



# Sales Leaders

The Association of Sales Leaders & Innovators

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## FOR MEMBERS

### OVERVIEW

## Ghosting in Sales

by Jon Dunkelberger, Senior Business Executive, Ricoh USA.

**Some sales professionals wonder why they never hear back from prospective clients. In this presentation, Jon Dunkelberger gives his perspective on why salespeople are “ghosted,” how to handle the experience, and how to prevent it from happening again.**

Jon Dunkelberger is the Senior Business Executive for the Dealer Division of Ricoh USA, which gives him the perfect opportunity to apply his broad-based leadership experience and diverse skillset. Ricoh is a global technology company, empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services to help individuals work smarter. His impact is rooted in human capital development and business process improvement skills. His passions are business development and growing sales for their impact on individuals and his organization.

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*“If you are a sales professional, you will get ghosted. Heck, I might do it to you.”*

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Dunkelberger goes over the basics of what ghosting is. Then he breaks down why it happens, and who’s responsible. (He even admits to ghosting sales professionals himself!). He discusses what is entailed in a meaningful conversation, when and why you should keep contacting someone, and the importance of realizing if you’re important to the prospect or not. All these tips can help you recover from being ghosted and prevent it from happening again.



## 1. Ghosting in Sales

- **What is it?**
  - In dating, ghosting is the practice of forming a personal relationship with someone, but suddenly and without explanation, withdrawing from all communication.
  - In sales, a salesperson will make a connection with a prospect. The salesperson feels that a business relationship is forming, but the prospect suddenly quits responding to communication.
- **Rule number one - don't take it personally**
  - Trust in your sales process- value based targeting, researching the prospect, and building connection. The worst thing you can do is decide that the problem is something inherent to your personality. Continually second-guessing what's wrong with *you* instead of continuing to streamline the process is a lost learning opportunity.



## 2. I've Ghosted Sales Professionals - And I will do it again

- Dunkelberger admits that he has done this very thing- and will do it again! He ghosts salespeople for several reasons, and he explains these to give salespeople insights into why it might be happening to them.
  - The connection wasn't meaningful. He wasn't actually interested what the sales professional was offering. Not every prospect is meaningful.
  - He will wait for sales professionals to follow up, and sometimes they don't. Follow-up is an important part of the sales relationship that salespeople *can* control.
  - Because he works in sales, he does a lot of the work himself. He is not easily swayed by the pitch because he understands how to research and figure things out for himself.
  - Sometimes, there are more important things to do. Salespeople have to understand that prospects have lives and the sale is not always at the top of their mind.



## 3. What is A Meaningful Conversation? LinkedIn is just the start

- A meaningful conversation must be personal and organized. You need to have specific information about the potential customer to sell to them.
- Dunkelberger notes that he looks for and uses the phrase, “we’ve helped people/organizations like you before,” when he is pitching a sale and when he is being pitched a sale.
- Determine the type of communication. What is the best context for delivering the message? What is best for the particular customer?
- The timing of the communication is also important. This is where having
- You need a backup plan if the person doesn't respond.
- He notes that you should pay attention- it's about the customer.
- He goes onto say that you should follow up as agreed- it's something he watches for.



#### 4. Appreciate Your Place

- **Dunkelberger displays a grid that helps you understand the urgency and importance of your sales proposal from 1-4, with one being the highest importance and 4 being the least. It's important to understand how where you sit on the grid**
  - Ask how important or not your product is. (Dunkelberger notes that it is brutally difficult to sell something when it isn't important to the customer.)
  - If it's not important to the customer, they are less likely to respond to the sales pitch – possibly to the point of ignoring it.
  - Dunkelberger notes that if you are in position where something is urgent and important to the customer, a number 1 on his grid, and you get ghosted, something went very wrong.



Can you trust your process?

- Still the right company?
- Still the right customer?
- Right time?

The more windows and the longer your process, the more difficult to answer the "How many times do I contact them?" or "What do I do next?" questions.

#### 5. Should You Keep Contacting Someone?

- **How many times?**
  - First and foremost, ask if you can still trust your process. If the process is off, why?
  - Is it still the right company?
  - Still the right customer?
  - Still the right time?

- The more random and less targeted your approach, the harder these questions become to answer.
  - However, if you have a process that you trust and works, the questions answer themselves.
- **How you contact. Here are some ideas to make contact meaningful and memorable.**
    - Be diverse and creative with your touches.
    - Email with the question in the title. This is a very important small detail that can be overlooked.
    - Respond to a post on LinkedIn.
    - Make a personal video.
    - Make a phone call
    - Send a card or gift.



## 6. Conclusion

- **You will be ghosted**
  - Understand what you did and why.
  - Then, have your process tell you what to do next. Take ghosting into account in the process.
  - Options are the best remedy. Find options that work in your sales process.
  - Keep, “building your pipeline.” Basically, try again.
  - Dunkelberger notes that you may get ghosted by one prospect but make progress with another – keep your options open.
  - It’s all about coming up with and refining a process to ensure that your customer contact is meaningful and generative.

### Conclusion

Sales professionals often wonder why they get, “ghosted,” for seemingly no reason. Dunkelberger has an explanation for them. In this presentation, he breaks down exactly why and how professionals get ghosted, and why he does it himself. Whether it be because the connection wasn’t meaningful, or just because it wasn’t on the to-do list that day, his advice is to trust your process and keep going.



The executive summary above was written by staff from watching the presentation and many other ideas were presented. Members may watch the full presentation if wished by logging in.