



Making Collections Calls Count

A Veritas Inside Guide

Truth | Tenacity | Teamwork

Making Collections Calls Count

There's an old saying that 'a sale is not a sale until it is paid for'. This statement underlines one of the biggest problems for businesses – getting paid on time. The quicker you can get paid, the better your cash flow and your business performance.

The telephone is the best way to communicate with your customers and get them to realise that you are serious about collecting money. It also helps you to build a personal relationship with the customer.

Don't wait until the account is overdue. Start communicating with customers before payment becomes due.

How to make an effective call

- Be prepared! Have the details of what's outstanding at your fingertips. Be clear about the nature of the debt, what is outstanding, what is overdue and when the payments are due.
- Talk to the right person in the company, the decision maker, who can authorise payment on your account.
- Don't just chase the overdue debt, chase the whole account.
- Know when your contact is available and make a note of this on your credit control system.
- Maintain a calm, confident manner, and listen to what the customer says. Be friendly and fair.
- Try to identify and resolve complaints and disputes while you're on the phone.
- Provide the customer with as much information as possible (including a copy of the invoice) as this will prevent any delays.

- Be helpful. If a query requires further investigation, agree with the customer what you need to do and when you intend to get back to them with the answer.
- Keep control of the call. Don't let the customer distract you from your objective - which is to secure a commitment to pay the debt on a date that meets your deadlines.
- Make a courtesy call to customers with high value invoices 48 hours after the invoice is raised to make sure that it has been received and that there are no problems that will delay payment.
- Be professional but assertive.
- Don't lose sight of the objective – to get paid on time.

Summary

- Prepare for every call
- Speak to the decision maker
- Listen!
- Provide as much information as possible to the customer and resolve any queries quickly.
- Confirm any agreements reached in writing where possible.

How to plan your call list

Prioritise your calls by calling the largest balances and problematic customers first.

Plan your call list to ensure that you are optimising the calling time available to contact as many customers as possible.

Identify customers that need to be called at a certain time of the day. Maybe they are overseas and start early or later in your working day because of time differences. Possibly they only work on set days or take calls at certain times.

Keep a record of all credit control activity, ideally on your credit control or sales ledger system. Or have a pen and paper at the ready to write down relevant details about the call, what actions have been agreed and agreed deadlines.

When you've finished the call, confirm what has been agreed in writing. Send the customer a brief confirmation of any points of agreement (email is ideal for this) and try to get the customer to acknowledge the communication.

If your customer agrees to pay, make a note of the date and follow up immediately if the payment is not received.

But how persistent can you be? There are rules about how often you can call which are set by the Financial Conduct Authority but, whilst working within these guidelines, don't leave too many days between calls. By calling regularly you are not only emphasising the importance of paying your account but also keeping your company on the customer's radar.

Those credit controllers who keep in regular contact and build relationships with their customers are the most successful.

Summary

- Make every call count
- Plan your day to maximise calling opportunities
- Don't leave long gaps between follow up calls
- Deal with issues as they arise

Remember the key principles for effective telephone collection techniques:

Get on the telephone!

- Engage and empathise with your customer
- Talk to the right person

Prepare for your call

- Allocate sufficient time
- Investigate queries promptly and thoroughly
- Don't leave the call without a promise or action

Always keep the purpose of your call at the top of your mind: to get the full amount paid on time!





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Contact Us

Call

Please call our team and talk confidentially and informally to one of our expert advisers about your requirements and objectives.

Phone: 0330 223 2525

Alternatively, email us at

contact@veritascs.co.uk

Meet & Plan

Built from years of working closely with businesses, our unique planning process will ask the key questions to chart where you are now, your desired destination, and your route to getting there.

All discussions are in complete confidence and without obligation.

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