

# Setting the Stage For Sales Success - Getting More Sales Interviews

**What is a sales interview? It is defined as the opportunity to tell your story under favorable conditions. Practice these 5 approaches to securing successful sales interviews.**

By Paul J. Meyer

A highly important link in the chain of successful selling involves the proper understanding and the development of effective techniques in setting up sales interviews. A sales interview is specific, concrete, and has one purpose: to make a sale.

**“A sales interview is specific, concrete, and has one purpose: to make a sale.”**

Too many salespeople tend to measure their effectiveness by the calls they make or the appointments they get, without the proper frame of reference. A master salesperson, however, thinks only in terms of sales interviews. His thinking is geared to making sales and every meeting is, in his mind, a sales interview. He approaches the meeting without giving any thought to the possibility of any other result.

## 5 Approaches to Arranging Sales Interviews

The sole objective of an approach is to arrange a sales interview. During the approach, which also includes a pre-approach, never give the prospect information that should be saved for the sales interview.

### #1 — Telephone

One of the most valuable assets for the professional salesperson is the telephone. Cold calls are frequent. However, as in any professional sport, you should warm-up before you call, such as through reading positive affirmations. **Setting up a specific time and place to make phone calls is helpful.** Select a planned telephone presentation and then practice. View the whole procedure as a process, which, if consistently pursued, results in a sales interview.

### #2 — Personal

Whereas one disadvantage of the telephone approach is that the prospect depends on sound alone to evaluate you, an advantage in the personal approach is that your personality shines through. Some disadvantages of the personal approach are that it is time consuming and you may be drawn into conversation with the prospect that should be saved until the sales interview.

**Never make a personal approach when you are not prepared to make a sales presentation.** Suppose that when the prospect is asked for a sales interview, he responds, “What’s wrong with right now?” If you’re not prepared, you are trapped and either lose the opportunity or lose the sale. The only acceptable excuse for not accepting a sales interview right now is that you are on your way to another scheduled appointment or sales interview. Be sure to be truthful and keep in mind you’re in an approach, not an interview.

### #3 — Social

This approach involves using opportunities to arrange business interviews with the people you have contact with socially.

**The key is having a sincere interest in people.** You can start by asking about the person, in turn the person then asks about you.

### #4 — Mail

Instead of approaching the prospect in person or by phone, you can use a more formal approach such as sending a personalized, short, handwritten note. **Be sure to include information about the prospect in your note to help establish a connection.** Also, stipulate how much time is needed for your presentation.

### #5 — Group

Become an effective public speaker and use every opportunity to do so, such as by joining Toastmasters. Speak at community events and meetings for local organizations. Exchange business cards or secure a list of event attendees, if possible.

## Favorable Conditions for Sales Interviews

After using one of the five key approaches to set up the sales interview, focus on ensuring that favorable conditions are present for success. The first, and by all means most important, favorable condition in a sales interview is to have a **Class A prospect.** Without a good prospect, favorable conditions do not exist. If you’re selling to a company, make sure that the person with whom the interview is arranged has the authority to make a decision.

The second favorable condition needed is **time to tell your story.** Know the time you need. For example, you cannot fit an 18-minute presentation into three minutes. Last but not least, **reasonable privacy** is the third favorable condition required. This one is the most difficult to control, but it can be done with tact and a pleasing, but forceful, personality. Translate the word *reasonable* to something that is meaningful for your presentation.

**If you arrive for the interview and favorable conditions do not exist, postpone telling your story.** Too many salespeople see themselves as being at the mercy of circumstances and situations over which they feel they have no control. They rationalize this unfortunate state of affairs by saying, “It goes with the territory.” Or, “It’s just a part of the selling game.” By contrast, the truly professional have developed techniques that allow them to be masters of their situations, rather than slaves to them.

Paul J. Meyer may be a *New York Times* best-selling author, but it is his success as an entrepreneur that has made him a millionaire many times over. To learn more tactics and tools for sales results, order Paul’s very practical CD, *How to Get Successful Sales Interviews* today, available at [www.pauljmeyer.com](http://www.pauljmeyer.com).

