to be sure that you're getting calls from people who have some chance of buying.

Information: This is the standard 'ring for a brochure' part, although there are more creative ways to go about it - info booklet (eg - 7 ways to cut your pool running costs, 5 things you must know before choosing a computer programmer for your new software), free tape or video, free computer analysis of your business etc. This step can work well - people like doing things that involve low commitment, and ringing for a brochure is the most minimal commitment you'll find. It's also good for you - you get people putting their hand up to say 'yes, I'm kind of interested in that type of thing'. You then have their details and can follow them up later.

Initial Consultation: This is where you actually have contact with the customer, discuss their situation and how you can meet their needs. It's also your chance to show how nice you are - people tend to deal with people they like. Sometimes, businesses with higher prices will win

the job because they seem 'friendly'. This is especially true when dealing with women customers. Although men are also interested in being treated well, many women can quickly develop a strong aversion to people who they perceive to be sleazy, or rip-off merchants. By the end of the consultation, you need to walk away with a clear picture of what the customer wants and the small issues. You may offer the price then and there, and attempt to close immediately. This is covered in more detail later.

Plan Of Action: This is the actual quote form that you give or mail to the customer. There are ways to do this differently. Why not throw in a mention of your guarantee, and the 7 reasons to deal with you. You'll find a more detailed explanation later.

Follow Up Phone Call/Letter: It's absolutely essential that you have a follow-up process if you are mailing out a Plan Of Action. If you don't, you can only blame yourself for a poor conversion rate.

Close/Final Interaction: This is the crux, although it shouldn't really be. If you've done everything else right up to this point, it should be as simple as 'well, it's clear that this is the right thing for you - how will you be paying for it?'. You should always ask an open ended question such as 'which credit card would you like to put that on?'. This isn't being pushy - if you've asked the right question up until now, and answered all objections, there's no reason why the person will say no - you should assume they are ready to buy.

3. What (Do Have To Offer To Your Prospects)?

Before even attempting to answer the above question, you first need to understand your customers. If you understand the needs, wants and position of your customer, you can sell almost anything to them.

It's all about taking them from Point A (not knowing if they want to deal with you) right through to Point B (where they fork over the cash).

First, you need to establish Point A. What do they already know about you? How do they feel about you? How do they feel about your product or service generally? How often have they been harassed by people in your industry? Do they want to spend a lot of time or just get it over with? What objections do they have? What else is important?

Put all this together and you will have an understanding of what the person feels and wants. Of course, everyone's different, but you would have noticed certain patterns - common things that most people seem to want.

It's important that you put yourself in the shoes of the customer - don't think of them as someone totally different to you. Think about what you do when shopping ... you probably want exactly what you want, and you want it for less than you thought you had to pay for it. It's natural - people want the most they can get for the least they have to give. That's fine - it's human nature.

So does that mean you have to give away your goods and services for under cost just to make a sale?

No, but you have to be SEEN to be providing a good deal. People want to feel that they've 'won'. This is especially true with men - they seem to want to feel that they've beaten the dealer, and scored an amazing deal. For proof

of this, just watch a normal man shopping for a car - unless they feel they've screwed the dealer into the ground, they're not interested.

As a business owner, that can be pretty disheartening - but be realistic, isn't that what you do to other businesses?

More than the desire to get a great deal, people don't want to feel they're being ripped off. That's part of the reason people want to get a better deal - they're always so certain you're making a killing out of the sale, and why should you get all that money?

Beyond all this, people want something else - the benefit of whatever they are buying. For example, when buying a car, people want transport, reliability, power, prestige, control. These aren't features of the car - these are the actual benefits of owning the car. People aren't buying a car - they're buying transport. And in the case of a BMW or Ferrari, they're buying fast, hot looking transport.

Thinking about that, it's clear that people will pay more if you give them more benefit. If your car looks better, and will be more reliable, you can probably charge more.

This is the whole price-issue in a nutshell - if you find out what the customer's main motivation is, then fulfil it to the max, people will pay more. If you fulfil them in this way, then sweeten the deal, you'll win the job almost every time.

So how do you find out what their main motivation is?

Simple - you need to talk to the customer and ask a lot of questions. It's always amazing to see businesses who give quotes without really asking any questions - it's not surprising they don't win many jobs.

The best question to ask is 'Ok, what's most important to you in this buying decision' or 'What are you looking for most in your new [x]' or 'What are you going to use this [x] for?'.

Once they've answered, repeat the answer back to them 'Right, so beyond everything else, you're looking for an [x] that will do [y]?'. If they answer positively, you've just been given the game plan. Gear your process towards fulfilling this desire. Refer back to it at all stages, and dispel all competitors by suggesting that their alternative will not do the job as well. Of course, this has to be TRUE - if you honestly can't satisfy the customer as well as a competitor, you may be wasting your time even quoting to them.

If it turns out that you can help the customer, you need to work out how you're going to encourage them to buy from you ... and soon.

It pays to remember that simply asking people to act now (or for that matter, telling them to act now) is rarely enough. You need to give them a good reason why NOW is the time to do something.

If the person has come to you through the Yellow Pages or another lead generation method, this won't be such a challenge, as they've put their hand up to say 'I'm ready to buy'.

Even so, most purchases (especially those of a luxury nature) can be delayed forever. It's one thing to fulfil the desires, but it's another to actually get people to part with their cash. In many cases, your biggest competitor is Non-Action ... when people decide not to go ahead.

Every month, customers have to decide what to spend their money on. It could very realistically be a decision between buying a patio from you, or clearing their dangerously high credit card debt.

Every buyer has priorities. Of course, there are ways to re-arrange these priorities.

If you offer a special deal on the patio, the customer may think “well, the bank will let me off for a bit longer - but I won’t get this deal on this patio again”.

The question is, how do you offer a great deal without slicing your profit margin drastically. There’s a couple of ways. First, make sure you are selling products or services with a high margin. If you have the option of gearing your business towards higher margin items, do so - it’s much easier to come up with great deals.

If you can’t do that, you need to find items or services that are highly valued by the customer, yet have a low cost. Extra service is an old standby, information booklets are another one. A great price is common - although it can be a double edged sword - people will often ask your competitors to match it (and as you know, they probably will).

There are two ways to get out of the price-game ... first, offer a deal that the other guys can’t offer. For example, if you sell computer systems, offer a software program that you’ve designed ... free. Second, and more reliably, give the customer more of what they want. Simply be everything they want, then offer them a reasonable deal - the aim is for them to say ‘well, these guys are a little bit more expensive, but they do [x], [y] and [z]’.

Of course, you can create urgency by placing a limitation on the availability. You could say ‘these will be only available for the next 2 weeks, then the new model is coming in’ or ‘the prices are about to rise’, or ‘we’ll only be in town for 4 days’. Naturally, being truthful is better - people are excellent at picking up insincerity.

4. How (Do You Win The Job)?

From the last few sections, something should be abundantly clear - if you want to win the job, you must give people what they want and make them feel like they're getting a great deal.

If you just offer a price, people will find someone to beat it. If you offer no reasons to buy from you, people won't. Let's be real - it can be tough.

There are people out there willing to sell stuff under cost just to get cashflow. These same people close up shop three months later, but in the short term, they can create havoc for you.

So what can you do to ensure you win the job, even when people are undercutting you in such a drastic way?

First, let's examine your process. Are you giving people too little information, or too much? If your people aren't sure whether they want to deal with you, you haven't given them enough. If you call them and they say 'I've already bought from someone else, you've probably missed the boat, by giving them too much info.

Here's a guide to 3 different processes - long, medium and short. You may see some steps that you are missing, or perhaps the shorter process will show you that your sale could be made quicker and easier.

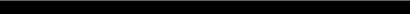
Short Process

Lead Generation: Either Yellow Pages, advertising, personal contact, referral or something else entirely. You need to test and measure this aspect also - you need to be certain you'll get a reasonable number of leads per month from each marketing strategy. Of course, you should be simultaneously testing a variety of strategies. The other consideration is targeting and qualification - you need to be sure that you're getting calls from people who have some chance of buying.

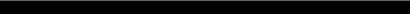
Take Phone Enquiry: Include a greeting that announces your name, your company and thanks the prospect for calling. Say 'Hi, thanks for calling [business name], this is [your full name]. Slow down with this part - if you seem to be rushing through, it'll set the tone for the entire call.

Get Into The Questions: Whatever they ask first, make sure you say 'Thanks for your call. Just so I can help you best, is it ok if I ask you a couple of questions?'. Don't answer their initial question under any circumstances.

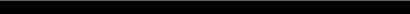
Ask Open-Ended Questions: Without doubt, this is the most important thing anyone could ever learn about scripts. You must ask questions that can't be answered with a 'yes' or 'no' - questions the prospect has to think about and get involved in. It's a good idea to ask questions that encourage the prospect to do the selling for you. Ask them specifically what they need, who else they've seen, how much they think is a fair price to pay etc. Then tell them about how good you are, then ask 'And what benefits can you see in having a business that will do all that for you?'. It's a tricky way to get them to say 'yes, it would be a good idea to deal with you'.

Get Agreement: At some point, you must get some feedback from the prospect. The best way is to ask a rhetorical question, and get them to answer 'yes'. This is the one time you break the rules. You say 'So it sounds like you'd benefit by [benefit 1], [benefit 2] and [benefit 3] - that sounds pretty irresistible doesn't it?'. Or, as a softer approach, what about 'you can see the sense in what I'm saying, can't you?'.


Deal With Objections: To get into this part, ask the question 'So you're ok to go ahead with the proposal I've suggested'. You might get lucky. More likely, the prospect will probably raise an objection or 4. That's fine - as long as you know how to deal with them. The first thing you say is 'Can you elaborate on that for me?'. Get them



talking a bit more. Then say something like 'now, assuming I could show you a way to get around that problem, would you be interested in that information?'. Then answer the objection, but do it empathetically - that is, say 'I understand that, and I used to think that way myself, but then I discovered', or alternately 'yes, I know what you mean. Someone else said that to me recently, but here's something that will surprise you'. Then, it's really up to you - you need to determine the major objections and a way to acknowledge them then turn them around. If someone says 'I haven't got the money', you could say 'I understand that - it's usually short this time of year. But there's some good news - you can afford this. We have lay-by, payment plans and interest free finance for 6 months. We also accept all major credit cards. Which of those would be most suitable for you?'. If they say 'I don't have time', you could say 'yes, it's hard to find time when life is so busy - but you know what, it only takes 1 hour a week, and the benefits are massive. Wouldn't you say it's worth investing 1 hour in yourself, you know - doing something just for YOU?'. Of course, there'll be times when you run into objections that can't be answered. If you offer your best payment plans and they still can't afford it, then forget it. If they've just bought a competitors brand and would never change, forget it too. These people aren't in your target market, and should be scratched from your list. Remember, you can't sell to people who don't have the means to buy, and no interest in doing so.

Close & Take The Next Step ... If you've got this far, you should be able to assume that the person is interested in buying. If you have agreement and you've dealt with their objections, it's time to nail it down. The first thing to do is trial an assumptive close. That is, 'We'll make an appointment now - would you prefer tomorrow or Thursday?' or 'Ok, which credit card is it easiest to process that on?'. Something else to consider is making the decision for them. Instead of saying 'Would you like to book in for your service now?', why not say 'I'd like to book you in for your service now - would today or tomorrow suit you better?'. If your close fails and they say 'no, not yet' or 'I don't want to', say 'ok, I thought you were ready to get the process under way. Level with me - what's preventing you making this decision right now?' or alternately 'what is it that you're not telling me?'.


Long Process

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Send Information: This is the standard 'send them a brochure' part, although there are more creative ways to go about it - info booklet (eg - 7 ways to cut your pool running costs, 5 things you must know before choosing a computer programmer for your new software), free tape or video, free computer analysis of your business etc. This step can work well - people like doing things that involve low commitment, and ringing for a brochure is the most minimal commitment you'll find. It's also good for you - you get people putting their hand up to say 'yes, I'm kind of interested in that type of thing'. You then have their details and can follow them up later.

Follow-Up Information: Call up and ask for the chance to see them. Firstly, ask about the information - what did they like about it? If they haven't gone through it, outline the main parts, then ask them what benefits they see in what you've just said. Keep asking questions that have a 'yes' answer, such as 'it would be a good idea to see how much that is, don't you agree?'. Once you have basic agreement, then lead into 'look, I'm out that way next week, I could come out Thursday night or Friday morning - which of those suits you better?'. Make a time and write it in your appointment book.

Initial Consultation: This is where you actually have contact with the customer, discuss their situation and how you can meet their needs. It's also your chance to show how nice you are - people tend to deal with people they like. Sometimes, businesses with higher prices will win the job because they seem 'friendly'. This is especially true when dealing with women customers. Although men are also interested in being treated well, many women can quickly develop a strong aversion to people who they perceive to be sleazy, or rip-off merchants. By the end of the consultation, you need to walk away with a clear picture of what the customer wants and the small issues.

Plan Of Action: This is the actual quote form that you give or mail to the customer. There are ways to do this differently. Why not throw in a mention of your guarantee, and the 7 reasons to deal with you. You'll find a more detailed explanation later.

Phone The Customer: It's absolutely essential that you have a follow-up process if you are mailing out a Plan Of Action. If you don't, you can only blame yourself for a poor conversion rate.

Outline Reason For Call: You must explain why you are calling, but always ask for permission. Say 'is it ok if I outline the reason for my call today?' then do exactly that. Explain the process you'll be running through, then ask if it's ok if 'we go through the call that way'. People tend to be a bit bamboozled by this approach, but that's a good thing. You want to stand out, and say 'this is something different - I'm a professional'.

Get Agreement: At some point, you must get some feedback from the prospect. The best way is to ask a rhetorical question, and get them to answer 'yes'. This is the one time you break the rules. You say 'So it sounds like you'd benefit by [benefit 1], [benefit 2] and [benefit 3] - that sounds pretty irresistible doesn't it?'. Or, as a softer approach, what about 'you can see the sense in what I'm saying, can't you?'.

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Close & Take The Next Step ... If you've got this far, you should be able to assume that the person is interested in buying. If you have agreement and you've dealt with their objections, it's time to nail it down. The first thing to do is trial an assumptive close. That is, 'We'll make an appointment now - would you prefer tomorrow or Thursday?' or 'Ok, which credit card is it easiest to process that on?'. Something else to consider is making the decision for them. Instead of saying 'Would you like to book in for your service now?', why not say 'I'd like to book you in for your service now - would today or tomorrow suit you better?'. If your close fails and they say 'no, not yet' or 'I don't want to', say 'ok, I thought you were ready to get the process under way. Level with me - what's preventing you

making this decision right now?' or alternately 'what is it that you're not telling me?'

Close/Final Interaction: This is the crux, although it shouldn't really be. If you've done everything else right up to this point, it should as simple as 'ok, so have you got the cheque book with you? Great - let's do the deal. If you haven't developed the relationship to the point where you can say that, you need to ask why. You've spoken to the customer 5 or 6 times - they should be quite friendly by this point. The other thing to consider is that people will feel a weight lifting off their shoulders when they decide to go with you ... the decision is over.

Medium Process

Lead Generation: Either Yellow Pages, advertising, personal contact, referral or something else entirely. You need to test and measure this aspect also - you need to be certain you'll get a reasonable number of leads per month from each marketing strategy. Of course, you should be simultaneously testing a variety of strategies. The other consideration is targeting and qualification - you need to be sure that you're getting calls from people who have some chance of buying.

Take Phone Enquiry: Include a greeting that announces your name, your company thanks the prospect for calling. Say 'Hi, thanks for calling [business name], this is [your full name]. Slow down with this part - if you seem to be rushing through, it'll set the tone for the entire call.

Get Into The Questions: Whatever they ask first, make sure you say 'Thanks for your call. Just so I can help you best, is it ok if I ask you a couple of questions?'. Don't answer their initial question under any circumstances.

Ask Open-Ended Questions: Without doubt, this is the most important thing anyone could ever learn about scripts. You must ask questions that can't be answered with a 'yes' or 'no' - questions the prospect has to think about and get involved in. It's a good idea to ask questions that encourage the prospect to do the selling for you. Ask them specifically what they need, who else they've seen, how much they think is a fair price to pay etc. Then tell them about how good you are, then ask 'And what benefits can you see in having a business that will do all that for you?'. It's a tricky way to get them to say 'yes, it would be a good idea to deal with you'.

Make Appointment Time: Simply say, 'ok it sounds like we can help you - I can come out and see you on Thursday night or Friday morning, which of those suits you best?'.

Initial Consultation: This is where you actually have contact with the customer, discuss their situation and how you can meet their needs. It's also your chance to show how nice you are - people tend to deal with people they like. Sometimes, businesses with higher prices will win the job because they seem 'friendly'. This is especially true when dealing with women customers. Although men are also interested in being treated well, many women can quickly develop a strong aversion to people who they perceive to be sleazy, or rip-off merchants. By the end of the consultation, you need to walk away with a clear picture of what the customer wants and the small issues.

Plan Of Action: This is the actual quote form that you give or mail to the customer. There are ways to do this differently. Why not throw in a mention of your guarantee, and the 7 reasons to deal with you. You'll find a more detailed explanation later.

Make 2nd Appointment: Simply call and say 'I'm out that way tomorrow, I'll stop by and run over the proposal with you - would you prefer 2pm or 4pm?'

Deal With Objections: To get into this part, ask the question 'So you're ok to go ahead with the proposal we discussed'. You might get lucky. More likely, the prospect will probably raise an objection or 4. That's fine - as long as you know how to deal with them. The first thing you say is 'Can you elaborate on that for me?'. Get them talking a bit more. Then say something like 'now, assuming I could show you a way to get around that problem, would you be interested in that information?'. Then answer the objection, but do it empathetically - that is, say 'I understand that, and I used to think that way myself, but then I discovered', or alternately 'yes, I know what you mean. Someone else said that to me recently, but here's something that will surprise you'. Then, it's really up to you - you need to determine the major objections and a way to acknowledge them then turn them around. If someone says 'I haven't got the money', you could say 'I understand that - it's usually short this time of year. But there's some good news - you can afford this. We have lay-by, payment plans and interest free finance for 6 months. We also accept all major credit cards. Which of those would be most suitable for you?'. If they say 'I don't have time', you could say 'yes, it's hard to find time when life is so busy - but you know what, it only takes 1 hour a week, and the benefits are massive. Wouldn't you say it's worth investing 1 hour in yourself, you know - doing something just for YOU?'. Of course, there'll be times when you run into objections that can't be answered. If you offer your best payment plans and they still can't afford it, then forget it. If they've just bought a competitors brand and would never change, forget it too. These people aren't in your target market, and should be scratched from your list. Remember, you can't sell to people who don't have the means to buy, and no interest in doing so.

Close/Final Interaction: This is the crux, although it shouldn't really be. If you've done everything else right up to this point, it should as simple as 'ok, so have you got the cheque book with you? Great - let's do the deal. If you haven't developed the relationship to the point where you

can say that, you need to ask why. You've spoken to the customer 5 or 6 times - they should be quite friendly by this point. The other thing to consider is that people will feel a weight lifting off their shoulder when they decide to go with you ... the decision is over.

Once you've got your process organised, you need to create systems for each part. That is - how do you answer the phone EVERY time, what does your quote form look like, what words to close the sale.

Here are some guidelines for the common parts of the process...

First Interaction: Create a system that ensures that people will know you are friendly and professional. For example, have a standard joke that you always use, like 'So you're interested in a new car - I guess the hubby wants something red, huh?'.

A word of advice - don't use this line under any circumstances. Come up with something that's actually amusing. Also, make sure you listen to the person. Ask them lots of questions, and really take an interest. Pretend you're a friend trying to help them. This may sound strange, but give it a go - you may be surprised.

Quote Form/Plan of Action: There's no rule that says that every quote form must look exactly the same - in fact, there's no rules at all. Your quote can look like anything at all, and you can include anything you like. It's mystifying why businesses don't do most of their advertising on their quote forms - this is the place where people actually make the decision.

There's no reason not to put something like 'Even if you've found someone who'll do it cheaper, here are 7 reasons to go with us' or what about 'If you're not sure whether you should buy from us, here are 3 facts that will help you decide'.

Remember, if someone else is doing a better deal with a better product and a stronger guarantee, you're not going to win the job. You can simply forget it - don't even worry about what your quote form looks like, go back to the drawing board on your business.

And here's something that's essential for small businesses - people will NOT deal with you just because you're local and small. These days, people prefer big companies - they have a security that a small business can't offer. If you want people to deal with you, you'll have to do better than saying 'we're local and will give better service'. You have to STAND OUT!!

There are a couple of tricks you can use to win the job. These are 'out of the box' ideas that break the mould and can truly get you out of the price game.

One idea is the 'two-deal' approach. That is, you offer the customer the choice of two deals - the first is high priced and full-featured. It's still good value, but it's definitely not for a pensioner. The second offer is cheaper and more basic. In many ways, this can double your chances of winning the job - it's almost like setting yourself as two businesses. Make sure each deal fits with the customer's needs.

Another approach is the 'no-price' approach. This is particularly cheeky. You offer to mail the customer a quote. Your quote form contains no price - only an outline of your proposal and the reasons why people should deal with you. You explain the absence of the price with this: 'I want you to have it all - the best price and the best quality. That's why I'm not going to give you a price yet. I'll phone in two days to find out what other prices you've received, then offer you something just as good'.

People sometimes worry about whether they have the ability to write anything beyond the normal quote form. It might sound funny, but most people won't even know if you're using proper English or not. People probably won't avoid buying from you because you can't spell quixotic, superfluous or rhetorical.

As long as your message is clear, quick and targeted well, your Plan Of Action will work. It's really like serving food - if you are serving a delicious

meal, it'll taste just as good delivered on paper plates as on your best silver. People may prefer it on the silver, but if you're serving to people hungry for what you've cooked, they'll eat anyway.

There is only one sin you don't want to commit - getting off the point, or rambling too long. If every word and every sentence says something important to the sale, fine. If your letter is full of guff, people will lose interest very quickly.

To see examples of a couple of powerful Plans Of Action, refer to the 'Examples' section - you'll notice the language is very simple and the ideas quite basic. You should be able to adapt these to your own business.

Of course, there's no need to send out a Plan Of Action at all.

Taking a different tack entirely, you could offer to come out and see the customer again, under the pretense that you 'have an idea of the price, but just need to finalise a couple of things'. When you get there, you can build more relationship. Just casually ask 'so what's your best deal so far?'. Sit down and get to the bottom of what they want, then do the deal on the spot.

Closing The Sale: This is where so many people fall down. The main reason is that they don't ask for the sale, or they don't ask in the right way. They keep getting the 'I'll think about it' or 'I'll call you back'.

The question is, what do they need to think about? If you've answered every objection, why aren't they ready to buy? You need to ask more questions 'ok, I thought you were pretty positive about the proposal, what is it that's preventing you from making this decision?' or 'you seem unsure about it - what don't you like about our proposal?'. Whatever they say, show them a way around it, then say 'how does that fit with what you have in mind?'.


Alternately, you can cut right to the chase and say ‘what do I have to offer you to win your business today?’. Or why not say ‘Look, I really want to do this deal with you - give me some guidance, what else do you want?’.

Once you’ve dealt with the objections, you can then proceed to the final question - always use an assumptive close. Here are some good examples ... ‘So which credit card is it easiest to process that on?’, ‘Would you like to pay that off over 6 months or will you pay in full today?’ and ‘Ok, I’ll get that out to you today, what’s the best address to deliver it to?’.

Always assume that they’ve decided, and you’re now just clarifying the details. If you’ve been through the whole process successfully, this should be easy to do.

5. What Else (Do You Need To Think About)?

Use this section as a final checklist - once you're happy with script, run through and make sure you're ready to get started. Here are a few things you may not have thought of ...

Staff Training: Do your staff fully understand the new process? It's important that they understand the vital role they are to play in this strategy. If your new customers come in and find your staff are uninterested in giving them service, the exercise will be a waste of time. Your staff also need to be shown how to use the scripts and Plan of Action, and they need LOTS of practice. It'll represent a new way of going about it, so give them time to adjust.

Check Stock and Staff Levels: It's unlikely your new process will make hundreds and hundreds of extra sales all at once (very few actually do), but you need to be prepared for a sizeable response. There would be nothing worse than having a rush of new sales only to find you have no stock or are too busy to fill the orders.

Examples

RE: Your new home, 22 Watford St

Dear [name],

I thought I'd mail you a couple of tea bags and a muffin with this letter. Here's why - who you build with is a serious decision, and one worth considering for the few brief moments it takes to enjoy a tea break.

So put the kettle on, and think seriously about what you want from your builder.

Before going into that, I'll get the financial details out of the way - to build the home we discussed, the investment is \$229,748 (you'll find the precise details on the bottom of page 2).

Whilst 'what's the price?' is an important question, here are a few others worth asking ...

- 1) Does your builder offer a guarantee on completion time, and offer to pay your rent for every week the project runs overtime?
- 2) Does your builder promise that every aspect of the work will represent quality workmanship, and offer to fix any problems within 24 hours at no charge?
- 3) Is your builder flexible enough to meet your every need, and willing to alter the design as many times as it takes for you to be absolutely thrilled with the design?
- 4) Can your builder offer over 100 references from delighted past clients?
- 5) Is your builder registered with the Master Builders Association, and do they use only accredited tradesman to ensure unquestioned quality?

Of course, I wouldn't be leading you down this path, if Contract Construction didn't fulfil all of the criteria above.

We aim to be one step above the normal builder. Our designs are built with YOU in mind. The same applies to the way we work - we do everything in our power to ensure that your home is ready on time, and we do everything to ensure that you're completely happy with it.

You'll also be constantly updated on the progress of your home, and are welcome to visit the construction at any time. The foreman will explain exactly what's going on, and why.

It means that the home you envisage is the home you move in to.

I'll phone you direct within the next 3 days to answer any questions you have. We'll discuss where you're up to in the decision making process, and take it from there.

I look forward to speaking with you soon,

Peter van Eekelen

Contract Constructions

PS The price quote is for the design you have identified as most ideal. If this is within your budget, I am pleased to say we have the staff and resources to start work immediately. If not, I'd like the opportunity to design something more affordable for you.

The 4 most important reasons you should choose Abetta Carpet (the price is only #3) ...

Hi there ...

Before I run through the 4 reasons in more depth, let me explain what this is all about ...

I've noticed that other carpet suppliers tend to just do a 'quote' - that is, they give you a price and that's all ... as if price is the only thing worth considering when buying carpet.

If all carpet was the same, that'd be true.

In reality, there's massive differences - things that matter ... like how the carpet feels under your feet, whether it stains, how well it's been stitched, if it's resistant to pests and critically, how many years it will last you.

Not to mention the important differences between carpet stores - like whether they use qualified and experienced tradespeople to lay your carpet, whether they guarantee to lay on the date and at the time they promise, whether they offer an iron-clad warranty and so on.

In the end, it's worth the extra 5 minutes to consider more than the price. After all, this is carpet that you'll probably be living with for the next 5 years and beyond.

With that in mind, sit down with a cuppa (I've included a couple of teabags for you and [wife's name]) and examine the 4 most important reasons to deal with Abetta ...

1. Abetta offer an unbeatable 3 point guarantee ... first, all carpet comes with a 5 year warranty. Second, our workmanship is guaranteed for a lifetime. Third, we promise you the very best service and advice.

2. Your carpet is laid in less than 8 hours ... meaning everything's completed in one day. On top of that, it's ready to walk on immediately.

3. Your investment is just _____, complete ... this includes everything we discussed, _____ metres of _____ carpet, delivered, laid and guaranteed.

4. We deliver your carpet FREE and employ experienced, qualified and dedicated layers to do the job ... no 'backyard boys' to do a half-hearted job - Abetta ensure that your carpet is laid perfectly, and that everything fits immaculately.

Obviously, you'll need some time to think it over - I don't want you to rush ... this is a major purchase, and it requires the right amount of thought.

Thanks for the opportunity, and I look forward to a long and happy association,

Eliseo Censori

Abetta Carpets

PS You'll notice I've included a small gift pack - hope you appreciate it. Along with the tea-bags, you should find a small bottle of spot cleaner, a box of chocolates and a gift voucher towards your next carpet clean. These goodies are yours to keep.

A warning from Pedders Suspension ...

Good morning NAME ...

Thanks for the opportunity to look at your suspension recently. Over 670,000 people, Australia wide, have now taken advantage of our 14 point suspension check.

But let me make something clear ...

The repairs we discussed are important. Our report indicates that you have [number] serious problems, plus a range of smaller faults.

These problems are NOT life-threatening, but they are endangering you, and are in need of quick attention.

Here's why ...

Your suspension takes a battering every day - each time you drive your car over a pothole, up a gutter, or even on an extra bumpy road, your suspension needs to be performing at 100%, or you're in danger.

Faulty suspension parts can wear out quickly, and cause much larger problems ... in the extreme case, a complete failure - meaning you'll lose control of the car. In the mild case, your tyres will wear out four times as fast, hitting your hip pocket.

Because of the reasons I've outlined above, it worries me that you haven't yet booked your car in for the work we discussed.

I understand that it's a blow to your budget, but the work WILL need to be done at some point. I'd recommend you do it sooner, rather than many thousand kilometres of driving later.

Every time you drive your car, you are placing the worn parts under more stress, and greatly increasing the chance that they will fail altogether.

But let me make this clear - it is NOT my intention to scare you - rather to alert you to the facts.

Following our check, we determined that the following work should be carried out as a matter of urgency ...

[Job 1]

[Job 2]

etc

As a special incentive to come back to Pedders in the next 14 days (and provide yourself with the peace of mind every car owner should have), I'm more than happy to fix the [cheap problem] FREE when you have the rest of the work done. The price for the complete service will be \$x, which includes parts, labour and workmanship.

I'll give you a call in the next few days and we'll discuss this further ...

Jeff Chuchward

Manager - Pedders Suspension

PS We have credit card facilities, and the option of a 3 month payment plan.

Date

NAME SURNAME

ADDRESS

Rocklea 3:34pm

Here's why Cloud 9 Tanks should be YOUR first choice ...

Good afternoon NAME,

I enjoyed speaking with you on [day] ... it's always great to come out and show people the Cloud 9 difference ... and let me just remind you what that is

...

1. You get a 25 year guarantee through Cloud 9 - this means your tank will remain in perfect condition for at least this long - it won't rust, warp, crack or fail you in any way - should that happen, we'll come out and replace it within 48 hours ...

2. Your tank is made from tough, maintenance-free polyethylene - this is an attractive material that requires no maintenance ... more than that, you don't get that "rusty" taste with your water - it tastes pure, clean and fresh ... just as nature intended ...

3. You can get a full range of accessories through Cloud 9 - sprinkler systems, animal troughs, children's pools, underground tanks, pressure pumps and more ... all perfectly integrated and designed to work together ...

Your investment in the system we discussed will be [price] - this includes your [size and colour] tank, as well as [other inclusions and details] ... I guess when you consider that you are buying a lifetime of maintenance-free rainwater storage, it makes good sense ... and let me tell you something else

...

New council regulations mean that every resident will now have to pay for the water they use - unless you supply your own, of course ... which means

your tank will ultimately pay for itself

And I bet you've already considered the health benefits of drinking and showering in pure rainwater ... you just feel "fresher" somehow ...

So here's what I plan to do ...

I'll call you in a couple of days to confirm our next step ... we'll discuss when you're looking to install the tank and any other needs you might have ... I'm sure you'll find that Cloud 9 can help ...

Until then, all the best ...

Ashleigh Mann

Owner - Cloud 9 Tanks

PS I spoke to a lady last week who's just installed a Cloud 9 Tank - she's just worked out that with the saving in her water bills, her tank will actually pay for itself THIS YEAR - true story ...

PPS If you've already made up your mind - you might want to call me now ... you can reach me on 3216 7141, or [mobile number] anytime ...

NAME SURNAME

ADDRESS

Osborne Park 3:23

Together, we'll build your dream home ...

Good afternoon NAME,

It was great to speak with you last [day] ... it's clear that our ideas on design and style are strongly aligned ...

Which leads me to the main point ...

From our meeting, I'm now confident that you'll be happy in an HBM home - the design we discussed seems to suit your needs perfectly ... and for an overall investment of [price], I'm positive that an HBM home is right for you...

Before you make your decision though, here are 4 things you can expect from HBM ...

1. Your home will be completed on the day we promise ... if for some reason that's impossible, we'll pay your rent for every day the project runs overtime...
2. Your home will be completed for [price] - there's no surprises or hidden costs ...
3. You WILL be delighted ... if you don't walk into your completed HBM Home and say "wow!", we'll do whatever it takes to make you happy ...
4. Your home comes with a comprehensive 20 year structural guarantee ...

This is a serious decision ... and HBM understands that - which is why we take the time to give you all the information - not just a price ... We want you to move into your HBM home and be ecstatic with the results ... so here's what you need to do ...

Look through the following list of features ... and the design I've had specially done up for you - if there's anything you'd like added, removed or modified, call me immediately - I'll call in a professional architect to make the changes for you ...

And here's why I'm doing this for you ...

I want your new home to be EXACTLY what you want ... after all, you're in the process of building a place where you'll spend 50% of your time, where you'll store your most treasured possessions, where you'll house your family - it pays to give it some serious thought ...

Here are the features of the design we discussed ...

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....

Remember NAME, if there's anything you'd like changed, call me now - I'll have our architect, [architect's name], make the alterations ...

On the other hand, you may be thrilled with the design we have ... if that's the case, call me and we'll take the next step ... but remember ...

I don't want to start work on your new home until you're completely satisfied ... Until you're sure that your HBM is the best you could possibly have, I don't want you to commit to anything ...

Call me on (09) 242 4448 and we'll take the next step now ...

Once again, I've enjoyed working with you on this project ... and I look forward to turning your dream into a reality ... Until we speak, all the best ...

Gavin Brackenreg

Owner - HBM Homes



PS Call me this week and we'll arrange a "virtual reality" tour of your new home - this is where we create a 3-D computer model of your home ... you can go through your new home, room by room, looking at the inside and outside from any angle - this service is normally \$79.00 ... when you call me this week, it's yours FREE ...

PPS Call within the next three days to confirm and you'll receive a special house-warming gift ... I'm certain you'll love it ... but you must call within the next three days to qualify for this special offer ...

PPPS If I don't hear from you in the next week, I'll give you a call ... just to see how things are going ...



Break Even Analysis

It's essential that you work out your costs up front. Otherwise, you'll have no idea what you need to achieve in order for the process to be worthwhile. You may find out after doing the analysis that the process costs you so much, it's not worth the trouble.

This analysis is for the whole campaign. After you've worked out your total fixed costs (for the campaign), you then work out your profit (your average dollar sale minus your variable costs), which gives you enough info to work out how many responses you need in order to break even.

Divide this number by the total number of prospects you are planning to approach. This will give you a percentage response rate. As a very rough guide (every case is different), anything over 40% is stretching it. If you need that high a response, you might need to have another think about it.

The very best businesses get around 40%. These are rare results - if you need higher than that to break even, re-assess whether this is the best marketing method for you.

Break Even Analysis

Quoting Process

Hard Costs

Advertising	\$
Envelopes	\$
Paper	\$
Printing	\$
Postage	\$
Other	\$
1. Total Fixed Costs	\$
2. Average \$\$\$ Sale	\$

Variable Costs

Telephone	\$
Wages	\$
Electricity	\$
Rent	\$
Brochures	\$
Other Postage	\$
Other	\$
3. Total Variables	\$

Delivery Costs

Cost Of Goods Sold	\$
Taxes	\$
Transportation	\$
Packaging	\$
Other	\$
4. Total Delivery	\$
5. Net Profit [2/(3+4)]	\$
6. Conversion Needed To Break Even (1/5)	\$