

**Susan Berkley's "Silver Inner Circle" Interview with Telephone Selling Expert Art Sobczak, president of Business by Phone**

**"Telephone Selling Secrets Every Voice Talent Should Know: What to say on the phone to get them to use your voice again and again and again"**

**Susan:** And welcome everybody to our Silver Inner Circle call. I'm going to mute everybody out because of some noise on the line. Okay. My guest tonight is Art Sobczak. Art can you hear me.

**Art:** Yes I can Susan.

**Susan:** Okay great. You and I are in our own special little room here on bridge line tonight. But this is the March Silver Inner Circle guest expert call and a special welcome to all the new members who are on the line tonight or listening to the CD. I know we just have gained a bunch of folks who were at our boot camp down in Florida last weekend. I have a special welcome to all of you. It was a great pleasure working with you and I deeply appreciated all of the wonderful testimonials that you gave us at that, how much you benefited from the program.

Well this is the first of many monthly calls that you will be having and I'll explain how this works. For the next hour or so I'll be talking with my special guest. In about 45-minutes I will open the phone lines for questions from you. So if, as I'm speaking with Art, something comes to mind please make a note of it so that when I open the phone lines we can answer your questions.

Now tonight's call is one in a series that I'll be doing about the business side of voice over. On future calls we'll be having experts about the performance aspect. You'll be hearing from producers, talent agents, casting directors and even other very successful talent. But every time I do one of these business oriented calls I get such great response because people, my members really, really want to know how to grow their business. They're very serious about doing this and making voice over a lasting and life long career.

So I think that's something unique that we bring you here at The Great Voice Company and my commitment is to help you grow things as strong and as good and as long we can.

So with that in mind I've invited Art Sobczak on the line. Now I've known Art for years. He's president of Business by Phone and he works with thousands of sales reps each year helping them get more business. Art provides real world how to ideas and techniques that help people use the phone more effectively to prospect, sell and service without what he calls moral killing rejection. And if you've been building your voice over business you know how important the telephone is. So I thought tonight's call would be especially important for you.

Now Art has spent over 22 years writing and publishing The How to Tips Newsletter: Telephone, Prospecting and Selling Report. And for the past six years his free e-mailed Weekly Sales Tips Newsletters. And I would like for all of you to stay on till the end of tonight's call because at the very end Art will tell you exactly how to get going with those resources.

Now he's a prolific producer of learning resources on selling by phone. Art has written several books and numerous audio and video programs. His how to ideas and tips appear regularly in print and electronic media. In fact if you Google Art Sobczak, which I'll spell for you, it's S-O-B-C-Z-A-K, you will find over 13,000 references that have published or reprinted Art's articles. My goodness Art. Most of all Art's subject is a sales person, always has been. He uses what he teaches and he's sold millions of dollars worth of his own products and services. He knows what works and what is sure to invite resistance. And tonight Art will share those ideas with us. So welcome to our call Art.

**Art:** Well Susan it is such a pleasure to be with you again.

**Susan:** Yes now I'm really looking forward to this call because as voice talent we have to use the phone a lot to get business. And the interesting thing that we have is that our voice is our product. So when were making our sales call it's even more important that we do it right.

Art when voice talent are doing tele-selling do you think we should script our message before we call?

**Art:** Oh there's no doubt about it Susan. Probably more so than anyone else and let me just go back to something you had said when you were doing your introduction. You mentioned it was important that your people learn the business side or become very proficient in the business side and in addition to the performance side what's interesting is that as it relates to using the phone in sales it also is the performance side.

Because I tell my people in seminars, and I work primarily with business-to-business sales people that we really are performers when were on the phone. And I do suggest that everyone uses a script at least for the opening statement of the call, which we'll be talking about here shortly as well as voice mail messages, which we'll also be discussing. So yeah most definitely and I would say that the advantage that all voice over talent has is that you all are exceptional at being able to work from a script so you don't sound like your working from a script and not everybody has that talent.

**Susan:** Yeah so we've overcome a hurdle that you always have to leap over when you're working with run of the mill sales people. But let's start up by

dispelling some of the myths about telephone selling. If you could name the biggest one what would it be?

**Art:** Well there's several and I would say probably the biggest one would be that using the phone in sales or prospecting is just a numbers game. Maybe you've heard that before, most sales people have and what a crock that is because if it were a number's game that would mean that if you took two people and handed them both the same script at the end of the day, assuming that they were calling from a similar list they would have the same results. And I could guarantee that that is not going to be the case because, of course, it's a quality game.

After the opening statement what is being said and what is being reacted to, how it's been reacted to really will determine success. So it's most definitely not a numbers game. There are several other myths of sales.

Another related one would be for every no you get your that much closer to a yes, which that's not true at all because if your not saying the right things on the phone your that much closer to getting another no and then your really getting good at being bad at it.

And then another myth is you should love rejection. Boy you got to love rejection! You got to eat it for breakfast. And that's ridiculous as well because if I love something or if anybody loves anything we probably want more of it. And we certainly don't want more rejection.

What I suggest is we look at what happens to us on our calls in a different way and try to make every call a learning experience and don't call it rejection. You see rejection is not an experience. When we get a no on the phone that's an experience and rejection is how we define the experience. So if you define your no as personal rejection chances are after a while you probably will stop picking up the phone.

And also what's interesting Susan about the people on the call tonight and everybody you work with is that it's very similar to my business in that we are the talent and it's sometimes a little bit more difficult for us to sell ourselves because we could have the tendency to take a personally. But again that is something that we must overcome and look at that fact that when were placing phone calls it's not us necessarily that they are saying no to. It is a situation and on every single call we can still can get a win of some type, even if it's as minimal as making sure that they leave, they leave the phone call with a good feeling about us. Or we at least ask the question if we could be the next one in line that they might consider when they do have an opening.

**Susan:** Well those are some great points you've just made and I'd like to go back and kind of how do you expand on them. May I do that?

**Art:** Certainly.

**Susan:** You said it's not a number's game, it's a quality game. What would some of the components be of a quality sales call?

**Art:** Well using the phone in sales or prospecting is a process. It's not just throwing it up against the wall and seeing what sticks like many people think, and that would be similar to consumer telemarketing where those things are just like talking direct mail pieces.

What we're doing is we're placing a consultative call to somebody who has some real need. So I'll give you the process and then what we'll likely need to do here is to break down each component of the process and discuss in as much detail as we can, in the short amount of time we have, how to execute each of these steps.

But in professional sales the first step is our pre-call planning and in our pre-call planning what we're doing, of course, is doing some research about the people or the organizations that we're calling and then we're setting our objectives for the call.

Now in addition to that we're also planning out the first several components of the process and that would be what I call pre-decision-maker conversations and that would be as soon as we get somebody on the phone we want to ask some questions, collect some information and this would also be the part where we might be dealing with voicemail and screeners. So we need to be prepared for what we're going to say there.

The next step after that would be the interest creating opening statement, which is the first 15 to 20-seconds of the call. Actually probably the first 10 to 15-seconds of the call. What we're trying to put this person in a positive receptive state of mind, actually probably the first 10 to 15-seconds of the call, where we're trying the questioning phase of the call. We don't want to get into a pitch, and I hate using that word by the way, or a presentation. We just want to get to the questioning, which is the next part of the call. So questioning is the next part. It's here where we're asking questions to identify some needs or pains or problems, concerns, we're doing some qualifying.

And then based on that information the next part of the call is our recommendation for whatever the next step might be. Some people like to call it presentation but I like to call it recommendation since a recommendation always has to come after questions.

Then the next step of any professional call is the commitment phase where we're asking for some type of commitment, which may be the commitment for the job. It might be commitment to be considered the next time they have an opening for

whichever area we feel that were best suited for. It would simply be a commitment that we could give them a call within the next month or so to stay in touch with them. So were at top of mind.

And then the last part of the call is wrapping up and setting up the next action, whatever that might be. So were summarizing who's going to do what next and what the next steps are and attaching a timeframe to it.

So those are all the components of any professional sales or prospecting call and they all need to be present and if any of them are missing or if any of them are weak that's why calls crumble.

**Susan:** Art can you go over those one more time because I can just almost just hear people taking [inaudible] notes out there.

**Art:** Sure.

**Susan:** And I want to make sure because this is so great. What is the first component of a call?

**Art:** First component is pre-call planning. Number two is what we call pre-decision-maker conversations where were talking with people other than a decision-maker, which normally happens before we get to them and we can always use these people as an information resource. And it's here where were also working with voicemail.

**Susan:** Right.

**Art:** Step three is the interest creating opening.

**Susan:** Right.

**Art:** Step four is questioning. Step five is recommendation. Six is commitment for action. Some people call that the close. I like to call it commitment because you may not necessarily be closing a sale on every call. We'd like to but chances are were not. But we should be trying to get some kind of commitment on every call.

**Susan:** Right.

**Art:** And then finally we have wrapping up and setting up the next action.

**Susan:** Excellent. All right well let's see if we can expand on some of these because I want to get you to elaborate how these might apply to a person, a professional sales person in voice over because let's face it guys you thought...I mean my members and my students know by now that what they think it is,

getting into voice over is being something totally different. They think it's about the voice when really ultimately it is about having a business, a sales business where the product is your voice.

So what are some of the components of a pre-call plan?

**Art:** Well I did a little bit of research and put in some thought on this Susan since we spoke, since you invited me to do this. And what I want to do is walk you guys through what I would strongly suggest everybody does before you ever get close to a phone call again because the phone call itself is really just culmination of everything else.

And what we need to do or what you need to do is set yourself apart from everyone else out there because you all know there are a lot of people out there doing what you do and a lot of people who are very good at it. And in order to get hired you're going to have to do some things to separate yourself and also you're going to have to do that on the phone at least to have an opportunity to separate yourself.

So let's dig in here. First thing I would suggest that you look at, what is your sales model or what's your strategy here? And I know some people's strategy is to just kind of spray demos out there. Send them out, call somebody up and then say, "Hey did you get my demo? Did you listen to it? What'd you think?" Or even if you have a chance to get them on the phone.

Well here's my suggestion and this is the same type of suggestion I'd give to anybody really selling anything out there in the business world and it's this I would suggest placing a phone call first before you send out any demo at all because if you think about it the people that your calling, the casting directors, talent agencies they are getting tons of recordings every day and obviously they're not listening to all of them.

So I would take a different approach and even before placing that phone call I might do a pre-approach to separate myself, which might be a fax, might be a letter, might be a postcard, might be an e-mail, might be a FedEx envelope with something silly in it just to set yourself apart. And there would be nothing more in that note other than a little bit of a sales message and I would incorporate some of the things I'm going to talk about here in a minute from your opening statement into this, something that would peak their curiosity, something about your specialization, something about your experience, perhaps it's a referral, just whatever might set you apart. But all were trying to do there is peak their curiosity.

Then I would place the phone call and the purpose of this phone call would not be to give a presentation on yourself initially but more so to ask questions about them and what they're looking for. Now that would be my approach and even

before I did this what you really want to do is a couple things. You want to find out more about the people that you're calling and then also you want to do a little self analysis on what sets you apart.

Let's start first with analyzing buyers and I would sit down and really do a worksheet for the different types of buyers that voice over talent sells to. So based on our conversation Susan I know that you're calling again, the talent agencies, casting directors. What other titles might you be calling on?

**Susan:** Production companies.

**Art:** Okay production companies.

**Susan:** Maybe project managers.

**Art:** All right.

**Susan:** That pretty much covers it. I think it's producers are the bulk of the types of people that were getting work from. But also talent agents and casting directors.

**Art:** All right. So the first thing would be then sitting down with each of these categories and, of course, there would be some crossovers as far as your answers here. But I'd ask myself several questions. First question would be so this person within this organization what is their job consist of and what does their everyday look like? Well they're probably getting tons of calls. They have all kinds of request on them. Going out and finding talent is probably just one part of their job.

And we want to think about them personally. How are they evaluated in their job? Bottom line is how can I make their job easier? How can I make them look better in their job? And again you might not be saying all these things on the phone but you want to get into that mindset.

Then a little bit more specifically as it relates to hiring voice over talent I'd want to ask and answer a couple questions. One would be as it relates to voice talent what do they want the most? What are they really looking for? Now of course this'll be general until we actually ask them but in general what are they looking for?

And from our conversation today, Susan, you told me that they want people who are reliable, people who are available, people who are reasonably priced, people who are easy to work with, people who take direction well and there's probably more.

So I would answer that question for each of those categories. There might be some unique answers for each one. And then the other question I'd want to answer is what do they want to avoid as it relates hiring and working with voice talent? And some of that might just be the reverse or the opposite of what we just said here but there might be some other things.

Now why are we doing this? Well really the reason you're coming up with some word-for-word phrases. You might be able to plug into great voicemail messages and opening statements, and by the way those really are interchangeable. People always say, "Well what should I say in a voicemail?" And I always answer, "The same thing that you're going to say in your opening statement." Once you get them on the phone just with a little bit of variation. So I would want to answer those questions first. So do a little worksheet there, brainstorm, see what you come up with and if you know people in those positions or you have some now it might be great to ask them some of those questions.

Then what I would do is when I'm getting ready to place a call to a company or an individual if I have the name of someone, this is part of pre-call planning now on the micro level. I want to do research both on that company and on the individual. How do I do the research? Well I would definitely go to their website. I would devour everything that I could see there about them, what they're looking for, who they work with, types of projects that they work on, anything you could see that might be useful. Certainly if they have an about us section there you want to read that about the decision-maker, see if you can glean any great information about them.

Then I'd dig a little bit deeper online. I'd go to Google and I would type in the agency's name, see what I might be able to come up with. I'd then also what I would do is I would if I have a decision-maker's name I would Google them as well. Who knows what you might come up there. You might find some personal things about them, maybe some productions they've been in, maybe articles they've written, maybe some awards that they've won in the industry.

How will this help you? Well you might find something that you just might be able to use in an opening statement that could cause them to say, "Wow this person's done their research." For example, you might say, "Joe I understand that your agency primarily works on this type of project. I understand this is what you're looking for. I might have something here that potentially could help you with your next project. I'd like to ask you a few questions see if we have a fit."

Now notice that's a lot different than, "Hey I sent you a demo. Did you get it? Did you listen to it?" So now I'm looking at this more as a consultant and I'm trying to peak your curiosity a little bit and you never know what you might find when you're doing some research here. And I got to tell you that decision-makers are always more pleased to speak with someone who appears that they're just not smiling and dialing but that they have done their homework and

they're interested in the business issues that these people are facing as opposed to just in their own self-interest of getting hired.

**Susan:** You know Art, and the other thing that you do if you've gone to this research is when you talk to the person and you show that you've taken the time and you really take an interest in them even if they don't have an immediate job for you your creating something that's called psychological obligation. And they actually feel badly that they don't have anything for you and the more you call, and then we'll actually even call you out of guilt or hire you, give you a job out of guilt.

I remember a situation in my own voice over career as I was building it where I was very, very persistent when I started and one of my prospects was The Travel Channel who I'm sure you've heard of.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Susan:** And I wanted to do their promos. So I called them. I literally must have called the promo guy for two years periodically. I didn't make a pest to myself. And one day he said to me, "You know Susan," and he knew I taught a class. He said, "You know you must be a great teacher because you practice what you preach. You're really persistent but I really don't have anything for you right now because we just finally got contract and he's doing all our work and I'm really sorry I can't use you." I said, "Okay no problem." I went in knowing unless I ask.

Next day I got a call and he said, "Susan can you come work?" And I said, "What happened to the guy that you signed the contract and he said, "Oh he's on everything. Were sick of him."

**Art:** That was quick.

**Susan:** This is in 24-hours. So what probably happened was some higher up said to him, "You know what? Get a woman. We want some other female voices." And I was the first top of mind.

**Art:** Well and that's an exactly point; there's a lot to be said for being persistent but not being a pest. And being persistent having something of potential value every time you call instead of just calling to check in. So you might say, "I've got an idea. I just want to let you know that I've just taken on a couple of other projects similar to yours." Or whatever might be new with you or maybe you saw some news, something that again would give them something to think about and say, "Oh yeah that's Susan again."

**Susan:** Well you just said something important and I want to probe on that. You said, "Have something of potential value every time you call." And I know people are thinking, "Well what could I have that would be useful for them?" What are

sources of little tidbits that you can throw into your sales call? Give us some examples of that.

**Art:** Well what were talking about here would be the follow-up calls is that what you're talking about?

**Susan:** Even the prospecting calls because you just said, "Well don't make a pest of yourself but when you call your not just calling to say I'm staying in touch."

**Art:** Right, right.

**Susan:** But have a little tidbit to offer. Can you give us some examples of what those types of tidbits might be?

**Art:** Well let's first take a prospecting call and then we can talk a little bit more about a follow-up call which would be more of the what I call a value added point staying in touch type of call.

On any prospecting call what we want to do and this by the way is the same thing on voicemail and I'll just kind of give you my mini opening statement, seminar here. Every time you call somebody the listener is asking themselves, "Who are you? Why you calling me?" And very importantly, "What's in it for me?" And the what's in it for me is the key and that's why I suggested doing these exercises where you really have to figure out what is it that these people want and again what do they want to avoid.

And then also doing the self analysis of what sets you apart. So you might have your voice that sets you apart, maybe you do characters or maybe there's something that they are looking for that you have a specialty in.

Well let's say you do have a specialty or maybe you have certain experience level in an area that they're working on. Perhaps again you have...you can drop a name. You've got a referral. Perhaps you're more affordable than somebody else if you're just starting out. All of those might be something that you could work into the opening. Now in addition to that and I'm jumping ahead here to the third part of the call, which is actually the second part, the pre-decision-maker conversation. It's here where you may also find some little tidbits that you could use.

What I mean by this is when you call up the agency you'll likely get someone else or you could find someone else. If you get voicemail I'd like to opt out and see if I can get someone on the phone. And when you do this what you want to do is introduce yourself and your company name if you have one and then say, "I'm hoping to speak with Joe Smith, your casting director. Before I do I want to make sure that I'm prepared. I'd like to ask you a couple of questions first." And then

here I would ask anything and everything that I could that might give me some insight into that person as well as the type of projects they're working on and also what they maybe looking for when they're looking for talent.

And it is here where you might learn something very valuable and what that might be well it could be just about anything. Perhaps it could be like your situation where they could say, "Well I do know that we just dumped somebody and we have an opening. I do know that he's reviewing some recordings right now." And you may be able to drop that into the opening. For example, "The reason for the call is that in speaking with your assistant Pat I understand that your now in the process of [insert] and what I do is [this] and I simply like to ask you a few questions to see if it would be worth our while to speak further."

**Susan:** That's very powerful. Can you give us some verbiage or talking to the assistant themselves? Can we preface it with, "I know you're very busy." How do you get into speaking with the screener and starting to extract some of that important information?

**Art:** Well a few points about working with screeners. My philosophy is I want to treat the screener as the most important person in the world because at that moment to you they are. And there's all kinds of literature out there, these are more myths I guess of sales and that is never talk to the screener. The screener's only job is to get rid of decision-makers. Screener can't buy from you and all that is wrong.

Actually a screener's job is protect the decision-maker's time and to get rid of people who just want to sell something with their own self-interest in mind. And I like to look at these people as someone who's going to keep everybody else out but is going to help me because we need to understand their job. So as far as what to say to these people first step is when they answer the phone normally they're going to say, "ABC Talent may I help you?" And I always like to use the 'help' word back, "Yes I hope you can help me." Introduce yourself and your company and then give the reason for the call, "Reason for the call is again I'm hoping to speak with Pat Smith, your casting director there. And before I do I would like to make sure that what I have is going to be of some interest or some value to him or her." Or, "So that I'm best prepared when I speak with him or her, I'd like to ask you a few questions first."

And then if you didn't get their name, always get their name, repeat yours, "By the way again my name is Art. Your name is...?" And get them to fill in the blank. And then ask them questions. And again do this in a very sincere and friendly way and you'll find more often than not people will answer your questions if you treat them with respect.

And by doing this you may also find that they may be an ally for you as well. I've had screeners actually go in and tell decision-makers that they didn't need to

look anywhere else for the presenter for their national sales meeting because she found the guy. I treated this person with respect and as it turns out she was one of the main influencers for their national sales meeting.

**Susan:** Yeah and that would work, that's wonderful. And this tactic that you're outlining it's fantastic. And it's going to work especially well at production companies and these talent agencies. They're small shops and often the position that leads to a full fledge producer, it would an intern or an assistant who starts by answering the phone.

So they do have a lot of clout. Often the assistants do screen the demos and they like to think of themselves as on the way to being, and this isn't just a job for them in other words. They're sort of developing themselves for a career. So I think it's wonderful what you outline. It should work very, very well.

**Art:** Well great point. It reminds me, different industry, but I was working with a company that sold to restaurants a couple of weeks ago. I did their national sales meeting. They were a food service equipment company and I talked to their number one sales person for the last five years and I said, "What is your key to success?" And he said, "Be nice to the bus boys because the bus boys become managers, the managers become owners, the owners become franchise owners and then franchise owners become multiple franchise owners and they remember you on the way up."

And even more so I guess in your situation here because if they are screening the demos now we can get them even more involved and say, "Well let me ask you, how many demos do you get there on a daily basis and how do you decide who your going to hire? And how do you decide who you're not going to hire? And can you maybe teach me here what would be the process to get my foot in the door with your agency?"

**Susan:** Yeah these are all great. So moving from the screener into the interest creating open, so we've gotten all this fantastic ammunition and then the screener passes the call over to the decision-maker. How do we weave all of that in and take the next step?

**Art:** Well there's a three step process here. First step is introduce yourself and again company name if you have one. And then step two is a combination of a lot of different things or maybe any one of these things and it really involves mentioning some type of specialty if you have one. For example you could say, "The reason for the call is that I specialize in working with...", and here you can talk about if you've done anything more than one or two times you could be a specialist in that area, if there is something that you work on more than others.

The other one would be using a third party reference. "I've worked with a number of other production companies of your size who specialize in industrial

videos.” So you’re putting them in the same category as someone else. The other way to execute step two might be using some of the information that you picked up from the intern, the screener, whomever. You might say, “In speaking with Pat there, your intern, I understand that you’re now in the process of doing this.” So your letting them know that you know something about them.

And then you want to tell them that you may have something of potential interest for them. You may say that, “I do have some interest in seeing if we might have a fit.”

And then the third step is letting them know that you want to ask some questions, not that you want to send them a video, excuse me, an audio, a demo. Tell them that, “I simply like to ask you a few questions to see if we might have the bases for further conversation.” And again the three steps, number one introduce yourself. Number two mention some type of connection or item of interest, some type of value statement. And then step number three is just simply move them to the questioning phase of the call.

**Susan:** That’s great. And so once they get into the questioning phase of the call what happens?

**Art:** Well the questioning phase of the call what you really want to find out is or are their needs. You don’t want to talk about yourself until you find out about them. So I most definitely would want to find out many of those things that hopefully I’d done some research on before. What do they want and what do they want to avoid? And hopefully I would know some of the answers to these questions, kind of like an attorney does. Attorney’s can go through a deposition process prior to a trial. Our deposition process is sitting down and thinking of these answers our self. Or asking someone other than the decision-maker first.

So I want to make it all about them. I want to ask what type of jobs they typically handle, how they hire their talent, ideally what they’re looking for...

**Susan:** How often they hire talent?

**Art:** Yeah most definitely. Then I would probably get a little bit more specific and ask them to describe ideally what they’re looking for. Ask them about the process for hiring their talent. Ask them what disqualifies them from even being considered for working with them. And really your next questions will be determined by their answers. Just make it conversational. Don’t be uptight and don’t sound like your working from a list of prepared questions here. I shouldn’t have to say this obviously to listeners here but quite often when people get in a sales situation they’re so caught up, “You know I got to ask my 10 questions,” that they’re just not being natural in conversation.

**Susan:** And this makes the whole process so enjoyable I think when you're this well prepared and there's really no pressure on the talent is there?

**Art:** Well that's the key to being smooth in sales. Quite often people will say, "Boy that's just a natural." Well that's like looking up in the air at an airplane and saying, "Boy that airline pilot yeah that's the natural up there." No that comes through hours of preparation and it comes through not always enjoying the success that were looking for but always learning from every single call. And even if we don't get a yes we can go back and I would strongly suggest tape recording. I guess tape recording; I'm kind of dating myself. Audio recording our calls and then going back and listening to them and not only listening of course for the voice quality but what did I say and what might I have said differently and what will I say differently next time?

**Susan:** Art how do you feel about opening a call with a phrase, "If I've caught you at a good time," or, "Have I caught you at a good time?"

**Art:** Well I definitely prefer, "If I've caught you at a good time," but where that should go would always be after number two in the opening statement process. For example, "Hi this Art Sobczak with ABC Voice Over. And the reason for the call is that in speaking to the person who answered your phone there I understand that you have a major production coming up where you're going to be looking for a variety of different voices for the industrial video that you're doing. And I have quite a bit of experience in that and if I caught you at a good time what I'd like to do is ask you a few questions about some of your requirements to see if I might be able to provide you with more information.

**Susan:** Yeah that's great. That really helps. Okay so we took them through the questioning phase and were up to step five, which is what you call recommendation. How does that flow?

**Art:** Well recommendation is totally based on what happened in your questioning. And recommendation could be, "Here's who I am. Here's what I do and here's how it's going to help you and here's what I suggest our next step be." So it's here we have the opportunity to talk about yourself. And again I would only talk about myself based on what they told me they were looking for.

So if they say, "Well here's the type of person were looking for. Here's the type of voice were looking for. And here's how I prefer to work with people." Again that's why the questioning is so important. If they mention, "I really need somebody who's available. I need somebody's who's reasonably priced. I need somebody who takes direction well." And just by the way if somebody said any of these things when they answer the question. If somebody said, "Yeah I really need somebody who takes direction well." "Oh could you explain that for me? Tell me what that means?" Have you had situations where you had somebody that didn't? What were those?"

So again I'd want to give their definition. So when it comes time for the recommendation I can just pretty much quote back to them what they just told me and you can bet they're going to agree with it because they just said it.

**Susan:** I know. That's my favorite part of a doing a sales call is all the note taking I do when I pair it back to people. And if I might make a suggestion, when we get around to the recommendation part it's there where you might want to, and of course in the questioning phase one of the question's would be for voice talent, "So how do you like to receive your talent demos?" Because there's three ways that we can send a demo; one is a hard copy in the mail as a CD. Another is to e-mail it to them and a third would be via our website. So perhaps in the recommendation phase one thing I might try would be to say, "So let me ask you this Art, are you online right now?" And you'd say, "Yes." And I'd say, "Would you have a moment to go with me over to my website so you can take a listen to my demo right here and now?" What do you think about that?

**Art:** Perfect.

**Susan:** Yeah. So that way they get the immediate sample. You don't have to chasing after the person to get them to hear your demo. You take them over right there, right then and there. And you can make up some sort of light hearted comments such as, "Oh you know how easy it is to lose demos and you'll have a memory that you talked to this nice girl on the phone today but a week from now when you have a call for somebody with a voice like mine maybe you'll lose the demo. I'm going to show you exactly where it is right now. Let's listen together. So I want it fixed firmly in your mind," something like that.

**Art:** That's awesome. I'm taking notes.

**Susan:** Good. And after that are there any other things you would add to this recommendation phase?

**Art:** Well the commitment really is a seamless transition from your recommendation because it's here; let's say you do get them to go to the demo with you. They're listening to it and they're thinking, "That sounds good. I could see how we might be able to use that." Then I would go for a commitment.

A commitment being as simple as, "Great where do you think you could use me?" And then getting a little bit more specific, "Well when would that happen? Well what would we need to do to get the ball rolling on this?" So you see a lot of people think the close is this magical moment in a sales call, this tension filled moment where you have to use some type of goofy story to close the sale and it's really the natural culmination of the entire process. I compare it to, I don't know if we have any sports fan on the phone here but I compare it to running the

ball in in football from the one foot line where if we try to close too early it's like throwing the long bomb. There's too much ground to cover.

But here you've already done all the heavy lifting and again the natural or next step is just simply asking and it's just running the play. It's just doing it.

**Susan:** Which is great and you've taken such careful notes that hopefully you've extracted information that you can use on future calls and contacts for years and years to come because all of this, of course, then goes into your database.

**Art:** Absolutely. Needs to.

**Susan:** Yeah this is great. Go ahead.

**Art:** And what this also does for you is if your taking the notes, putting into your database it is helping you for your follow-up call. Let's take the cases where perhaps they say, "I like you," or, "We don't have anything right now." I want to get clarification on that and say, "So what you're saying is you do feel you could use me specifically. You could use me for this type of project, is that correct? Great. When you do anticipate that coming up? So what your saying is you will call me at least for (I don't know if you guys call them auditions) but you will at least give me a shot at that, is that right? Great. So if I don't hear back from you say within a month may I give you call. Super."

So now we get off the call, I put all that in my notes and now I have the basis for our next conversation. So I could open up that follow-up call with, "Susan the reason for the call is I'm following up on our last conversation about a month ago where you mentioned that you felt I might be appropriate for one of your commercial recordings. And what I'd like to do is continue that conversation plus I'd like to share a few things I've been doing since then that might of some interest to you."

**Susan:** That is so priceless. Fantastic. Art after we have our initial sales call is there any other kind, would you advocate written follow up or perhaps an e-mail to the person reinforcing the call in some way? Or should we just let it go till the month later when we do our follow up?

**Art:** Oh I would definitely suggest staying in contact a variety of different mediums. I would suggest e-mail, postcard, letter, fax and after hours voicemail. Let's say face it as you had mentioned to me earlier in your business these people are very busy and it might that they're going to simply call up the person that they think of first. So if I can stay in contact with them and my name's in front of them and they're going to recall who I am and what my specialty is that's one way for us to stay top of mind even though we may not necessarily be talking to them.

And you had mentioned before the call here somebody has a newsletter and I don't know if that was a newsletter for voice over business but if you had something like that to stay in touch I would say that that would be a great part of your marketing strategy.

Let's face it sales using the phone is just one part of your overall marketing and getting book strategy. There has to be a lot of things that work together in synergy.

**Susan:** Sure. And I just want to reinforce everybody this is a real business. This isn't just a little acting your doing here and there. If you take your voice over career seriously you can be set up for life. I've said to my members before that I realize recently that just one of my customers that I acquired about 12, 15 years ago has paid me an aggregate over one million dollars and I'm sitting right now on a very beautiful condo on the water overlooking the Hudson River that thanks to my voice over career, my diligence and my sales effort.

So if this sounds like work to you think again. It is so worth it and I can guarantee you that probably less than 5% of your competition will go to this amount of trouble. To them they just don't take it seriously like a sales job. So while there's competition going in there's almost no competition in the follow through I would say Art. It's very, very few people treat this like a true business and train themselves like my members do, to have the opportunity to train themselves now to be this level of sales professional.

Now you mentioned those voicemails during off hours. What's the protocol for that?

**Art:** Well put yourself in position of the person's who's getting a lot of voicemails, which they are. Everybody is. I would say you want to make it short, sweet, to the point, thinking about you, some type of value message. You don't want to go on and on and on. Most people will delete before they ever get to the end of it.

And I would just make it similar again to any e-mail or note that you might send and simply say something to the affect of, "Just wanted to let you know still very interested in working with you. You had mentioned the 'X' project and when that comes up I'm here ready for you. Here's my phone number."

**Susan:** Yeah introduce yourself. Would you start out by saying, "Hi it's Susan Berkeley, voice talent."

**Art:** Oh yeah. Oh yeah, most definitely. Yeah sorry to overlook that.

**Susan:** Go ahead.

**Art:** I was going to say that is always, that's the way I suggest starting every phone call starting with your name and again if you have a company that your working with.

**Susan:** That's great. What do you think about voicemail blasts?

**Art:** Voicemail blasts as in automating your voice going out?

**Susan:** Yeah.

**Art:** For potential buyers of voice over talent?

**Susan:** Yeah, yeah.

**Art:** I would shy away from it because if I receive that I might think you couldn't take the time to call me personally? That's my feeling.

**Susan:** Yeah if you do it because we had a member that tried that and he said, "Okay I'll do it in the middle of the night." And he neglected to realize that a lot of the people he were calling had cell phones. They were small one person shops and he actually woke them up in the middle of the night.

But he had to send that. He sent out these I'm sorry notes and it actually worked out in his favor because people were understanding. He did it only once though.

**Art:** Wow. Okay.

**Susan:** Art any other points you want to make before I open up the call to our members for questions?

**Art:** Well I just want to reiterate what you had said and that is this is a business and you would not have, you won't have any voice over jobs unless you have clients. And in order to get clients obviously you have to sell them in some way.

And going out and selling yourself is kind of an unpleasant thing for some people if they don't consider themselves to be a sales person. However, if you strongly believe in what you have and you feel like your delivering great value and you are prepared with what you're going to say just like your going to be prepared once you have the job and your working from the script. And it gets easier and with that ease comes a little bit more confidence and then it snowballs.

And then you won't find yourself having to make as many calls even though you probably will because then you might be going after some of the bigger jobs and where you're able to charge even more.

So as far as sales itself keep in mind people are going to buy it for their reasons, not yours. We need to find out what those reasons are. So get information before you pick up the phone. Get information when you're on the phone before you speak with the decision-maker. Use that to generate some interest and then get information after you've generated the interest so we can find out why they buy and how they buy and then tell them how you could do that for them.

**Susan:** That's great. Before I open the call Art I want everybody to know how they can get more of your resources because I got to tell you this has been one of the best calls I've had in the almost two years that I've been doing these calls. So Art I couldn't be happier with the fantastic information you're giving us. And this is so step-by-step and it's fantastic and I hope people realize that if they follow what your saying it's going to mean 10s if not hundreds of thousands dollars in their pocket over the time that they do this. So thank you so much.

Tell people about resources, how can they get more of Art?

**Art:** Well I've got all kinds of stuff. I'm not on the call here to sell anything in particular.

**Susan:** No but this is as a resource for them. Your stuff has got to be in their library before you go into it. I'm sorry to interrupt. I just want people to know that before I met you personally Art I was subscriber to Telephone Selling Report and because of what I learned through you, I mean you made it so easy for me. Everybody needs to subscribe to your magazine, your newsletter.

Tell them how to do that please and tell them how to get your books and how to get on your list, go right ahead.

**Art:** Sure. First of all just go to my website, which is BusinessByPhone.com, BusinessByPhone.com and there on the left hand side you can simply put in your e-mail address, get our free weekly e-mail sales tips right there. You'll also get access to back issues of the e-mail newsletter.

And then on that home page you can navigate around and I have a number of different resources that you can check out and all of them will help you be more affective on the phone, depending on what you want to accomplish. We've got some stuff there just if you want to just create opening statements. We've got a CD for that. You can check out the monthly Telephone Prospecting and Selling Report.

And within about three weeks were going to be introducing a membership Inner Circle, similar to what you have going here for sales people, which will give people access to about \$600 dollars worth of stuff right off the bat for two months for absolutely free. So if you just sign up for the e-mail newsletter you'll be notified about that. But most definitely if you do nothing else just go to the site,

get on the e-mail newsletter list and start checking out some of the back issues and I guarantee you you'll gain right away

**Susan:** That's great and it's free, those e-mail newsletters. So super Art. Okay let me unmute the call and get some questions for you.

Hi guys oh were live now.

Noel: Hi Art this is Noel Tupelaro.

**Art:** Hey Noel.

Noel: I have a question.

**Art:** Sure.

Noel: Being in sales myself I sometimes find this happens but being new to the voice over trade it happens more often where you do a blind custom audition and all you have to accompany it is a letter. If that were you what would you put in the letter?

**Art:** Explain for me a blind audition.

Noel: Okay. It's an audition say for a business presentation and they give you a script and you do maybe a paragraph of it and you e-mail it to them and you want to e-mail a cover letter along with it. And they won't tell you who it is.

**Art:** How do you find out about the blind audition?

Noel: Through what's called a virtual agent.

**Art:** Okay. This means you go to a website and they say, "We've got this job available. Send in what you think you could do."

Noel: Yes.

**Art:** Well my first inclination would be, if this would be possible, is just to be different than everybody else which might be is there anybody there you can talk to find out just a little bit more about the project. What's involved? How they're going to make their choice and then if so I would certainly want to ask those questions and then put something to that affect into the letter.

**Susan:** You don't even know who they are though Art.

**Art:** Pardon me?

**Susan:** We don't even know who they are. We only have an e-mail address. What they do is they post the script and the requirements and then they say, "Okay send us your audio." And then we pick. So we don't even know who it is, who the company is.

**Art:** Okay.

**Susan:** Or how to contact them.

**Art:** Well that's a good question. I'm not sure if there's any tricks that you can use here. So all they're going to do is listen to the audio and read the letter is that right?

Noel: Hopefully they'll listen to the audio.

**Art:** Hope you can listen to the audio. Again I don't know if there's any magic here because they're not giving you a whole lot to work with. My premise of sales is that I want to get information before I give it. So I don't know if there are any magic words here other than perhaps saying in the letter or maybe even in the audio, "I would really enjoy the opportunity to ask you a few questions about your agency or this project because I may have something else here that you might be interested in." Without that again I guess I'm just at a loss.

**Susan:** Well let me tell you this is one of the seductive things about voice over these days because it is easier than ever to get these kinds of blind leads that Noel's talking about and so what happens is the talent stops doing good old sales 1-0-1, which is prospecting and building a list where they have all the contact information.

So while it's perfectly fine and we should be auditioning online as much as possible do not mistake that for a business because it's not a real business if you don't have a prospect list.

So you still have to go out there and do the rest of the work. It's only one part of the whole picture Noel. Let's see if we have another question.

James: Art this is James Early in Connecticut. I've got a question for you. I called someone about a week or two ago that had an ad in a local business newspaper and they had an agency and all this stuff. And so I called them and the person who answered the phone I got the feel that it really wasn't their like secretary or screening. It was like some agency that just answers the phone for you, make it look like you've got a staff.

**Art:** Oh sure.

James: Because every time I've called back it's a totally different person and it's like they've got a little script of whichever button goes, they know who it is.

**Art:** Sure. Probably an answering service.

James: And so then they say, "Well I'll give you their voicemail." The first time when I said, "Well I saw your ad in this thing I'd like to talk to you about, see if we could do some business together." She called back.

**Art:** Okay.

James: And she was happy to get my demo. And I was trying to follow up and just actually make sure she had it. But then I got the voicemail again. I probably didn't say it in the best way. She hadn't called back at that point. I don't want to bug her. Do you have any ideas about how to do that so...I did get her e-mail so I can e-mail her along? So I've got that. Anyway any thoughts?

**Art:** So the question is how to deal with those type of answering services or how to deal with this person in particular that you already...?

James: Well those type because they don't necessarily know anything about the business.

**Art:** Right. First I would want to find out, I would say, "Now do you actually work for Ms. Johnson? Are you there physically or is this an answering service?"

James: Oh okay. And that's okay to ask that question?

**Art:** Sure. What's the worse they can say?

James: Okay.

**Art:** So I'd want to find that out. And then I'd ask, "What are alternative methods to get a hold of her? What e-mail address do you have for her?" And I want to find out any of that information if possible. Now sometimes, of course, they're not going to give it to you.

But then what I would want to do is make sure that the voicemail message is as compelling as possible and give them alternative means to get a hold of you as well. "Here's my phone number. Here's my e-mail address. If you wouldn't mind shooting me an e-mail or at least if you could return my call. And if you reach my voicemail let me know what your e-mail is if that's more convenient for you."

James: Okay.

**Art:** Ask all those questions. Let's use all the resources available to us if we can.

**James:** Okay good. That's helpful.

**Art:** Great.

**Susan:** Art thank you and thank you James very much for that question and Noel too thanks for your question. We are now at the end of the hour. This hour flew by. Art thank you so much for your time. You have been fabulous.

**Art:** Well thank you for inviting me and I really enjoyed it and let's do it again at some point.

**Susan:** Yeah and you know what? If you should think about doing voice over yourself. I love your voice. Like you need another business right?

James: I know a good voice coach.

**Art:** Yeah I do too.

**Susan:** Okay. Well thanks so much to all of you and Art thank you again. It's been a real pleasure.

**Art:** And thank you and good luck to everybody and hopefully we can help you in the future.

**Susan:** Thanks so much. Bye.