

## **BEP 48 – Cold Calling: Overcoming Objections & Closing Down**

This is the last in our three-part series on cold calling. In today's episode, you'll learn how to deal with several typical kinds of objections that a potential customer might raise.

When Steve first asked for an appointment, Linda didn't agree right away, did she? As you know, it's normal for even a good prospect to give you one or two negative responses, so it's important to be ready to deal with these and "turn them around" skillfully.

Today we'll be listening to the last part of the cold calling dialogue between Linda and Steve. As you listen, pay attention to how Steve turns around Linda's objections.

Along the way, try to answer the following **listening questions**. The answers will be posted in a few days on our website.

1. When Steve asks for an appointment, what is Linda's first response?
2. What is Linda's second objection?
3. How does Steve deal with Linda's objections?

### **Vocabulary**

**to leave/put the ball in someone's court:** This is a sports idiom that is common in business. In tennis, you hit the ball from your court to your opponent's court. Similarly, in life's game of words and actions, you can set up a situation in which your "opponent" is required to respond. For example, if someone asks you a question, you can respond with a question. If someone accuses you of something, you can accuse them back. Often, however, the idiom just refers to simple things like the steps in a negotiation. After your potential customer makes an offer, you make a counteroffer. That is also "hitting the ball back into their court."

**centralized database:** A database is an organized body of related information, usually on a computer. A centralized database probably refers to one in which information that was previously scattered or stored in several different places is now put into one central location, or "centralized."

**dedicated help desk staff:** "Dedicated staff" in this case means that they are focused on one task. So "dedicated help desk staff" probably refers to staff who focus only on providing help desk service, instead of doing this as an extra job. "Dedicated" also has another connotation: it can mean loyal or trustworthy, which blends into the meaning here making it a felicitous combination.

## Dialog

**Steve:** Well, let's get together next week for 20 minutes to see if there's a fit. I can answer your questions and show you how our service can achieve all your objectives. What's better for you, mornings or afternoons?

**Linda:** Maybe you can just send me a brochure.

**Steve:** Why don't we just get together in person? I can demonstrate the system for you and I'll bring along some brochures as well.

**Linda:** To be honest, I'm really busy.

**Steve:** That's okay. I'll only need 20 minutes. What day would be better for you? Toward the beginning or the end of the week?

**Linda:** [laughs] Okay. Fine. How about Tuesday. Tuesday afternoon... at 3:30 p.m. Can you swing that?

**Steve:** Great. That's perfect. And your at 52A Washington Square, right?

**Linda:** Yes. Just tell the receptionist when you arrive.

**Steve:** Wonderful! I'll look forward to seeing you next Tuesday at 3:30 then!

**Linda:** All right.

**Steve:** Have a great day!

**Linda:** Bye.

## Debrief

Steve did a pretty good job of dealing with Linda's concerns, didn't he? He's achieved the goal he set out for, which is getting an appointment.

Part of Steve's success is his persistence. He briefly responds to each of Linda's objections, keeping the pressure on her to agree. Part of it is his voice. Steve sounds warm, relaxed and polite; he speaks slowly and sounds like someone you want to help. As we pointed discussed last time, it's important to understand how your voice sounds. A good way to practice this is by recording yourself and asking other people what they think of you.

Now let's look in detail at how Steve turns around Linda's negative responses. Along the way, we'll also examine some additional common types of objections that can come up.

Linda's first negative response is a normal one—"Maybe you can just send me a brochure." She doesn't want to meet in person. She just wants to have a look at the website, or maybe see some promotional materials. What does Steve say to this?

**Steve:** Why don't we just get together in person? I can demonstrate the system for you and I'll bring along some brochures as well.

Steve is careful not to make his response too long. He just asks for an appointment again and briefly states the benefit of meeting in person, which in this case is that he can demonstrate the system. Note the use of “just” in “Why don’t we just get together in person?” This “just” makes his request sound softer.

By being polite and brief, Steve “keeps the ball in Linda’s court.” This is a sports analogy that’s common in business. In tennis, you hit the ball from your court to your opponent’s court. In the game of words, Steve politely hits the ball quickly back to Linda, putting the pressure on her to respond. By keeping the ball in your prospect’s court, you make it harder for them to think of a suitable excuse for not meeting with you.

What’s Linda’s second negative response? It’s also typical—she doesn’t have any time.

**Linda:** To be honest, I’m really busy.

**Steve:** That’s okay. I’ll only take 20 minutes. What day would be better for you? Toward the beginning or the end of the week?

What does Steve do? First he politely acknowledges her concern by indicating that he values her time. Then he asks for a meeting again. What are some other things you can say?

- I understand. I’ll only be taking a few minutes of your time.
- No worries. I will just take a few minutes.
- I totally understand you are very busy, Ms. Smith, so I’ll make it very quick.
- I totally understand. I’ll be really quick.

All right. So far we’ve looked at how Steve deals with Linda’s two negative responses in the dialogue. But what are some other types of typical negative response that you should be prepared for?

One type of common objection is “No thanks, I’m happy with what I have.” Depending on situation, there are different ways to respond to this objection. If appropriate, you can talk about how your product will complement—that is work together with—the customer’s current product.

**Linda:** No thanks, I’m happy with what I have. We’ve been using the ConStar system for years.

**Steve:** It’s great that you have the ConStar system. As I said, we recently started serving Pritchins and Rutherford, who also use ConStar. They say that what we have really complements their current service. So I think it would be really worth your time to meet. How about next Thursday at 1pm?

Another way to deal with this objection is to ask further needs analysis questions to understand the prospect’s current product, then compare advantages to tell them how your product is better. Let’s listen to some language you could use.

**Linda:** No thanks, I'm happy with what I have.

**Steve:** May I ask who you are using right now?

**Linda:** We use ConStar.

**Steve:** I see. What do you like most about ConStar?

**Linda:** Well, they let us book everything online.

**Steve:** Including your own meeting rooms?

**Linda:** No, we have to book those ourselves.

**Steve:** Well with the Nexus system, you can even handle your own meeting room booking through our centralized database, and there's a team of dedicated help desk staff ready to assist you 24-hours a day.

**Linda:** Really.

**Steve:** You know something, we should really get together to talk. How about Wednesday? Are you free any time in the afternoon?

Great, so you've dealt with "I'm happy with what I have." How about other typical objections? Another common type of negative response is "I'm not interested." How can you deal with this?

**Linda:** I'm not interested

**Steve:** Well, Linda, some of our most loyal customers had the same reaction you did when I first called, before they had a chance to see how what we do will benefit them. We should get together. How about next Wednesday?

Also, sometimes your prospects will tell you that they are not the right person to talk to. You should ask them what they do. Then, when they reply, either ask for an appointment or ask who the right person is.

**Linda:** You know, I'm probably the wrong person to talk to.

**Steve:** Oh. I see. What do you do?

**Linda:** I'm the training officer.

**Steve:** Well, who would be the right person to talk to?

**Linda:** You should talk to Jen Mattel. She is the regional admin manager.

**Steve:** Great. How do I get a hold of her?

To almost any other negative response, you can say "Well, that's okay; let's get together anyway." Remember, be persistent but warm and friendly. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Keep your responses brief so that the ball stays in your prospect's court.

Now, it's your turn to practice. Imagine you are cold calling Linda Darling. You have just asked her for a meeting next week. She is going to raise a total of three objections. You should try to keep the ball in Linda's court by dealing briefly and

politely with these negative responses. Each time before Linda starts talking, you will hear a beep.

**Practice 1**

**Linda:** Well, I don't know. I'm kind of busy next week.

**Learner:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Practice 2**

**Linda:** Actually, why don't you send me a brochure?

**Learner:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Practice 3**

**Linda:** I'm not interested:

**Learner:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did you do? Let's listen to some example **answers**.

**Linda:** Well, I don't know. I'm kind of busy next week.

**Learner:** I understand. I'll only need 15 minutes of your time. What would be better for you, mornings or afternoons?

**Linda:** Actually, why don't you send me a brochure?

**Learner:** How about we just get together in person? It would give you a chance to see how the product works.

**Linda:** I'm not interested:

**Learner:** A lot of our best customers have said that before they had a chance to see our service. You know, we should really get together. How about next week? What's better for you—toward the beginning or the end of the week?

What do you think? Of course bear in mind that these are just examples. There are obviously many possible good responses.

Also, it's good to remember that as you deal with the customer's objections, usually the first one or two negative responses will just be excuses. The real issue may only come out after that, and it may well be important to spend more time addressing the customer's concerns. In future episodes, we will do more practice on

comparing the advantages of products or services and on employing different styles of persuasion.

So now you've turned around the prospect's negative responses, and hopefully gotten an appointment. Finally, it's important to close down the conversation positively.

If you were unable to schedule the next step, what can you say? You might say, "Well, thanks anyway. It was nice talking to you." If appropriate, you can add, "Well, give it some thought, and if you change your mind give me a call." And it almost never hurts to say, "Have a great day!"

And in successful sales calls, it's always very important to leave the prospect with a good impression. Let's review some language you can use.

- Fantastic. I'm looking forward to meeting with you next Tuesday at 2p.m.
- Great. I really look forward to meeting you in person. Have a great weekend and see you next week!
- Thanks. Have a great day!

Well that's about all for today's show, which concludes our three-part series on cold calling. Over the last three episodes, you've learned some great strategies for making yourself more persuasive, whether you are selling a product, selling an idea, or selling yourself.

Today you also practiced dealing with some typical negative responses and closing down the call politely and positively.

Remember—a key to successful persuasion is to ask good questions and listen carefully to the answers.

Don't forget to check out the learner's notes at our website, [www.businessenglishpod.com](http://www.businessenglishpod.com). There you can find vocabulary and definitions, a full transcript, listening and language exercises, and additional strategies for practicing your English.

Thanks again for listening and take care. See you next time at BusinessEnglishPod.com!

## Language Review

Fill in the blanks to complete the dialogs.

- I. A:** I'm not interested.  
**B:** Well, Linda, some of our most loyal customers had the same  
 1) \_\_\_\_\_ you did when I first called, before they had a  
 2) \_\_\_\_\_ to see how what we do will benefit them. We should get  
 3) \_\_\_\_\_. How about next Wednesday?
- II. A:** Well, I don't know. I'm 4) \_\_\_\_\_ busy next week.  
**B:** I understand. I'll only need 15 minutes of your time. What would be better for you, mornings or 5) \_\_\_\_\_?
- III. A:** 6) **A** \_\_\_\_\_, why don't you send me a brochure?  
**B:** How about we 7) **j** \_\_\_\_\_ get together in person? It would give you a chance to see how the product works.
- IV. A:** No thanks, I'm happy with what I have. We've been using the ConStar system for years.  
**B:** It's great that you have the ConStar system. As I said, we recently started serving Pritchins and Rutherford, who also use ConStar. They say that what we have really 8) \_\_\_\_\_ their current service. So I think it would be really 9) \_\_\_\_\_ your time to meet. How 10) \_\_\_\_\_ next Thursday at 1pm?

Bonus question: What is the principle objection in each dialogue?

- I.** \_\_\_\_\_
- II.** \_\_\_\_\_
- III.** \_\_\_\_\_
- IV.** \_\_\_\_\_

## Learning strategy

Role play with a friend. First, decide what product you are trying to sell. It can be a real product—perhaps something from your own company's catalogue—or, for an extra creative challenge, you can make up a new product. Next, make a list of all the possible objections encountered in this episode, i.e., send me a brochure, I don't have time, we're already using your competitor's product, etc. Then, with your friend, take turns role playing the different scenarios. Or, role play by yourself by engaging in an imaginary dialogue. Deal with the customer's objections one by one. It would be a good idea to record yourself so you can play back your voice and check to make sure it sounds suitably slow, calm and friendly.

## Useful Language

### ***Dealing with the "no time" objection:***

- I understand. I'll only be taking a few minutes of your time.
- No worries. I will just take a few minutes.
- I totally understand you are very busy, Ms. Smith, so I'll make it very quick.
- I totally understand. I'll be really quick.

### ***Example: Dealing with the "No thanks, I'm happy with what I have." objection:***

**Linda:** No thanks, I'm happy with what I have. We've been using the ConStar system for years.

**Steve:** It's great that you have the ConStar system. As I said, we recently started serving Pritchins and Rutherford, who also use ConStar. They say that what we have really complements their current service. So I think it would be really worth your time to meet. How about next Thursday at 1pm?

### ***Example: Asking needs analysis questions to better understand the prospect's current product/service and restate your benefits:***

**Linda:** No thanks, I'm happy with what I have.

**Steve:** May I ask who you are using right now?

**Linda:** We use ConStar.

**Steve:** I see. What do you like most about ConStar?

**Linda:** Well, they let us book everything online.

**Steve:** Including your own meeting rooms?

**Linda:** No, we have to book those ourselves.

**Steve:** Well with the Nexus system, you can even handle your own meeting room booking through our centralized database, and there's a team of dedicated help desk staff ready to assist you 24-hours a day.

**Linda:** Really.

**Steve:** You know something, we should really get together to talk. How about Wednesday? Are you free any time in the afternoon?

### ***Example: Dealing with the "I'm not interested." objection:***

**Linda:** I'm not interested

**Steve:** Well, Linda, some of our most loyal customers had the same reaction you did when I first called, before they had a chance to see how what we do will benefit them. We should get together. How about next Wednesday?



**Example: Checking you are speaking to the right person:**

**Linda:** You know, I'm probably the wrong person to talk to.

**Steve:** Oh. I see. What do you do?

**Linda:** I'm the training officer.

**Steve:** Well, who would be the right person to talk to?

**Linda:** You should talk to Jen Mattel. She is the regional admin manager.

**Steve:** Great. How do I get a hold of her?

**Closing down the phone call on a positive note:**

- Fantastic. I'm looking forward to meeting with you next Tuesday at 2p.m.
- Great. I really look forward to meeting you in person. Have a great weekend and see you next week!
- Thanks. Have a great day!

**Answers**

**Listening Comprehension**

1. When Steve asks for an appointment, what is Linda's first response? "Maybe just send me a brochure." Instead of meeting with Steve, she just wants to see some promotional material.
2. What is Linda's second objection? She says she is very busy; she doesn't have time. This is a very common objection, so you should be ready for this one.
3. How does Steve deal with Linda's objections? Obviously each objection requires a slightly different approach, but you notice that Steve deals with each objection briefly and respectfully. He acknowledges Linda's concern, then turns around and asks for an appointment again. To use a tennis analogy that is common in business, this is "leaving the ball in Linda's court."

**Language Review**

1. reaction
2. chance/opportunity
3. together
4. kind of/sort of/pretty
5. afternoons
6. Actually
7. just
8. complements
9. worth
10. about

**Bonus question:**

- I. Not interested
- II. Too busy
- III. Just want to see a brochure, not meet in person
- IV. We're already using another company's product.