

## Cold Calling or Dance to Success

By Dr Pete



I was talking to a wash guy from the mid-west the other day. He was having a bad day because business was slow. He was worried that if things continued to be slow his business could fail. It's probably fair to say that we have all had moments like this, especially when we were new to pressure washing. A slow day can turn your mind to thoughts of doom and gloom. I think he was just trying to feel better by sharing his troubles. Fortunately for him, he was talking to "the doctor". I asked him if he was a good dancer. He said he wasn't too worried about that right now. I told him now was the time he needed to worry about it. Let me explain.

It was Saturday night. At the high school the first dance of the year was just getting started. On one side of the gym stood the girls, and on the other stood the guys. Everyone was nervous. Everyone was hoping to have fun. What they didn't realize was that the next five minutes would set the course for their future success or failure. Those five minutes would truly show what they were capable of. Oh yeah, they were nervous alright, but they didn't have a clue as to how important the immediate future really was. Let's focus in on four young men that are leaning against the far wall. Their names are Wally, Flash, Lance, and Rocky. We will start with Wally.

Wally Flowers wasn't a bad kid. He tried to do the right things. His problem was that he was an introvert. He was shy. He just couldn't get his feet moving. He really wanted to dance, but without some outside force pushing him forward, like a buddy grabbing him by the arm and dragging him out, he just didn't have the will power to unglue himself from that wall. We are not going to spend too long analyzing Wally. The poor kid ends up working in a factory that manufactures hot dogs. He runs a machine that spits the things out at a rate of 500 per minute. His job is to watch the machine and push a button if the hot dogs start flying too high or get cut in half. He has very little interaction with his coworkers, he likes that. The good news for Wally is there was a girl at the dance named Jane. She was afraid to dance too. The next day between classes she dropped all her books in the hall at Wally's feet. Wally helped her pick them up. Their eyes met and they instantly fell for each other. They married a few years later and have two kids. A trip to Disney World is being planned for the fall.

Flash Aallot was the exact opposite of Wally. He was extremely extraverted; ask him, he will be happy to explain it to you. He was tall and athletic. He played a few sports, but tried to stay away from the really hard ones, like cross-country. Way too much work running that far! He was young, but already had the entire world figured out. No one had to tell Flash what to do. He moved off the wall quickly and strutted right up to Amanda Right. Amanda was a cheerleader. She was the one that stood on top of that pyramid thing they all did at halftime at the football game. Then she would flip off at just the right second and get caught by the two guy cheerleaders. They would then put her down, she would prance forward, and end with one knee down and her pompoms raised and shaking! Wow... Oh, sorry, back to Flash. He approached Amanda with a winning smile. He didn't ask her to dance, just reached out his hand and off they went. They danced a few dances, but then Flash got a bad case of the "wandering eye". He went to see just how many girls he could dance with. He danced with many that night. He had a blast. Flash went on to marry five times. The fifth one seems to be working out alright for now. Flash owns and operates a business called "Buy It Now ". He sells quality used cars. He doesn't get a lot of repeat business, but that's OK, because there are a million fish in the sea.

Lance Longfellow came to the dance with one thing on his mind. That was to have a few good dances. He wasn't as pushy as Flash, but he didn't need to be. For Lance things just seemed to happen without needing to put in much effort. Lance looked good. He knew he did, having spent a long time checking himself out in the mirror before leaving home. The only problem, with Lance in my opinion (not in Lance's because he doesn't see a problem), is that there really isn't anything else in there. Do you know what I mean? Lance has never had it tough. He hasn't gone without something he wants or needs. Again, in my opinion, without this type of character building experience something ends up missing in a person's personality. What is missing is the fortitude to fight hard enough to achieve long term success. No matter what gets thrown in front of you. No matter how high the mountain is, you get over the top. Lance never developed that fortitude. Lance ended up doing well at the dance, since his expectations weren't very high. He got the few good dances he was after. He is now in middle management pulling down a decent salary. He has a well trimmed house in suburbia with a beautiful wife and two kids. Obtaining these things wasn't difficult for Lance. Take a picture, because at least on the surface everything looks great.

Rocky Roller had no idea how the dance would turn out for him. He was pretty sure he would have a good time. He knew that he was going to try his best to have things turn out right. Rocky was slightly extraverted. For Rocky conversation was usually easy and he listened more than he talked. When he did talk he usually tried to say something that was thoughtful and well meaning. Rocky wanted everybody to have a good time at the dance. Rocky sat next to a girl names Laura in math class. He was struggling in that subject, and yes, it did have something to do with her. Laura's hazel eyes always made him lose track of the problems he was working on. So at the dance, Rocky knew who he wanted to dance with. He approached Laura and respectfully asked if she would be willing to dance with him. She accepted. They hit the floor and Laura was surprised by Rocky's dancing ability. Turns out Rocky asked his older sister to teach him some moves in preparation for this night. She liked the way he smelled too. Rocky put on a little splash of cologne for the dance. At one point Flash tried to cut in. Laura waved him off, her eyes never even left Rocky's. The night went by quickly; Rocky brought Laura home and said goodnight on her front step. He took a chance and kissed her goodnight. The whole night worked out great for Rocky. He sees Laura again on Sunday afternoon. He walks up and down in front of her house until she comes out. He acts surprised to see her. He tells her how great it was dancing with her. He gets to look into those eyes. Rocky and Laura end up together. They have four kids. Both work hard and have a good life. Rocky ends up self-employed and Laura works with him. They do things together that make their lives exciting. They take some risks and have some adventures. They end up old and happy without regret.

So now you understand just how important the actions taken in those five minutes were. Presentation, preparation, and follow through are all necessary for success. Now let's apply some of these lessons to a mobile washer trying to pick up business. For those of you that have already got it figured out, I will leave you with this parting thought. You can do it... "Be a Rocky". For the rest of you gluttons for punishment, read on.

### 1) Prepare for success

It doesn't usually jump in your lap in this business. You need to look professional. You need to know more than your customer about everything that pertains to washing. It is important that you can explain it all to them. You have to have professional equipment and a clean vehicle. Get work shirts with your company name on them. Look as good as you can. Create business cards and handouts about your company.

### 2) Presentation

Sometimes it's best to start with a phone call. Sometimes you need to walk in the door. It is up to you to determine how to approach customers. There isn't a wrong way, just effective and ineffective ways. One approach will work with one customer and not work with ten others. If you call, have a script written out to read about your business and services. Practice it out loud a few times until you feel comfortable with it. Revise it with each failure or success. Develop it. You'll probably have plenty of time to refine it. One important point to remember about your script is that it is meant to keep you from forgetting important points you want to make. You still must listen and adapt what you are saying in response to what your potential customer says to you. Without thinking on your feet, you probably won't get the job.

Do you have a hard time with rejection? Better go work at the hot dog factory. You will lose more times than you win. Learn to deal with it. You don't climb a mountain easily. You need to stop and recover often, and this is like that. In person you need to remember what you can from your prepared script and throw some in while you talk. This will become easier each time you do it. When possible offer a demonstration, it is a great selling tool. When you are blocked at the door, leave your company card and brochure. Try very hard to get the name of the person that would decide to hire you. Follow up with a phone call. If they still block you, try calling when they are closed. Sometimes you can listen to the company directory and leave a voice mail. You can also mail information to the person directly. Do NOT give up.

### 3) Follow through

Once you get a job, treat it like its gold. Others want it. Make sure to communicate with your customer. Don't drive them crazy, but occasionally ask for feedback and correct problems immediately.

Always take the time and put in the effort required to do the job right.

So, good luck to all. Remember, life is a dance. With thought, preparation, and ambition, you will be successful. Don't sit it out. - Pete