

# THE MOST ELUSIVE PROSPECT AWARD

*Winner*

*The Most Elusive  
Prospect Award*



**I** imagine you are leaving what feels like the 80th message for a prospect who just won't call you back. If you feel a little snarky and more than tempted to tell them how you really feel about them ignoring you, you aren't alone. If you actually do just that, you might be [Dan Seidman](#). Seidman, the 2013 Stevie International Sales Training Leader of the Year at Got Influence?, shares his story in this month's Sale Humor column.



I'm sitting in my office making lead-generation calls and I'm looking at my computer when up pops a woman's name, from a prospect company. As I'm scrolling down through the notes field I see, "LVM," "LVM," way, way down the column. "LVM" means "left voicemail." We had left voicemails for this woman forever, and she's never returned a single phone call.

Well, I have something I've always wanted to try, and I think, "I'm going to try it on her." I pick up the phone, and I call her. I get her voicemail, of course. This time when I leave her a message I say, "Congratulations. This is Dan Seidman from corporate recruiting. You have earned our company's prestigious, Most Elusive Prospect Award. We've called you 47 times over the last three years (today makes 48), and you have not responded to a single phone call. Nobody in the history of our company – with tens of thousands of people in the database – has ever ignored us as frequently as you. Thank you, and congratulations on your award." And I hang up the phone.

You know how sometimes in sales, when people jerk you around, you kind of wish you could do something like that, but you can't think of what to say, or you're not brave or stupid enough to do



something like what I just did? Well I did it.

Guess what happened. She calls me back. And I get an earful. "You stupid jerk. I don't ever have to return a phone call if I don't want to. That was rude of you to leave me that message. Don't ever call our company again. You're a jerk." And I just manage to squeak out, "I'm so sorry. I was just kidding." And bang, she hangs up the phone.

I'm thinking, "Well, at least she didn't call the VP of sales. At least she just called and ranted at me." And the phone rings again moments later. It's her again.

This time she says, "You know what, I apologize for popping off at you like that, and actually that was a really funny thing you did. We use companies like yours. Would you come in and talk to me about what you do?"

Well guess what? Yes, a happy ending. She became a client.

## The Lesson

What did I do? In cognitive psychology that strategy is called a pattern interrupt. It takes people that are stuck in a fixed way of thinking or behaving and disrupts them. It's



a way to shake somebody up and get them on a new path, a better path for their life.

When selling I develop pattern interrupt comments for all the top objections I get from my buyers. If somebody told me, "We don't have enough money right now. The economy is really bad," my pattern interrupt comment would be something like, "What story are you on?" And they'd go, "What?" I'd say, "Well, what floor? What story are you on in your building?" They'd say, "Well, I'm on the third floor. Why?" I'd say, "Well I'm wondering when things are so bad – if they're so bad right now – when you throw yourself out the window will you die or just be maimed?" And they go, "Okay, okay, it's not really that bad." Then I can start a real

dialogue with, "Well how bad is it then?"

The pattern interrupt basically tells them, "Hey, quit jerking me around." You're finding a nice, fun way to do it. If you're saying it face-to-face and you say it with a smile, you can get away with it.

I built this into sales training I do. One insurance company I had as a client dealt with old people who would come in to buy an annuity.

They would often say things like, "We think we're too old to have a financial product like that." As if they didn't know how old they were when they walked into the office.

The response, the pattern interrupt response to that statement is this – "We have sea turtles older than you as clients." You laugh and smile when you say it to let them know, "These products work for everybody. Quit playing games."



**Dan Seidman**, Got Influence? CEO and co-founder, is a sales trainer, author and keynote speaker. He has worked with organizations such as Million Dollar RoundTable, Amway International and Sales & Marketing Executives, International. He also is a World Masters Athlete with three gold medals playing on the U.S. basketball team.