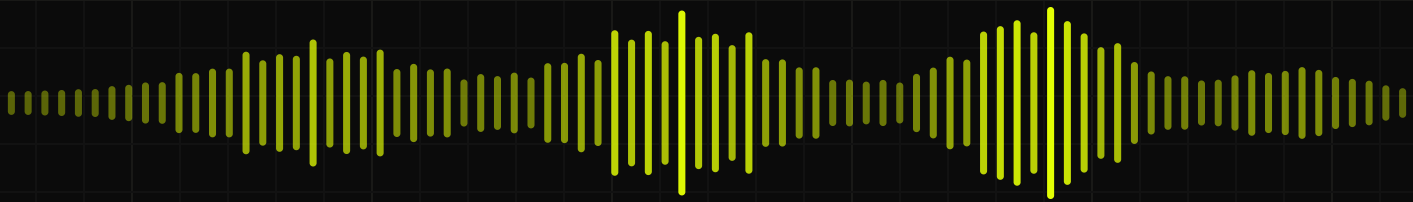
THE DIAL LAB

SEVEN BELIEFS · FREE

WHAT WE BELIEVE.

The psychology of the cold call.



GREG GOLDBERG

16 YEARS ON THE PHONE

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THE HARD PART OF THE COLD CALL HAPPENS BEFORE ANYONE PICKS UP.

Most sales training teaches what to say. Almost none of it touches what happens in your head before you dial: the dread, the stalling, the doubt that shows up two minutes before the block.

That part is what The Dial Lab is about. Seven beliefs, each with the psychology behind it and one drill you can run before your next call block.

01 **Cold calling isn't a script problem. It's a fear problem.** p.04

02 **Busy is the new scared.** p.07

03 **Nobody gets comfortable. You get practiced.** p.10

04 **A real reason beats a clever opener.** p.13

05 **A “no” is information, not a verdict.** p.16

06 **AI is the orchestra. The call is the solo.** p.19

07 **The doubt is louder than the data.** p.22

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WHY I WROTE THIS

In one of my first sales jobs, on an inside sales team at IBM selling MaaS360, a mobile device security product, I learned that booking a meeting on a cold call takes a force of nature. One objection, then another, then another. So I started studying every book and podcast I could find, writing my own cold call scripts, and rehearsing them to myself.

Paycom is where I accelerated. Jeb Blount's playbooks and coaching helped me significantly, and I've followed his work ever since. That's where I learned what makes it easier: preparation. When you come prepared, knowing what to say and understanding the psychology of the conversation, what's hard for most people becomes easier for you.

Since then I've worked alongside and led a lot of reps. The ones who struggled usually weren't missing the words. They knew the script. They could handle the objection in a role play. Then the call block started, and suddenly the CRM needed updating, the list needed one more pass, the email needed one more rewrite. That isn't a skills problem. It's fear dressed up as work.

The shift came when I stopped waiting for the fear to go away and started training it like any other skill. Rehearse the hard moments before they happen. Name the doubt out loud instead of letting it choose your next task. The fear never fully leaves. It just stops making the decisions.

This is for anyone who has stared at the phone longer than they'd like to admit. The rep in their first month, the seller who hasn't prospected in a while, the leader trying to figure out why a team that knows what to say still isn't saying it.

GREG GOLDBERG 16 YEARS ON THE PHONE

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Cold calling isn't a script problem. It's a fear problem.



THE DIAL LAB

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THE PSYCHOLOGY

The words were never the hard part.

Most reps who stall on the phone already know what to say. They've read the script. They've heard the recordings. They still find a reason not to dial.

The hard part happens before anyone picks up. Your brain runs the call in advance, and it runs the version where it goes badly.

A better script doesn't fix that. Handling the fear does. Treat it like any other part of the job: something you train, not something you wait out.

THE EVIDENCE

Ten minutes of writing out their worries before a high-stakes test lifted anxious students' scores, from around a B- to a B+.

Ramirez and Beilock, Science, 2011. Four experiments, 173 students.

It was students and exams, not reps and calls. Our read: the mechanism carries over. Worry takes up the room you need to think.

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THE DRILL

WRITE THE FEAR DOWN.

01 **Before the block, set a timer for ten minutes.**

Not five. Not “when I get a second.”

02 **Write what you're actually worried about on this block.**

The hang-up. The silence. The VP who's short with you. Be specific.

03 **Close the page. Make the first dial.**

You're not solving the worry. You're getting it out of your head so it stops running the call.

The fear doesn't need to be gone. It needs to be on paper instead of in the call.

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Belief 02 / 07 ON BUSYWORK

Busy is the new scared.



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THE PSYCHOLOGY

Busywork is fear with a to-do list.

Re-researching an account you researched last week. Rewriting a sequence that was fine yesterday. Cleaning a list that's already clean. One more coffee before the block.

All of it looks like work. None of it carries any chance of hearing no.

That's the point. Put a task with rejection in it next to a task without it, and your brain picks the safe one and calls it productive.

THE EVIDENCE

If-then plans (“if it's 9:00, then I dial”) helped people reach their goals far more often, across 94 studies.

Gollwitzer and Sheeran, 2006. Meta-analysis.

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THE DRILL

WRITE THREE IF-THEN RULES.

01 **If it's the start of the block, then I dial before I open email.**

The trigger is the clock, not your mood.

02 **If I catch myself re-researching, then I dial that account instead.**

You already know enough to start.

03 **If I finish a call, then I dial the next number before I log notes.**

Momentum is easier to keep than to restart.

The block starts at the time on the calendar, not when you feel ready.

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Belief 03 / 07 ON NERVES

Nobody gets comfortable. You get practiced.



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THE PSYCHOLOGY

Waiting to feel ready is waiting forever.

The first few seconds with a stranger don't get easy. Not after one year, not after ten. They get familiar.

Reps who wait to feel calm before they dial are waiting for something that doesn't arrive. The nerves come with the job.

The move isn't to switch them off. It's to point them somewhere. A racing heart before a call feels a lot like a racing heart before something you're looking forward to.

THE EVIDENCE

Saying “I'm excited” instead of “I'm calm” before a stressful task lifted performance.

Brooks, 2014. Three experiments, 441 adults.

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THE DRILL

SAY IT OUT LOUD. THEN SAY IT AGAIN.

01 **Before the block, say “I'm excited.” Out loud.**

Not “I'm calm.” You won't believe that one, and your body won't either.

02 **Say your first thirty seconds out loud, three times.**

To a wall, a colleague, your car. The words have to leave your mouth before a prospect hears them.

03 **Make the first dial inside two minutes.**

Practice that sits too long turns back into waiting.

You won't get comfortable. You'll get practiced, and practiced is enough.

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Belief 04 / 07 ON OPENERS

A real reason beats a clever opener.



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THE PSYCHOLOGY

People say yes to a “because.”

In a classic study, people asking to cut in line at a copy machine got a yes far more often when they gave a reason, even a thin one.

But when the request got bigger, the empty reason stopped working. Only a real one held up.

A cold call is a big request: a stranger's attention, right now, unplanned. A clever opener is an empty reason with better timing. A real reason is why they stay on.

THE EVIDENCE

Copy machine study: about 60% said yes with no reason, about 94% with one. On the bigger request, an empty reason stopped working.

Langer, Blank and Chanowitz, 1978. Later studies only partly replicated it.

Stating your reason for calling made calls 2.1x more successful. “Did I catch you at a bad time?” was about 40% less likely to book.

Gong's own data, from its cold call research.

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THE DRILL

FILL IN THE BLANK BEFORE YOU DIAL.

01 **Write one line per account: “I'm calling because ___.”**

Plain English, the way you'd say it to a friend who asked.

02 **If you can't fill the blank, don't dial that account yet.**

Find the reason first. It's usually one more minute of thinking, not one more hour of research.

03 **Say the reason early, then stop talking.**

Let them answer. The pause is part of the reason.

No reason, no dial.

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A “no” is information, not a verdict.



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THE PSYCHOLOGY

One no weighs more than one yes.

A bad call sticks with you longer than a good one. That's not you being soft. It's how everyone's brain is built.

So a no feels like a judgment on you. It almost never is. Most objections are reflexes, not decisions: wrong time, wrong person, or no reason to stay on yet.

Read it as data. A reflex gets one calm answer. A real no gets a thank-you and a clean exit.

THE EVIDENCE

Bad events hit harder than good ones of the same size.

Baumeister and colleagues, 2001. Review of the research.

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THE DRILL

SORT EVERY NO.

01 **After each no, write one word: timing, person, reason or reflex.**

Two seconds. It moves the no out of your gut and onto the page.

02 **Handle each objection once.**

Acknowledge, ask one question, propose a small next step. Then let it go.

03 **If they object twice to the same thing, thank them and leave.**

A clean exit keeps the door open for the next call.

The no is about the call, not about you. Log it and dial the next one.

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AI is the orchestra. The call is the solo.



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THE PSYCHOLOGY

Let the tools carry the work. Train the human for the finish.

Research, briefs, lists, the CRM, email: AI is getting good at all of it, and it should take that work off your plate.

What it can't do is the live part. Hearing the hesitation in a voice. Changing what you say mid-sentence. Earning a stranger's trust in thirty seconds.

The tools your team uses are good. They measure the conversation. Someone still has to learn to have it.

The risk isn't that AI takes the call. It's that the time it saves turns back into busywork, and the call never gets more practice.

THE ORCHESTRA (AI)

- Research
- Briefs
- Lists
- CRM
- Email

THE SOLO (YOU)

- **The opener**
- **The pause**
- **The “no”**
- **The next dial**

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THE DRILL

SPEND WHAT AI SAVES ON THE PHONE.

01 **Read the AI brief in sixty seconds. Then dial.**

Prep that runs past a minute is usually avoidance.

02 **Book the time AI saves as a call block.**

Unbooked time turns back into busywork.

03 **Rehearse your objections out loud.**

The answer has to live in your head, not on a card.

AI composes. You perform.

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Belief 07 / 07 ON DOUBT

The doubt is louder than the data.



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THE PSYCHOLOGY

“Is cold calling dead?” is usually the call block talking.

The question sounds like market research. It also gets you out of the next dial.

Notice when it shows up. It rarely arrives on a Saturday. It arrives two minutes before the block.

Doubt is a hiding place with a smart-sounding door. The answer to it isn't another article. It's a dial.

THE EVIDENCE

Sales job postings dipped across the board from mid-August to mid-September 2026. Sales leadership fell 14.3%, Account Executives 10.4%, SDR/BDR roles 7.0%: the smallest drop of the three.

PredictLeads' own data, US Sales Hiring Index, October 2026.

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THE DRILL

ANSWER THE DOUBT WITH A DIAL.

01 **Notice when the question shows up.**

Right before a call block is not a coincidence.

02 **Check the data once. Then close the tab.**

You just did. The phone seat is still being hired.

03 **Make one call before you decide.**

The answer is on the other end of the line.

Dial first. Decide later.

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SEVEN BELIEFS.

01 Cold calling isn't a script problem. It's a fear problem.

02 **Busy is the new scared.**

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04 **A real reason beats a clever opener.**

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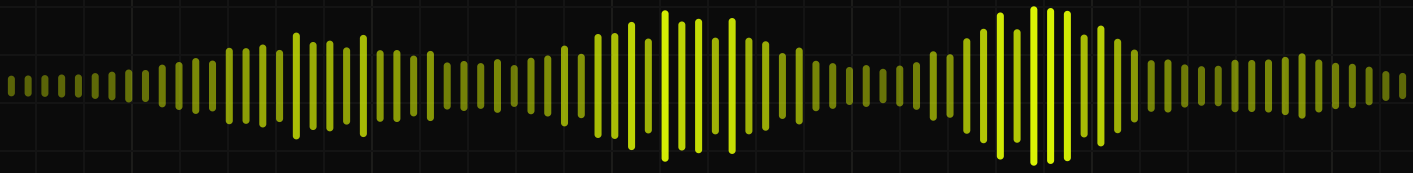
YOUR NEXT STEP

FREE

Comment SAMPLE on the post this came from and we'll send you Twelve Objections: twelve common objections and what to say to each.

Follow The Dial Lab for one breakdown every week.

Win the half-second.



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SOURCES

Every number in this book comes from one of these. Figures from companies that sell sales tools are their own data, and we say so where we use them.

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THE DIAL LAB

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE COLD CALL

WIN THE HALF-SECOND.



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