

Heat Up Your Business with Warm Calling

It costs about 5 times as much to get a new client as it does to keep an existing client. That's where warm calling comes in.

Each IWOC member has a list of current and past clients. So you don't have to develop a list as you would for cold calling. You can use many of the techniques Jim Leman discussed for cold calling – smile on the phone, call early or late and use a script.

I can just hear you saying, "I can't call Pam to get work because I know she doesn't have any and I don't want to put her on the spot." Of course, you don't want to make your client uncomfortable and you won't if you use warm calling techniques. In fact, they will probably be glad you called. So, you ask, how would that work?

You call your hot list of current or past clients (these are hot calls because you know and have worked with these people before). When they answer, here's what you say:

"Hi Pam. This is Chris Brauchwerk."

"Hi Chris!"

"Did I catch you at a bad time?" - (you don't want to impose and you also want to be sure you have enough time to talk about what you want)

"No. What's up?" - (If you did call at a bad time, find out what would be a better time or day to call.)

"Pam, I need your advice." - (People like to give advice.)

"What about?"

"Pam, you know a lot about the widget industry and you are familiar with my skills. So, I was wondering if you could advise me on who in the widget industry may have a need for my skills now."

(You are not asking Pam for work but it is clear that you are looking for work. If she does provide some names, ask for the e-mail addresses.)

Towards the end of the call casually say,

"By the way, Pam, I don't know if you know about my policy of paying a \$100.00 finder's fee for any referrals that lead to paying work." - (a little incentive for Pam to help you)

End of conversation.

If you get voice mail, do not get into the details. Leave a message such as.

“Hi Pam! Please call me. I need your advice. Thank you!” – (use curiosity to get her to call you back)

When they call back use the answer script above starting at “Pam, I need your advice....”.

This script is not the only script that you can use and not necessarily the best script. But it is important that you develop a script for these calls. It will keep you focused.

Using your script, call all those on your hot list.

What will happen? One of three things may happen.

1. They don't know of anyone who needs you right now but will keep you in mind if they hear of anything (you now have someone bird-dogging for you)
2. Your timing was great. They may have some work they need done and you get the work.
3. They give you the names of a number of people that may be able to use your skills (the main purpose of your call). These people are added to your warm list.

So now you either have more work, somebody bird-dogging for you or a list of people (your warm list) that may need your skills. Not a bad outcome for a number of pretty stress-free calls.

So what's the next step?

You call the people on your warm list.

“Hi Jerome. This is Chris Brauchwerk.”

“Hi Chris!”

“Jerome, Pam Porteuvert over at Acme Widgets suggested I call you.” – (the “Pam suggested” line gives you an introduction and makes this a warm call not a cold call)

“How is Pam?”

“She's great. She sends her regards. I've worked with Pam on a number of copywriting projects in the widget industry and she felt that you may be able to use my skills on some of your current projects.”

If Jerome does indeed have current projects find out what he needs. Go on to discuss your areas of expertise and how they may fit with his needs.

If there is no fit, ask for Jerome for advice on whom to call.

If you get voice mail, do not get into the details. Leave a message such as.

“Hi Jerome! Pam Porteuvert at Acme suggested I call you. Please call me when you get a chance. Thank you!” – (use curiosity to get him to call you back)

What will happen? One of three things may happen.

1. They don't have any work for you right now but will keep you in mind if they hear of anything (you now have someone else bird-dogging for you)
2. They may have some work they need done and you get the work.
3. They give you the names of a number of people that may be able to use your skills (icing on the cake). These people are added to your warm list.

Now you may have some new work and a potential new client, somebody new bird-dogging for you and a new list of people who may need you skills.

Clearly, the only limit to this process is when you get no more referrals. And look what you have accomplished. You have alerted your current and past clients that you are looking for work without asking them for work and they are bird-dogging for you. You may have a vastly expanded hot to warm list of potential clients. You can use this list for other marketing methods you use, such as e-mail blasts, quarterly post cards or newsletters.

Be sure to thank those who helped you. Send each of your hot list current and past clients a little thank you card by snail mail. Yes, snail mail. It has more impact than e-mail.

Within reason this warm calling process can be used any time you are running low on work.

It's almost painless; it's free and it's fast.