

KEY ELEMENTS OF A GOOD COLLECTION CALL

Thoughtful Preparation – will assure a more productive collection call. Review the paperwork or previous collection notes to familiarize you with the most recent history of the customer. In particular review payment history, recent purchases, and any broken promises.

The Right Attitude – will set the tone for a successful collection call. Be straightforward and always professional. Do not take it personally – and do not lose your temper! Remember you are the one who kept the agreement.

The Right Person – will save you time, aggravation (well hopefully), and money. Make sure you are discussing the past due account with the right person, preferably the check-signer. Learn to recognize when you are being screened. If you are sure that you are being screened, let the screener know. You may find you will get your call back.

Stay In Control Of The Call – and keep a collection call just that – a collection call. Try not to allow the customer to sidetrack you with endless stories and excuses. The goal is to collect money, professionally and effectively.

Keep An Open Mind – and adjust your collection effort to the customer's current circumstances. Where verifiable you must be ready and willing to look at alternative repayment schedules, agreements, etc. Working with the customer will most often bring the most favorable results – collected dollars.

Always Be Certain – that you do not leave a collection call “open-ended”. Make certain you get specific dates that the customer intends to deliver the payment. Also make certain you determine the exact amount the customer intends to pay. If possible a check number or electronic tag number. If the promise is for a return call, the same determination for detail is necessary. The results will be fewer follow-up calls and more collected dollars.

Take Good Notes – as they are vital to the current situation, as well as future situations. Make sure your notes are concise and complete. Try to avoid large amounts of abbreviations. Always consider the other people who may need to review your notes. Concise notes are critical in the event of a skip or a lawsuit.

Do Not Let Your Ego – prevent you from separating the tree from the forest. You will always find a delinquent customer who either does not respond or does not see it your way. Often it comes down to personalities versus plain fact. Often a customer simply cannot pay. Spending too much time on these accounts takes you away from more productive calls, to customers who you can communicate with and can pay. Consider referring the non-believers to your outside collection agency.