



Don't Cold Call. Social Call™

Prospect with Sales 2.0 tools and social networks

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Executive Summary

If you don't have time to read a 20-page e-book then this section is for you. Here are the key points from the next 20-pages all in bullet points so you can read them while eating soup or on your iPhone:

- The cold call is dead, if it means “smiling and dialing” with little-to-no-preparation on behalf of the sales person. But smart prospecting is very much alive. Sales people can execute “social calls” using the latest in Sales 2.0 tools and social networks.
- Getting in the buyer's office is the hardest part of selling for the vast majority of sales organizations.
- We've come up with six factors that dictate if a buyer will meet with you when you're prospecting:
 - i. Your product
 - ii. Your message
 - iii. Repetition of your message
 - iv. Talking to the right people
 - v. Using changes in your buyer's environment
 - vi. Establishing relationships
- There are Sales 2.0 tools now available (including social networks) that help you with the three most critical factors: talking to the right people, establishing relationships and using changes in your buyer's environment.
- Using these tools in your prospecting can increase your ability to “get in” dramatically, ***using just one of these techniques can cause an eight-time improvement over “cold calling”***

What is Sales 2.0?

What is “Sales 2.0”?

Sales 2.0 is a “new way of selling”. I believe that’s a worthy cause since the sales profession I see today (and the one I’ve seen for the past 13 years) needs radical improvement. Sales 2.0 to me is a banner leading the way to a better way of selling for all sales professionals, their managers, the CEOs of their companies and their marketing colleagues.

It’s about time too. When I first came up with the term “Sales 2.0” in 2006, I found a press release that came out about the same time applauding the anniversary of the first “President’s Club”. The first President’s Club it turned out was invented by a fellow called John Patterson who founded [NCR](#), National Cash Register. On further investigation, it turned out that John Patterson invented most of today’s “standard sales operating procedure”: territories, quotas, prospecting scripts etc. He was an amazing man. He was the “Thomas Edison of the sales profession”.

To make the story even better, John Patterson hired a fellow called Tom Watson at NCR and trained him in all his sales techniques. Tom Watson left NCR after several years and set up his own company...IBM.

IBM has long been considered *the* “gold standard” for professional sales organizations. So the story of just these two men is a history of the professional sales profession in a nutshell. John Patterson invents professional selling and Tom Watson perfects it.

Many of the things we still do in sales today were invented 100 years ago

But all this innovation in the sales profession took place in the **1890's**. This was when the last radical shift occurred in the way we sell. This is what I think of as the birth of "Sales 1.0".

Fast Forward 100 Years

Buyers truly moved into an "Internet world" several years ago. The tipping point was *Google*.

With the advent of *Google* you had a search engine that really worked for business people. Buyers were given a tool that they could use to find almost any information they needed. This helped them research and make early decisions on what to buy.

Buyers no longer needed sales people to give them basic product information updates. Sales people lost an "excuse" for getting into the buyer's office. Now in 2009, buyers can find whatever detailed information they need early in the buying process simply by typing into Google and pulling up dozens of whitepapers or webinars.

In the last couple of years, buyers not only use Google to research your product -- they use *each other*. And they don't do this research at industry conferences, or the pub, they do it *online*. They use social networks. So we sales people are dealing with some really well-informed buyers by the time we talk to them (or at least that's the default if we don't change our behavior).

At Last the Internet Helps Sales People

The path to a "new way of selling" is also being driven by the Internet. Tools have recently appeared (and more continue to appear) that are

*Sales 2.0 tools
give sales
people a
chance to
“level the
playing field”*

giving *sales people* a way to fight back against this wave of buyer disinterest in meeting with sales people.

These Internet-based tools really help sales people sell. They are not CRM systems set up as management reporting systems. They are tools that make a sales person's job easier and more efficient.

Using these tools to improve your sales process is what Sales 2.0 is all about. And using them to get into your buyer's office is what this ebook is about.

Getting in the Door

Through our consulting and outsourced lead generation activities we've noticed that the biggest bottleneck in the sales process for most companies is getting in-the-door.

Buyers can do so much of their research online now they don't need to see sales people for updates. Time-starved, over-stressed buyers will only meet with sales people if they sense you have something they *really* need. The bar has been raised on getting in.

Through observing what works, and what doesn't, we've come up with **six** factors that determine whether a prospect will meet with you.

These six factors are:

- i. Your product
- ii. Your message
- iii. Repetition of your message
- iv. Talking to the right people
- v. Using changes in your buyer's environment
- vi. Establishing relationships

I will cover each of these factors briefly in this ebook but will focus on the last three most heavily as they are the most important ones and also the ones we can change the most in our favor using Sales 2.0 tools and techniques.

*You need a
good product*

i. Your Product

First a waiver. You need a good product!

I operate in the world of professional selling. The companies we work with sell to business executives, usually to the “C-level” or one level below. These buyers are smart. They have a sixth sense for BS and they are usually well-educated on the alternatives out there in most product categories. It doesn’t take them more than a few seconds to decide if your product might have *value* to them.

As a sales person/consultant I can help companies optimize the way they communicate the value of their product but I am not in the business of developing products. I see Sales 2.0 as a pretty holistic approach but it does not include product development.

So the waiver is: if your product does not have *value* to your target market then the rest of this ebook is not going to help you that much. I can tell you how to deliver your message most effectively but sales is not about BS or tricking people. The buyers I am talking about in this ebook are too smart for that. They will figure out *if* your product has value to them. If it does not, then you need to change your offering.

ii. Your Message

So let’s assume your product/offering has intrinsic value to this buying audience. Now you need to make sure you communicate this value so the prospect can actually understand it.

*Get your Intro
Down to 15
Seconds*

Whether you are calling on the phone or emailing, we are in a world where our attention spans are drifting towards zero. We are bombarded with information (3,000 plus marketing messages per day). I used to say you had 30 seconds to get your message across now I'd say 15 seconds is generous.

Your name and company are not even relevant during this time (if you're on the phone, I'd use them, but only since it's the social norm -- don't expect anyone to hear them or care). We have literally one sentence to get something across that is relevant and of value. If we get two sentences in, we are lucky (similarly with email if someone reads more than a sentence we are doing well).

This is a build up to saying you've got to have your "elevator pitch"/"script"/"value proposition" (whatever you want to call it) **down**. This statement has nothing to do with *you or your company*. It's *not* about how long you've been in business, or how many employees you have, or how many countries you have offices in. It's all about the *prospect*.

You've got 15 seconds to tell them what's in this for them...Go!

OK, time for another waiver. I can't cover how to develop good value propositions/scripts in the space of this particular ebook. It's a whole ebook unto itself. If you want to learn about developing value propositions go to our website (www.sales2.com) or Jill Konrath's website (www.SellingToBigCompanies.com). There are many good articles posted in both places on how to develop a good value proposition.

iii. Repetition of Your Message

Since we are all so bombarded with messages every day there's good evidence to show that not only do our messages have to be relevant and of value, we also need to repeat them.

Messages simply do not make an impression on us the first time. In fact research shows we may need to see a message seven times before we even remember seeing it.

Another thing about messages is that it's fairly clear that different people react differently to different media. So that the same message delivered via phone or email might not get a particular person's attention but the same message in a postcard or letter might. This gives rise to an approach I call "multimedia prospecting", meaning we need to try to reach people in a variety of ways -- not just keep pounding away on one "frequency".

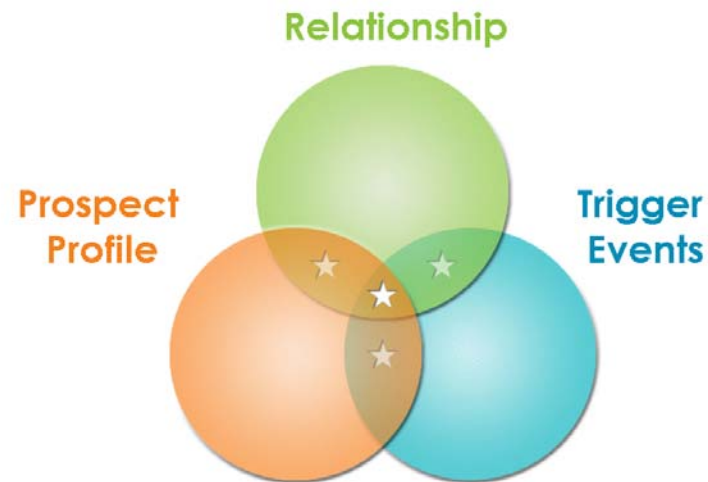
Practically speaking we should consider using not only the telephone and email but also ground mail like postcards and good old-fashioned sales letters.

Keeping this repetition going for hundreds of contacts using a variety of media quickly starts to become a significant logistical challenge. Enter "marketing automation". This is one area where it's quickly obvious that sales and marketing groups need to work together. These tools are called *marketing* automation, and are being sold to marketers, but they clearly help sales efforts too. If sales people don't own these tools, they should certainly get involved in having the marketing programs being run using them tailored to their objectives. Talk to your marketing colleagues!

iv. Talking to the Right People

The first of what I call the “big three” factors in determining whether you get into the buyer’s office is whether you are actually approaching the right person. This is determined by the accuracy of your prospect profile, which then feeds into your prospect lists. OK, so this is *obvious*. Obvious but very often executed incorrectly.

The 3 big factors: prospect profile, relationships and trigger events



This is about preparation. You need to figure out which companies are “ideal clients” for you. The usual demographic criteria apply: revenue, industry, geography etc.

Then think about the *people* in those companies you need to speak to. Be a careful on this point. The world has changed quite a bit. “Selling high” is not that effective any more. Yes, the concept of “selling high” is great but given the reality of getting your message through, it’s a long shot to try to

sell *only* to the CEO/CFO etc. What you really want to do is get through to *anyone* in your target company who gets involved in buying your product.

The hardest part of the sales process these days is getting any meaningful conversation with your target company. You can learn vital account intelligence from a single conversation with someone in the information flow within your target account. So a conversation with anyone who is informed is better than dead silence -- the default situation.

A great statistic from some recent research from [Marketing Sherpa](#) is that for example a technology product of over \$25,000 in value, selling to a prospect company with over 1,000 employees, there are twenty-one (21) people involved in buying that product. OK so a bit scary that so many people can nix your product but on the plus side it implies you have a lot of people who know how this product is purchased. So you've got a bunch of targets to speak to. And getting in is the hardest part -- so this is good news!

Time to Talk about Some Tools

There are some well-established tools that help you build prospects lists and there are some new "Sales 2.0" tools that have come out in the last couple of years. Whichever tools you use, you are going to have to do your homework to figure out your ideal client profile (both type of company and type of people within that company). Right now there's no tool to do this for you.

Some of the well-established tools that help you build prospect lists include:

- [Hoovers](#)
- [Dun and Bradstreet](#)
- [One Source](#)
- [SalesGenie](#)

These are the kind of databases you use to download lists of companies, some basic demographic data on the companies, and the senior executives of those companies.

So that's a good start. These are great tools to build a foundation for your prospecting efforts. But there are now Sales 2.0 type tools for getting even more information on your prospects. Some are of these new tools are:

- [Jigsaw](#)
- [Netprospex](#)
- [Spoke](#)
- [Zoominfo](#)

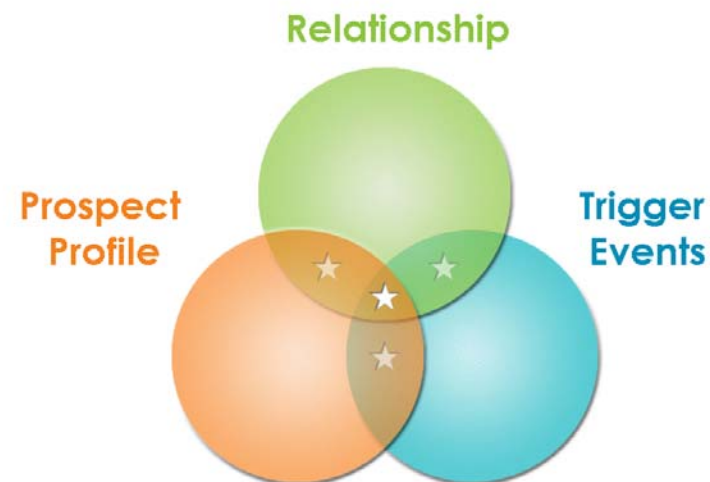
Jigsaw, *Netprospex* and *Spoke* are built on social communities of sales people. In these systems it is sales people who are members of each community that put contacts into the database for other sales people to use. In my prospecting efforts I find *Jigsaw* and *Netprospex* extremely useful for finding middle managers in large companies that are not typically listed in *Hoovers* or *Dun and Bradstreet*.

Another interesting tool is *Zoominfo*. This tool takes a different approach to *Jigsaw*, *Netprospex* and *Spoke*. Rather than a community of sales people putting in contact data to share with each other, *Zoominfo* gathers data using "web spiders" that look at billions of web pages and suck down executives' bios and company data into one consolidated database.

Change =>
Pain => Need
=> Buy
Something!

v. Using Changes in your Buyer's Environment

Changes in your prospect's environment upset their "status quo". Examples of things that happen to your prospect are: new executives, new product launches, cost-cutting, fast growth, mergers and acquisitions and moves by their competitors. I (like many other "sales geeks" -- I mean "sales experts") -- call these changes "trigger events".



Trigger events are our friend in sales because they create *pain*. And pain creates *need*. And needs are solved with products and services. Buyers in "status quo" generally don't buy. They are the "we've got that covered club".

There are almost always trigger events behind why people buy things but the tricky thing about trigger events is that many of them are not *observable* from outside a company.

Sometimes we can overcome this by finding a “proxy trigger event” for the trigger event that actually creates a need for *our product*. For example, if my service is data center consolidation then it’s unlikely I will see an announcement from a prospect company that they are consolidating their data centers but it *is* likely they will announce a merger with another company. In this example, since I know that company mergers often imply data center consolidations I can use the company merger announcement as a “proxy trigger event” for the trigger event I really want to know.

The Tools Stuff

Once you get this concept of trigger events, and identify which particular trigger events help you identify higher-probability prospects in your market, you will instantly become a fan of press releases.

I used to think press releases were so boring but now I love them. Well, only the ones about my prospects.

You can set up [Google Alerts](#) to monitor press releases that contain the name of your target companies. With *Google Alerts* you can select key words in a Google search and have news items on these subjects emailed to you.

This allows you to set up the name of your target company as one keyword and a suitable keyword for the appointment of a new executive as another keyword. For example a *Google Alerts* search where you are monitoring if a new Chief Marketing Office is appointed anywhere in IBM might contain the keywords: “appointed”, “Chief Marketing Officer” and “IBM”. If a press release comes out at any time with all these three keywords in it, *Google Alerts* will email you an alert immediately.

Another very helpful tool is [InsideView](#). *InsideView* will let you choose which categories of trigger event you want to receive alerts about: new executives, new product launches, mergers and acquisitions and so on, -- rather than relying on you to creatively choose the correct keywords as you need to do when using *Google Alerts*.

InsideView is an integration point for more sales information than just trigger events. It also allows you to see *who* you know at accounts where there is a trigger event.

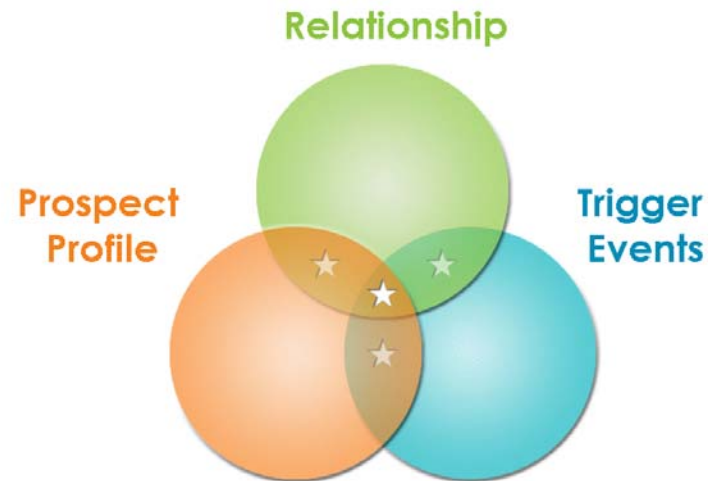
In some businesses job boards can be used as trigger event tools. Obviously there are the major job boards like [Monster](#), [Hot Jobs](#) and [CareerBuilder](#) but there are many hundreds, if not thousands, of niche job boards out there. For example, if you're in infrastructure IT services and you see that a prospect company is posting a job for a system administrator that may be a trigger event for what you sell.

vi. Use Your Relationships

Sales is about people. In the end it's people who buy things. The larger the item, and amount of money involved, the more *trust* we need before we buy. Trust is based on relationships. If there's one single factor that determines whether you will get in to meet a prospect, it's ***relationship***.

Just imagine your sales job if you knew the decision-maker in every target company in your territory. How would that be? Nice picture, right? Well, most of us are not that lucky. We sales people often start with the opposite situation: we don't know *any* of our target buyers. We're on the outside.

In what I call “old school selling” sales people used to spend lots of time developing relationships with buyers at dinners, lunches and on the tee at the golf course. But buyers are less-and-less likely to want to spend large amounts of time with any sales person. They are simply under too much pressure to deliver results with too little resources.



But there is hope. There are new ways to build relationships. In fact, these new ways allow you to build relationships far *faster* than you could before - - and build more relationships that you could before.

These new ways are about using social networks to start relationships with people in your target market -- often without even leaving your office.

However this is not about *only* using the Internet to build relationships. You can build *initial* relationships through the web but you need to get *offline* at some point and make these relationships “real”. You need to

speak to people on the phone and meet them physically. We humans still need voice and in-person interactions to build more than surface-level relationships – not much has changed about that so far. You won't be able to build up more than the beginnings of trust until you move your relationship offline.

The Tools Stuff

The most popular social networks for business are [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#). Everybody knows about these websites but it's not always obvious how to use them to actually sell something.

I'm going to talk about *LinkedIn* since it's the most popular social network for sales people. Let's assume that you've figured out your "ideal client" profile (you are supposed to have done that remember) and hence a target list of companies. And let's assume you've built up a reasonable number of connections on *LinkedIn* while you've been using it (if not, check out a book like "I'm on LinkedIn, Now What?")

A Quick Example

Let's briefly walk through one way you can use *LinkedIn* to sell.

Type in the name of one of your target companies into the main search box in *LinkedIn* (keep the search pull down menu set on its default of "People"). *LinkedIn* will show you in the results *who* you know in your target company, how many "degrees of separation away" from you they are, and who of your direct (1st degree) contacts connects you to that company's staff.

In the example shown in the screenshot below I searched for people in *Goldman Sachs*. To protect everyone involved I doctored this LinkedIn screen so no real people's names, or details, are shown but imagining for a moment that the person I found at *Goldman Sachs* is called "Person 1" (not a great name but parents can be funny) then LinkedIn is showing me that I know "Person 1" through someone I already know called "Person 2".

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn search result for "Person 1" at Goldman Sachs. The profile includes sections for Current and Past roles, Education, and Connections. A "Connections" section shows 44 connections. Below the profile, an "Experience" section lists roles at Goldman Sachs. A "How you're connected to Ivan" section shows a connection path: You → Person 2 → Person 1. The "Public Profile" URL is http://www.linkedin.com/pub.

So in this example, I can ask "Person 2" (who hopefully I know in "real life") for an introduction to "Person 1". If I really do know "Person 2", I can

ask for this introduction either within the LinkedIn system or *outside of LinkedIn* using good old-fashioned email -- or even the downright archaic telephone.

LinkedIn is working like a networking tool for me here. It is telling me who the people I know in turn know. It's the equivalent of me meeting with all my connections and asking them to bring their Rolodexes to the meeting. Then going through their Rolodex looking for people in my target companies. Before social networks were mainstream I tried to organize these "Rolodex sharing meetings" to little avail. Now all you have to do is sit in your office and you can do the same thing. Pretty cool.

One other feature of *LinkedIn* that's pretty interesting is that people tend to put more personal information on their LinkedIn profile (not to mention their Facebook profile) than they do on a corporate website. So looking at someone's LinkedIn profile will usually turn up more personal research on them than you will get from any public bio. For example, a typical profile includes the schools someone has attended, their interests (scuba diver, sky diver etc.) and the groups they belong to in LinkedIn (another good indication of their interests).

Time for my final waiver: I don't have time to get into any more detail on how to use social networks for prospecting. That's for another ebook (and a training class if you fancy paying us something).

Do the Math

Some people say cold calling is dead. Other people say it's the most effective way of all to get new business.

Being an engineer and scientist by training, I couldn't figure this out. Does cold calling work or doesn't it? *Now* I believe the answer is in each person's definition of "cold calling". Do you consider "cold calling" picking up the phone and dialing as many times as you can (often called "smiling and dialing") or do you only call after extensive research?

Let's just consider the last factor in our model of what gets you into a buyers' office: relationships. Looking at the real data I have from our own telesales operation we have found the following:

- We have to dial the phone ten times before we get someone on the telephone these days. Everyone is busy. Everyone is screened. So you've got to make ten dials to get one conversation.
- Even if we are talking to the right person, and we have an average product or service, we might easily have ten conversations to get one meeting (this ratio of conversations to meetings varies a lot in our experience based on the quality of your product and messaging but 10 to 1 is a good average to use for our purposed here)

So if you're prospecting and you have an average product, average messaging and a decent prospect list you may well be making *one hundred dials to get one meeting (100:1)*.

If you move into a referral selling-based approach (what I'm calling "social calling" in this ebook) based on using relationships to get you in, these ratios change -- a lot.

Typically, you may only make four dials to get a conversation because the person may call you back when they know you have been referred by a trusted colleague or friend. In this situation, you might get one appointment for every three conversations you have, for the same reasons: the person you are speaking to *trusts* you because you have been referred by a trusted intermediary. They know who you are.

So let's look at the math here. In the first scenario where no relationship exists you are making *one hundred* dials for an appointment. In the second scenario where a relationship connection exists you are only making twelve dials.

So here we have an ***eight-time improvement*** in prospecting efficiency using a "social calling" approach versus a traditional "smile and dial" approach.

And that is using only one factor in our model. If we calculated the impact to sales effectiveness of using trigger events and a tightly-targeted prospect list versus a "shotgun" approach the improvement would be much larger.

An eight-time improvement in a business process is *huge*. But this is the kind of improvement that is quite possible (and needed) in many sales organizations.

*An 8-Time
Improvement in
Sales Results
using Just One
Factor in the
Model*

Sales 2.0 tools and techniques give us sellers the chance to *get smart* and use the power of the Internet to “level the playing field” with buyers who have been using the Internet to make uninformed sales people less relevant. Sales 2.0 is our chance to make ourselves highly useful to buyers again.

Sales people who don't learn these latest tools and techniques take the risk that their value will drop to both buyers and their companies.



About the Author

Nigel Edelshain is CEO of [Sales 2.0 \(LLC\)](#). Nigel sets direction for the company and manages the company's lead generation team. He delivers consulting and training that provides clients with sales improvements of 2-3 times.

Nigel has sold millions of dollars of IT solutions to major Fortune 500 firms. He was head of sales for the financial services vertical for Starpoint Solutions (a 600-person system integrator). Prior to Starpoint, Nigel worked for Platinum Technology (now CA) selling IT professional services.

Nigel is the chairman of the [Wharton Business School Club of New York](#) – the school's largest alumni association. Nigel graduated from Wharton's MBA program in 1993 and has an undergraduate degree in microelectronics (chip design) from Edinburgh University.

About the Company

Companies work with Sales 2.0 (LLC) to:

- Crack into new accounts and markets
- Launch new products
- Reduce the costs of running their sales organization
- Hit sales goals with less resources
- Speed up their sales cycles

Our services include: consulting, lead generation and training. What makes us different is that we are experts in Sales 2.0 tools and techniques (if you've read this ebook, maybe you believe that now...)