## Telemarketing Do’s and Don’ts and Sample Telemarketing Scripts

### **Telemarketing Do’s**

Frankly, telemarketing calls can be annoying. Therefore, you want your calls to be conducted in a friendly, professional manner that doesn’t alienate the people you call. We recommend the following:

* Greet the person in a friendly voice as soon as she answers the phone — a pause on the line suggests you’re phoning from a call center.
* Use the person’s name in greeting her. (And pronounce it correctly! If it’s difficult and you find out how to say it, add this information as a note to the donor record.)
* Establish your identity as a **volunteer.**
* Point out that you have something in common. (The donor information record should give you some information to use.)
* Respect the call recipient’s mood: If this is not a good time to talk, offer to call back. Ask her to identify a better time.
* If the call recipient wants to call you back, tell her that another **volunteer** is providing use of a phone system for the telephone campaign, and you can’t accept calls. If possible, suggest another time you can be available.
* Tell your story. Establish the need for contributions quickly and in terms that may be compelling to the person you’re calling.
* Try to get the person you’ve called to commit to a pledge then and there. (But don’t harass her.)
* If the call recipient can’t make a decision at the time you’re calling, ask if you can check back with her in a week or two weeks.
* If she asks for information demonstrating that your organization is a legitimate nonprofit, offer to send her a packet of materials the next day. And do it!

### **Telemarketing Don’ts**

We’re sad to say that there are some bad practices in the telemarketing field, ranging from annoying, impersonal, often-repeated calls to too-aggressive solicitations by callers paid on commission, scare tactics used on older adults, and even scams raising money for organizations that don’t exist. If you’re ever the victim of one of these, you can find lots of good advice on the web about what to do!

To effectively telemarket for a charity, set your approach apart from these annoying, bad, or even illegal approaches by avoiding the following:

* **Don’t hesitate** in greeting the person you’ve called. (Automatic dialing services often require someone to say “hello” three times before connecting to a caller.)
* Greet him by name, but **don’t use the name over and over** again. (This is a common harassment technique.)
* If he asks who you work for, **don’t evade** the question.
* Offer to send a pledge card the next day, but **don’t offer to show up** in person to collect it.
* If he asks not to be called in the future, **don’t ignore it:** Respect and honor that request.

### **Sample Script/Sample Conversations**

**Caller:** Good evening. Is this Perry James?

**Perry:** Yes, this is Perry.

**Caller:** Perry, I’m volunteering tonight with the Cedar Street Boys and Girls Club. I’m pretty sure we met on the bleachers at soccer camp last summer. My daughter Toni is in the “C” League. I’m the one with the Lab puppy.

**Perry:** Oh, that could be. My daughter Julie was playing last year.

**Caller:** I’m calling tonight because we’re working to raise scholarship funds for Cedar Street’s summer camp. Our own kids have had such a great experience at the camp that we’d like to extend that chance to families who can’t afford it. I believe that Julie has participated for three summers. I hope that means that you agree with me that it’s a terrific program.

**Perry:** Yes, she has enjoyed it, though I don’t think she’ll play soccer this year.

**Caller:** Could you help us with a contribution of $200 toward the scholarship fund? Our goal is to raise $20,000 by April 30 so we can announce the scholarship program before this summer’s camp applications are due.

**Perry:** $200 is high for me. We’ve had some unexpected bills this spring.

**Caller:** I understand. Is $100 possible?

**Perry:** Maybe. I’ll have to talk to my wife.

**Caller:** Okay, of course. Since we’re volunteering to help the program, we only have use of this office phone system one more night, and that’s next week. Could I check in with you again then?

**Perry:** Okay.

**Caller:** Thanks so much for considering this. I’m going to put some materials in the mail to you about our scholarship plan so you’ll have them when you talk to your wife. May I confirm your street address as 174 Hitchens?

**Perry:** Oh, yes. That’s it. Thanks. Good night.

**Caller:** Good night.

### **Sample Script/Sample Conversations**

### ***Call #1***

**Caller:** Hello. Is this Mary Scott?

**Mary:** Yes, this is Mary.

**Caller:** Mary, I’m volunteering tonight as a cast member of Evansville Community Theater’s musicals.

**Mary:** Oh.

**Caller:** Yes, I played Marian in last summer’s *The Music Man.* I know you’ve seen our summer shows for the past five years.

**Mary:** I’m trying to get dinner on the table. I can’t really talk right now.

**Caller:** We volunteers are just working tonight and tomorrow night after work. Can I call you again a little later?

**Mary:** If you could give me an hour to get through the dishes . . . okay.

### ***Call #2***

**Caller:** Hello. Mary Scott? This is Elsie from the Evansville Community Theater. I hope you had a nice dinner.

**Mary:** Oh, it was a little rushed. It always is on these school nights.

**Caller:** You teach at Evansville High, don’t you?

**Mary:** Last year I changed over to Central.

**Caller:** Well, you may know about our theater outreach program to public schools. Last year we performed *The Music Man* for 60 different class groups from 11 local schools. More than that, our volunteers help middle and high school drama teachers when they are preparing productions by lending them set materials and equipment, coaching their young actors, and serving as assistant directors. It makes the “school play” a much deeper experience for the students. And our coaching helps the shyer ones shine alongside the hams.

**Mary:** I didn’t know you did that.

**Caller:** Oh, yes, we’ve worked with Central’s drama program for the last six years. And we’re calling our subscribers tonight to see if they can help us continue this work with high schools. Because we use volunteers, the overall cost is modest, but we do need to raise $7,500 for staff expenses. There’s a lot of scheduling and coordination to do, plus the shipping of sets, and wear and tear on our equipment. Could you help us with a contribution of $100?

**Mary:** Well, I’m a teacher, so $100 is a lot for me.

**Caller:** If $100 is too much, we’re also inviting $50 Friends of Future Players contributions.

**Mary:** Maybe I could do that.

**Caller:** If you can make the gift right now by credit card, it lowers our expenses for raising these funds.

**Mary:** I don’t feel comfortable giving out my card information over the phone.

**Caller:** I understand. In that case, can I send you a pledge card and return envelope?

**Mary:** Okay, I guess.

**Caller:** Let me confirm your address quickly. Are you still living at 123 Main Street?

**Mary:** Yes, that’s my address.

**Caller:** Keep an eye on your mail for the pledge form. We’re hoping to receive all contributions in the next six weeks so that we can begin scheduling for fall theater productions as soon as the new school year begins.