

• AGENCY GROWTH • THE PHONES

The Cold Calling Playbook

Book **2 to 3 client meetings a day** from one 100-dial morning block. The exact opener, permission line, pitch, and word-for-word objection answers that take you from a 0.9% script to a 10% one – so you stop hanging up on yourself by 11am.

The dials-to-meetings math

The 10% opener

The permission + reason line

The fill-in pitch

4 brush-offs, answered

Gatekeeper & voicemail

The daily call tracker

WHY YOU QUIT BY LUNCH

You make 60 calls, book nothing, and decide cold calling is **dead**.

It isn't. You just don't know what a normal day looks like, so a normal day feels like failure.

Here is the part nobody told you. A great cold caller and a quitting one make almost the same number of dials. The difference is they expected the rejection, because they knew the math. When you know that one connect comes from roughly 18 dials, a "no" stops feeling personal. It is just a number ticking toward the meeting you are owed.

THE REAL NUMBERS

Out of **55,701 dials**, only 9,247 connected, a 16.6% connection rate, which produced 5,265 real conversations and **254 booked meetings** (Cognism, State of Cold Calling 2024). The average B2B success rate is 2.3% to 2.5%, about **1 meeting per 40 dials**. Top performers hit 5% to 8% (SalesHive, 2025). The number does not lie. Your reaction to it does.

Cold calling is not broken. Quitting at dial 60 is.

So map your 100-dial morning to direct lines and watch it become predictable. At a 16.6% connect rate that is roughly 17 connects, and at a 5% set rate per dial that lands 2 to 3 meetings. Every dial below is worth the same fraction of a booked call, including the ones who hang up.

100

DIALS

Direct lines, one tight block

17

CONNECTS

16.6% on good data

10

CONVOS

Past "hello, who is this?"

2-3

MEETINGS

~5% set rate

That is one morning. Do it Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and you walk into the weekend with 6 to 9 meetings on the calendar. The whole rest of this playbook is about the eight seconds that decide which way each connect goes.

THE OPENER

The second you say your agency's name, they **mentally hang up.**

You can hear it. The flat "we're all set" before you finished a sentence. The fix is the first line, and it is counterintuitive.

SAY THIS THE OPENER

"Hey [Name], it's [You] with [Agency]... **how have you been?**" *(then go quiet)*

Why it works: Gong studied 90,380 cold calls. Opening with "How have you been?" booked a meeting **10.01% of the time versus a 1.5% baseline**, a 6.6x lift. It pattern-interrupts. The brain assumes you've spoken before, so the guard drops for a beat. That beat is your whole opening.

**NEVER OPEN WITH THIS**

"*Did I catch you at a bad time?*" It feels polite. It is the **worst-performing opener in the study at 0.9%**, about 40% below baseline. You hand them the exit before you've said why you called. You are doing their screening for them.

After the pause, do not rush to pitch. You earned three seconds of attention, not a sale. Use them to be honest, because honesty is the last thing they expect from a cold call, and that is exactly why it lands.

SAY THIS THE PERMISSION LINE

"I'll be straight with you, this is a cold call. Give me **30 seconds** and then you can tell me to get lost. Fair?"

Why it works: You name the elephant before they do. Asking for permission and capping it at 30 seconds makes you the one person all day who respected their time. Most say "go ahead," and now you are talking *with* permission instead of *against* resistance.

SAY THIS THE REASON LINE

"The **reason for my call** is [specific trigger]..."

Why it works: Stating "the reason for my call is..." increased the likelihood of booking by **2.1x** (Gong). A clear reason signals this is not a random blast. Anchor it to a real trigger: a new hire, a job change in the last 90 days, a fresh round of funding, or an ad you saw them running.

THE PERMISSION-BASED PITCH

You hate your own pitch because it sounds like **every other agency.**

Fix it by getting specific and short. Fill these four blanks once, say it the same way every time, and stop improvising at dial 12.

THE 4-LINE PITCH

"We help [niche] get [specific outcome + number] without [the pain they expect]. The reason I called: I noticed [real trigger]."

1 • NICHE

Name the exact business type. "Roofers," not "businesses."

2 • SPECIFIC OUTCOME + NUMBER

"30 estimate requests a month," not "more leads."

3 • THE PAIN THEY EXPECT

"Without burning ad spend on tire-kickers."

4 • REAL TRIGGER

A new hire, a job change, funding, or an ad you saw live.



THE TALK-TIME RULE

On dead calls the rep talks the whole time. On booked calls the call runs nearly **twice as long** because the prospect talks. After your four lines, ask a question and shut up. Aim to keep your own monologues under **20 to 30 seconds**, then hand them the mic.

THE 4 BRUSH-OFFS · 1 & 2

The line that kills you isn't "no." It's the **polite** one.

"Not interested" and "send me an email" are reflexes, not decisions. Here is the word-for-word answer to each.

1 They say: **"Not interested."**

YOU SAY "Totally fair, most people aren't until they see exactly what this is. Can I take 20 seconds, and if it's not for you, you hang up and I never call again?"

Why it works: You agree with them first, which removes the thing they were braced to argue against. "Not interested" is a reflex fired before they heard anything. You are not fighting it. You are asking for one specific, tiny, time-boxed exception, and giving them the off-ramp keeps you the reasonable one.

2 They say: **"Just send me an email."**

YOU SAY "Happy to. So I send the right thing and not a generic deck, are you the person who'd actually own this if it made sense, or is that someone else?"

Why it works: "Send me an email" is the polite kill. You always say okay, send it, and never hear back. Instead, you agree, then trade the email for one piece of intel: the decision-maker. Either you confirm you're talking to the right person, or you just found out you weren't, and now you have a name and a reason to call back.



THE PRINCIPLE UNDER ALL FOUR

Agree, then redirect. Never argue. The objection is a door held half-open, not slammed. Your job is one more sentence that earns one more sentence, not to win the debate. **Keep your prospect talking and the call alive.**

THE 4 BRUSH-OFFS · 3 & 4

"We're all set" and "no budget" are **curtains, not walls.**

Both sound final. Both have a clean, non-pushy answer that keeps the conversation going.

3 They say: **"We're all set."**

YOU SAY "Makes sense, and honestly most of the clients we work with said the exact same thing right before we showed them the one gap that was quietly costing them deals. Worth 15 minutes to see if you have it too?"

Why it works: "All set" means "I don't see a problem worth solving." You don't challenge that they're fine. You introduce the possibility of a blind spot, framed by people exactly like them who also thought they were set. The curiosity gap, not pressure, is what buys the meeting.

4 They say: **"We don't have the budget."**

YOU SAY "I hear you, and I'm not asking you to spend a dollar today. I'm asking for 15 minutes. If what I show you is worth it, we talk budget then. If it's not, you've lost a quarter of an hour. Fair trade?"

Why it works: Budget objections this early are almost never about money. They're a brush-off because they don't yet see value. You take price off the table entirely and shrink the ask to the only thing that matters right now: a short conversation. You are selling the meeting, not the retainer.

**On a cold call you are never selling the deal.
You are **only ever selling the next 15 minutes.****

GATEKEEPER & VOICEMAIL

"What is this regarding?" and you **fall apart.**

The receptionist isn't the obstacle. Sounding like a salesperson is. Talk to them like a peer who expects to be put through.

GATEKEEPER WHEN ASKED "WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?"

"Hey, hoping you can help me out. Is **[First Name]** around? I'm calling about **[the trigger]** and wanted to run something by them directly."

Why it works: "Hoping you can help me out" treats the gatekeeper as an ally, not a wall. Using the decision-maker's first name signals familiarity. Naming a specific reason beats "it's a sales call." You are calm, brief, and you expect to be connected, so you usually are.

**DON'T DO THIS AT THE FRONT DESK**

Don't launch your pitch at the receptionist. They can't buy and they will shield the person who can. Don't sound nervous or over-explain either. **Confidence and brevity get you transferred. Pitching gets you a voicemail.**

VOICEMAIL UNDER 20 SECONDS, EVERY TIME

"Hi **[Name]**, it's **[You]** at **[Agency]**. I'm calling about **[specific trigger]** and I think there's a quick win for you. I'll try you again **[day]**, or grab me at **[number]**. Talk soon."

Why it works: Voicemails feel like a black hole because most ramble or beg for a callback. Keep it **under 20 seconds**, name a real reason, and say you'll call again. You're not waiting on them, you're warming the next dial. A tight, specific voicemail earns a callback around **4.8% of the time**, and even the ones who don't call back recognize your name on attempt three.

**YOUR MOVE**

Never leave a voicemail on the first dial. Leave it on the second or third, once your name has flashed on their screen a couple of times. **Familiarity does half the selling before you say a word.**

THE CLOSE

They sound warm, then say "send me some info" and vanish.

A warm call with no booked meeting is a loss. The instant you sense interest, stop talking and put a specific time on the table.

SAY THIS THE ASSUMPTIVE CLOSE

"Easiest thing is I show you on a quick screen-share what this looks like for [their niche]. I've got **Thursday at 2** or **Friday at 10**. Which is easier?"

Why it works: You don't ask *if* they want to meet, you ask *which time*. Two concrete options are far easier to answer than an open "when works for you?" You're closing the next 15 minutes, the small yes you've been earning the whole call, not the deal.

SAY THIS LOCK IT DOWN

"Perfect, sending the calendar invite now while we're on the phone. You'll see it pop up. Worst case, life happens, just hit reschedule and I'll see the new time. Sound good?"

Why it works: Booking live, on the call, beats "I'll send something over" every time. The invite lands before the warmth fades. Naming the reschedule button lowers the no-show fear and gives them an out that keeps them in the system instead of ghosting.

ONE QUESTION BEFORE YOU HANG UP

Before you say goodbye, ask: "**Out of curiosity, what made you open to a chat? I want to make Thursday actually useful.**" Their answer is the exact pain you'll open the meeting with. You just got them to hand you the script for the next call.

PERSISTENCE & BENCHMARKS

You call once, maybe twice, then give up. So does **everyone you're losing to.**

The meeting you want is usually on attempt three to six. Almost nobody gets there.

44% of reps quit after a single follow-up and the cadence below is built to put you in the small group that doesn't. Cognism found **3 attempts is the sweet spot** to reach a prospect. Work each name across three days, vary the time of day, and stop guessing whether you're a bad caller or a normal one.

Day 1

AM

Attempt 1 + 2

Morning dial, then a second mid-day. **No voicemail yet.** If you connect, run the opener. If not, you've put your number on their screen twice.

Day 2

MIDDAY

Attempt 3 + voicemail

Different time than yesterday. This is the high-probability attempt. **Now leave the under-20-second voicemail.** Your name is already familiar.

Day 3

PM

Attempt 4, 5, 6

Late-afternoon dials, 4 to 5pm, when gatekeepers have left and owners pick up their own phone. **Most of your meetings come from this window.**

SCORE YOUR DAY AGAINST REAL NUMBERS

METRIC	QUITTING	NORMAL	STRONG
Connect rate	under 10%	14-17%	18%+
Meetings / 100 dials	0-1	2-3	5-8
Set rate per convo	under 2%	~4.8%	8%+
Attempts per prospect	1	3	6

Benchmarks: Cognism State of Cold Calling 2024 (connect and set rates), SalesHive 2025 (meetings per dial), Invesp and Brevet Group (follow-up attempts). Ranges shown as ranges. Your results depend on list quality, niche, and reps.

THE CALL-BLOCK ROUTINE

You stare at the phone for 40 minutes before you dial. **Kill the stare.**

A pre-loaded block removes the decision to dial. You don't summon willpower 100 times, you just start the block.

BLOCK A

11am - 12:30pm

- **50 dials**, direct lines only
- List loaded the night before
- Phone face-down between dials, no inbox
- Tally connects on the tracker, not feelings

BLOCK B

4pm - 5:30pm

- **50 dials**, gatekeepers gone
- Owners answer their own phones now
- Leave voicemails on 2nd and 3rd attempts
- Book live, send the invite on the call

Run it Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Mondays and Fridays convert worse. Two 90-minute blocks, 100 dials, three days a week. That is roughly 300 dials and 6 to 9 meetings a week, on a schedule you can actually keep around client work.

THE TRAPS THAT WRECK A BLOCK

1

Checking email between dials

Every context switch resets your momentum and feeds the stall. **Inbox closed, phone face-down, dial after dial** until the block ends.

2

Judging the day at dial 20

The math only works across the whole block. Twenty dials is noise. **Score the day at 50, never mid-block.**

3

Dialing bad data

A 16.6% connect rate assumes direct lines. Switchboards and dead numbers tank it. **Verify the list before the block, not during.**

THE ONE-PAGE TRACKER

Track the **numbers**, not the feelings.

Tally every dial here. When a "no" is just a mark on a sheet moving you toward a known meeting count, the rejection stops running your morning.

WEEKLY CALL LOG · TUE / WED / THU

DAY	DIALS	CONNECTS	CONVOS	VOICEMAILS	MEETINGS
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Week total					

TODAY'S TARGET

100 dials. Two blocks of 50. Non-negotiable.

MY CONNECT RATE THIS WEEK

$\text{Connects} \div \text{dials}$. Aim for 14% and up.

MY BEST OPENER LINE SO FAR

The one that kept them on past 8 seconds.

THE OBJECTION I FUMBLER MOST

Re-read its script tonight. Run it tomorrow.

Fill it in every block. By Friday you'll know your exact dials-to-meeting ratio, and you'll never again wonder whether **3 meetings from 100 calls** means you're bad or normal. It means you're winning.

• YOUR NEXT MOVE

You can run the phones yourself. Or we can **build the machine with you.**

This playbook is the system on paper. AgencyGod is the system done **with** you: we build your list, sharpen your scripts to your niche, and install the whole client-acquisition machine so the calendar fills whether you feel like dialing or not. It's backed by the \$10,000 guarantee. **You either get the result or you get paid.**

Every feast-or-famine month is another stretch of staring at the phone, hoping referrals show up. We onboard only a handful of agencies a month so we can actually deliver, and **every spot carries the guarantee.** Read this, run it, then come map your machine with us.

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Results mentioned are real client outcomes and are not typical. Individual results vary with effort, market, and execution. The \$10,000 guarantee is real and subject to the program's written enrollment agreement terms.