

The Best Ways to Start a Cold Call Conversation

We're terrified of cold calls. Can we admit that?

There's nothing that strikes fear in the hearts of men and women quite like the icy grip of the COLD CALL. Even the name sounds like a bad B-movie: "*You never know who's on the end... of a COLD CALL!*" (Cue terrifying shriek, bad music) "Rated **"R"** for **Run Toward Another Job Right Away.**"

The reason we hate them so much is because we know how we feel when we RECEIVE them!

Think about your feelings when someone calls or visits you out of the blue looking for you to buy something. You're thinking about all the negative words that people use to describe salespeople, and don't want to be thrown into that same category. Right?

So here's the secret: Don't sound like a salesperson!

Ask yourself: What do salespeople say, do, and act like that turns you off? Jot down a few of those things. Then decide that you're not going to do those things!

What can you do instead? Here are a few ideas that I use in training sports ticket sales reps, but can be adapted for any selling situation. Use these as idea-starters, inspiration, or read them right from the sheet, but make sure you understand the intent, and when you customize them, keep the intent intact:

- "Hi... Sales department, please." (*This is an indication that you're a revenue-producing call, and the receptionist is almost always instructed to route MONEY calls to the sales department. Be prepared to answer questions as to what you're interested in 'buying', so the person can route you to the right desk!*)
- "I have the weirdest question you've had all day." (*Choose your weird question from the several below, or make up your own*)
 - If sales are down at your place, who's the one that usually gets the maddest? That's who I need to talk to.
 - Who's the biggest baseball (or your sport) fan in your office? That's who I need to talk to. (*When you reach that person, say: "If you thought Season Tickets would be a good idea for your company, who would you have to convince in order to get them?"*)
 - When was the last time your company went out and did something FUN as a group?

- Who's in charge of smiles at your place? The one who's got to keep morale up, and keep employees happy. Would that be you?
- "Could you help out a starving salesperson today?" (*gets receptionist/gatekeeper smiling and on your side!*)
- "I have called all over, and I hope you finally have the answer I'm looking for. Do you know who would handle (*sales incentives/group outings/etc.*) at your place?"
- "Is the boss around?" (*informal, non-threatening, familiar tone*)
- "Hi... who's in charge today?" (*wait for response*) "Good! Is he/she nearby?"

There are plenty more non-traditional ways to start a conversation, which I train in my 3-day Sales Dominance program for sports ticket sales teams. These should get you going in the right direction.

Always remember that cold calling is a game – a serious, results-oriented kind of game -- and if you inject more FUN into it, your voice will reflect that fun, and you'll be more successful as a result.



Bill Guertin is CEO (Chief Enthusiasm Officer) of **The 800-Pound Gorilla**, a dynamic sales training and consulting company whose list of blue-chip clients includes the ticket sales departments of dozens of teams from the NBA, NFL, NHL, Major League Baseball, and Major League Soccer. He is the author of the Gold Medal-award-winning book [Reality Sells](#), and his second book, [The 800-Pound Gorilla of Sales: How to Dominate Your Market](#), will be published this fall by John Wiley & Sons. Subscribe to his Sports Ticket Sales Newsletter at www.The800PoundGorilla.com, or follow Bill on Twitter at www.twitter.com/800poundgorilla.