

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

*“Never manage numbers – manage behavior.”
– David Sandler*

We Have Liftoff!

From this point forward, any time you encounter something that seems a little uncomfortable to you, consider that to be a good sign...and a reason to put whatever you’ve just learned into action!

After all, discomfort simply means you’re learning something new. Like any process you haven’t followed before, reaching out directly to VITO by phone will take a little time to get used to. At first, it may feel a little strange. So did riding a bicycle the first time you tried that. With actual practice, you got better at riding the bike.

It’s going to be exactly the same when it comes to calling VITO. You have to put the plan into action. Don’t analyze it – *do* it.

Reading this chapter, or thinking about it, won’t change your behavior on the phone. Implementing what it contains, over time, is what will get the rocket off the ground.

Three Questions

As you ponder the first-call guidelines that follow, remember that they are meant for VITO. If you run across anything that seems a little unorthodox to you now, just ask yourself these three questions:

- “Does this fit in with what I now know about VITO’s leadership style?”
- “Does this fit in with what I now know about VITO’s values?”
- “If VITO were communicating with another VITO, would this be appropriate?”

In all cases, the answer is going to be “Yes.” So let’s get started.

“What’s Going To Happen When I Dial The Number?”

A well-defined and consistently followed process will always yield predictable results, and the process you’re about to learn is no exception. Direct experience with tens of thousands of calls to VITOs have given us some benchmarks on what you can expect to happen when you start dialing the phone to follow up on your correspondence and Waves.

Let’s start with the basics. You should make as many VITO calls as possible in any given day. We suggest that you plan to make twenty calls to the VITO prospects in your territory (every half-hour on the hour) the first day you do this. We suggest that you devote one full day of your working week to making those twenty calls and recording what happens when you make them. We can tell you that those twenty calls are going to play more or less as follows:

- Twenty percent of the time (about four of your twenty calls), VITO will actually pick up the telephone. This is a considerably higher number than most people expect, and it’s the reason we’re sharing the “road map” for the VITO call with you now. These four calls are what you’ve been doing all this work for, so make the most of them, and follow the instructions that you’re about to read...no exceptions! Of the remaining sixteen or so calls...
- VITO’s private assistant Tommie will pick up the phone about eight times. (You’ll be learning about interactions with Tommie in a later chapter.)
- The remaining eight calls will go to VITO’s voice mail. (That, too, is the topic of a later chapter.)

Your Opening Statement

Picture VITO behind his or her desk. Did you picture a busy, active, engaged, and perhaps even preoccupied person? Of course you did. Now, with that picture firmly in your mind, ask yourself: What kind of opening statement would effectively invite VITO to drop everything and engage in a conversation with you?

In other words...what is the shortest possible combination of words that would spark an interest in VITO's mind sufficient to make VITO say or think, "Tell me more!"

After all, you know that VITO isn't going to be sitting around, staring at the ceiling, waiting for your call to come in. Even if VITO is the only one in the office, you can rely on this: there's already a lot going on in VITO's world. These people do not do "reactive." They are always in action and always in motion. So – how will you get VITO's attention?

By saying the magic words: VITO's name. That's the very first thing that's going to come out of your mouth. You're going to give VITO a chance to respond, and then you're going to move directly – that is, without any icebreaker, without any flattery, without any attempt to talk about yourself or your company – yes, we said *directly* dive into your Big Idea.

You're going to talk about that Big Idea, not as though you were a salesperson eager to find some way, any way, to make quota...but as though you were what you in fact are: a fellow thought-leader who knows how and when to make good business relationships happen. The conversation should sound, not like a sales call, but like two VITOs chatting briskly and enthusiastically while seated on the same park bench.

So picture this. VITO is sitting at his or her desk. It's 7:30 am – the time you said you'd call. VITO is totally unprotected; Tommie isn't in yet. The phone rings and instinctively VITO picks it up. Let's listen in on the call.

VITO: Good morning...VITO here...how can I help you?
(Or, if VITO is having a fast-paced morning: "VITO here."
Or: if VITO is having a particularly rough morning:
"WHAT?" Or:"This better be important!")

YOU: Ms. Importanta?

VITO: Yep, that's right.

YOU: It's great to speak with you! (DO NOT talk about yourself after you use this greeting. DO NOT ask how VITO is doing. DO NOT ask VITO, "Is this a good time?" DO NOT ask whether VITO got your correspondence or remembers it. Instead, move directly into your Big Idea, even if it feels a little funny the first time you do it...and it will.)

YOU: (continued): Five other CEOs in your industry rely upon us to increase margins by as much as 4% annually, while substantially increasing federal compliance. This is Will, Will Prosper with Alliance Mutual. Ms. Importante, what's the fastest way for us to find out if our proven process could be of greater interest to you and your team by the end of this calendar month?

VITO: How did you pull that one off in this economy? Was it this past year?

Congratulations. That's a "tell me more" response. Mission accomplished! VITO has officially "leaned in" to your first eight seconds. You are now the subject of a prime-time interview that's being hosted, not by Larry King or Katie Couric, but by VITO. Hang on tight, answer the questions, take notes and remember the five great outcomes we shared with you in the previous chapter.

By the way, VITO's "tell-me-more" response could also have sounded like this:

VITO: Hold it, hold it, hold it. Who is this again? (Give your name again, slowly—and your company name, said with pride – and then explain that you sometimes talk too fast, but that's only because you're so excited about what you've been able to do for the other CEOs in VITOs industry. Then shut up.)

Or:

VITO: You sent me a letter, right? (Yep. You did. Acknowledge this in a sentence of two words or less. Then ask VITO what he or she thought of the letter. Then shut up.) For example:

YOU: Yes...what did you think of it?

Or:

VITO: “Tell me more.” (Give VITO three options to choose from. Of course, each choice will be relevant to this VITO’s industry, and each will be connected to a timeline. So – Is A, B, or C, more important in VITO’s world this quarter? Then shut up.)

As long as you don’t hear “Not interested” or a dial tone, virtually *any* response from VITO that sounds vaguely like the ones above – including a challenge from VITO – means you have successfully launched your five minutes and passed the eight-second test. *This is easier to do than you think!*

Keep your responses brief – never more than thirty seconds, preferably less than fifteen – and use only words and phrases that you know for certain that VITO will be familiar with. Follow VITO’s lead.

We’ve been telling you over and over again about the importance of the first eight seconds when it comes to your first conversation with VITO. Look closely at what just happened in our example call. This is what made those first eight seconds a success:

You used VITO’s name

These were the very first words out of your mouth. They broke pre-occupation. If you’re in a crowded café and someone, somewhere, says your name, you’ll stop whatever you’re doing long enough to turn and try to see who is calling you. Any time you call, VITO is going to be busy doing what VITOs do. *There is no “good time to call.”* Saying VITO’s name breaks the preoccupation...and enables VITO to lean into your message and hear what’s next.

You used a pleasantry

“It’s an honor to speak to you.” This phrase is so effective that we recommend that you use it verbatim as you’re getting familiar with this system. Of course, you may move on to other pleasantries any time you feel comfortable doing so. Say the words with enthusiasm and make them sincere. Say them with a smile on your face.

Here are some other examples of pleasantries that work:

“...thanks for picking up the phone...”

“...thanks for taking my call...”

“...it’s great to speak with the person who’ll appreciate the following idea...”

“...you’re just the person who’ll love this idea...”

Again: If VITO wants to know your name, VITO will ask for it.

You moved immediately into your Big Idea

Typically, this is the verbal rendition of the headline that was at the top of your VITO Correspondence. Notice that the Big Idea was unique to this VITO’s industry, that it featured social proof (five CEOs in VITO’s industry), that it incorporated the element of time (annually) and that it featured a balanced gain equation (improving margins while increasing compliance). Look at it again.

Five other CEOs in your industry rely upon us to increase margins by as much as 4% annually, while substantially improving federal compliance within just 120 days...

If you want, your Big Idea can be based upon the balance of two Hard value results:

...increase margins by as much as 4% annually, while substantially increasing the acquisition of new markets up to 2.5% within just 120 days...

...or it can be based on the balance of two Soft value results:

...substantially increase margins and the acquisition of new markets within just 120 days...

Which one will VITO lean into more? Who knows! That's for VITO to decide. It's been our experience that what's most important here is the issue and result being addressed – and the confidence you project during the call.

You only introduced your name after you were finished introducing your Big Idea

This is one of the hardest things for salespeople to get used to, so we're emphasizing its importance every chance we get. *Don't lead the call with your name.* VITO doesn't care who you are at the beginning of the call. When you do say your name, say it like this:

“...this is Will, Will Prosper with Alliance Mutual...”

Will's smart. Will knows that it's important to say his first name twice and to say it slowly. And, he says his company name with pride. Just as VITO would say it on a call to another VITO.

Use an intelligent ending question

This gets VITO used to the idea that you are comfortable asking for up-front contracts. In the first eight seconds, your statement to VITO should have these three elements:

1. VITO's name.
2. A suggested next step (aka, up-front contract).
3. The all-important element of time.

Look again at example we shared with you.

“Ms. Importanta, (1) what's the fastest way for us to find out if our proven process could be of greater interest to you and your team (2) by the end of this calendar month (3)?”

“No one can enter your castle without your permission.”
– David Sandler

Here are some additional examples of Ending Questions that work:

“In your opinion, what is the best way for us to pursue the topic right now?”

(This can be extremely effective. For VITO, there is no time better than right now!)

Or:

“Have I touched on an issue that affects your day to day goals for the balance of this fiscal quarter?”

All Together Now

Look at the complete sequence that will launch the perfect first eight seconds with VITO:

- VITO’s name
- Pleasantry
- Big Idea
- Your name
- Ending Question

There’s a lot more to cover...the conversation has just begun! Before we move on, though, complete the Action Step below.

ACTION STEP

Practice all elements of your first eight seconds with a specific target VITO. Make sure the elements of what you say follow the precise order laid out in this chapter. This is your Opening Statement. Say it until you can deliver it without looking at any notes or reminders.
