

Best Practices for Kick-off Calls

1. Performance

People pay for this type of **Performance** just like they pay for a movie or a concert. You don't want to be fake on these calls but you do want to **Perform**. It is no different than a Broadway show. You have lines that you've rehearsed that you are going to deliver in character.

In the **Performance** it is important to be genuinely excited about being able to run the campaign for the client. You may never hear someone compliment you on how excited you are in a kick-off call **but they will definitely call you out if that element is missing.**

How you behave on the kick-off call can lay the groundwork for how your client behaves throughout the campaign. If you are nonchalant and boring, then there is a better chance that your client will act the same as the two of you communicate throughout the campaign.

2. Agenda & Routine

Just like it was mentioned in the last section, you have lines to deliver in this performance, and that is your **Agenda & Routine**. Think of your **Agenda** as what you say (following the script of the campaign planning doc) and your **Routine** being how you say it.

You need to have this down cold. Your **Agenda & Routine** need to be embedded in your DNA to the point that you could deliver this on call with no prep. Very little should be completely improvised when it comes to the **Agenda**. Sure, any given call could throw you a curveball and you'll need to deviate from the script for a bit, but if you have truly mastered the material then improvising a little won't matter that much because you know how to *steer the ship* accordingly.

I have strategic points along my call where I have certain pump-up phrases and statements. Most of the time it's me saying, "We're really excited to work with you and we're looking forward to get this campaign up and running ASAP" etc. etc. I know exactly where to interject these types of statements because I have them planned out in my **Agenda & Routine**.

I also never use phrases like "I don't know," "I'm not sure," or "I have NOOOO idea what you're talking about. You straight cray cray, girl." I always turn negatives into a positive. Instead say things like, "Good question, let me check on that for you and I can get you the answer so we know the best way to handle it."

Everything I say and do is a reflection on the product/service that they just bought. Each time I talk to them is an opportunity to continuously sell these people on why they should be doing this. If I'm not constantly communicating the value, then they won't see it.

This kickoff call is key to preventing any sort of "buyers remorse" and will re-sell them on you and the service they have purchased.

3. Preparation

Mastering the agenda & routine to the kick-off call are certainly part of the **Preparation**, but even more so, **Preparation** is about researching what the client does and reviewing the notes of the campaign before the call. In all reality, it is best to do this a day or two before the call. So make sure you not only review notes, and if another member of your team sold the client – speak with them beforehand as well.

4. Listen

I will be the first to say that my kick-off calls have a habit of going the longest. Yes, I am a talker but I also provide a ton of opportunity for myself to **Listen** and have the client tell their story. If I don't **Listen** and I don't provide them the opportunity to talk, then I'm not learning as much about the nuances of their business as I should.

Ask lots of questions and be prepared to sift through all that is said to find the finer things that could help make the campaign a success. If you constantly push and try to move things along without **Listening** to your client, then not only will you miss important items, but the client will think you don't care.

This does not mean a kick-off call should be three hours. But the difference between a 60 minute call and a 90 minute call is minimal. That extra 30 minutes for the call could be the difference in having a successful call versus a "rushed" call. So give the client an opportunity to talk so that you can take a break from performance mode and **Listen**.

The other important part of the ability to **Listen** is that this will be how I gain a full understanding of their business and their targets for the campaign. I will never understand this unless I **Listen**. This may be the most crucial part of the Kick-off call. If I leave the call without understanding their business and their targets as it relates to the campaign, then everything else will fail.

5. Build Rapport

This call is the first major interaction between us and the client where we are *officially* on the same team. It is of the utmost importance to begin (or cement) the **Building of Rapport** during this call. I'm not only trying to listen about the client's business, but I am

also trying to find out who they are as a person. What do they like? What are their interests? What type of personality do they have?

I'm looking for anything I can grab a hold of and run with. This can be done by how you open up the call, but really the opportunity is there all throughout this conversation. The client needs to know that we generally care about them, their business and this campaign. Adjust to the client and what they need. Do not make them adjust to you.

What Makes A Successful Kick-off Call?

There are two things that make a successful Kick-off call:

1. You deliver a well-rounded **Performance** based on the **Routine & Agenda** you put together in your **Preparation**.
2. You **Listen** to the client so that you have a full understanding of their business, targets and goals for the campaign, while at the same time **Building Rapport** so the client feels like choosing our service was one of the best decisions they have ever made.

Ben Kniffen
COO - LinkedSelling