

The Virtual Medical Sales Call Guide



How to Use Technology to Schedule, Prepare,
Engage, and Close Business
When You Can't Sell in Person

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Introduction

Medical professionals are less available to medical sales reps than ever before. Since 2008, almost half the number of physicians who would see sales reps now refuse access.

At the time of this writing, the novel coronavirus, aka COVID-19, threatens our normal way of life. Medical reps may find themselves increasingly unable to gain access to stakeholders in their accounts for sales presentations. One of the reasons is because of the increased risk of disease transmission from in-person contact.

We've known for some time of the the availability of technology to provide an alternative to live, in-person sales calls. This may be the time to add virtual platforms to your armamentarium of sales skills and tools.

Keep in mind that there is no technology that can help you to sell effectively unless your medical sales skills are rock solid to begin with. If you've been making steady progress in your territory, growing every month and easily exceeding quota, your skills may be up to par. But if you're struggling, unsure of how to change your sales results, lacking confidence, and feel like your business is under constant threat by competition, you'd be wise to consider additional training.

Again, assuming your selling skills are solid, let's move forward to learning about the virtual sales call.

Scheduling the Virtual Appointment

When making live sales calls, you can attempt to just pop in. However, it is not this simple when selling virtually. In most cases, you'll need to schedule an appointment.

How do you schedule an appointment for a virtual sales call? It's not much different than scheduling a live, in person sales call - request the appointment.

Getting the appointment is the *first sale* you need to make. Healthcare professionals are not eager to give up their time unless there is a clear benefit for them and their patients. You'll need to convince them that it will be worth their time. Be very specific as what you wish to discuss and how they will benefit from it.

You can request an appointment several ways.

Telephone: This is likely the way you are doing it now - by telephone. Many medical reps are less than competent when it comes to booking appointments. If this describes you, scheduling a virtual sales call certainly won't be any easier. The idea is to contact a person (gatekeeper) who schedules appointments for the decision-maker you wish to meet with. The job is to convey how their boss will benefit from the meeting in a way that will make said gatekeeper look good.

Email: Another common way to request appointments is via email. While results are often not as good as with a phone call, a benefit is that you can't frequently email the HCP or other decision maker directly. Email can be effective if you include the same elements that are effective using the phone.

The first step is to get your email opened. This requires a compelling subject line that creates curiosity. This can be as simple as "PRP issue," or "Re: Dental implant fees"

In the body of the email, open by providing some context and get right to the benefit without giving away too much information. Your goal is to create a level of curiosity so that your prospect agrees to meeting with you. Keep in mind that a big concern for almost anyone granting a salesperson access call is wondering how long the meeting is going to take. I suggest informing the prospect how much time will be needed proactively. The shorter, the better. By the way, whatever time you specify you will need to honor. Do not go over!

Video Message/Email: There are some relatively new software platforms that could make your appointment request hard to resist. They allow you to send a short video message to your prospect. Some of these platforms include Loom, BombBomb and Covideo. Script out your request for the appointment. Next use one of these platforms to record a short video to generate curiosity and provide tangible benefits to your prospect. Emphasize that meeting with you will be short and worth their time. Be specific as to what they will know or be able to do after they meet with you.

Another option is to send a short video via email or SMS text message that you record on your mobile phone. Make sure the file is not too large or it could interfere with delivery.

Preparing for The Virtual Sales Call

The first step is to decide which platform you will be using for the virtual sales call. You might use a conferencing platform such as Zoom, Google Hangouts Meet, or Skype. You can also use a webinar software like GoToMeeting.

Make sure that you are completely familiar with the software and able to navigate it's features easily. This requires practice. Practice with a sales colleague or family member to make sure you can control audio and video, and switch from the webcam view to showing a document on your screen. Also, ensure you have a strong Internet connection without any bandwidth issues. If you will be doing this from home, I suggest you ask anyone else in the house to avoid streaming video at the same time to ensure maximum upload / download speeds.

This one step I'm going to suggest now can save you a lot of heartache: *create a checklist!*

The checklist should include every step you need to complete before going online. If you leave something out, your prospect may have a poor experience due to video or audio issues. If that is the case there is a good chance they will not schedule a virtual meeting with you again.

I again remind you to keep virtual meetings short into the point. Know your primary goal for the meeting and I also suggest having a secondary goal in case your primary goal cannot be met. For example, your primary goal is likely to make a sale, schedule an evaluation, request to submit a proposal, or something similar. If that is not achieved, what is a secondary goal that you would like to achieve such as obtaining specific information, gauging interest, or scheduling follow-up.

Conducting the Virtual Sales Call

What is the biggest difference between an in-person or virtual sales call?

Being in the room.

Physical presence commands attention more than talking on the phone or via video. The downside selling virtually is that if you're not really good at grabbing and maintaining attention, your prospect can easily tune you out without you knowing it. they are also more likely to multitask while pretending to be paying attention.

Effective selling is about effective engagement. Nowhere is this more true then when you are trying to sell without being physically present.

A big advantage when you're physically present is the ability to read body language and other emotional cues. This is still possible during a virtual sales call provided three things occur:

1. You can see your prospect
2. The prospect can see you
3. You keep the prospect engaged

Do you pay attention the prospects body language, speech patterns, or breathing during a sales conversation. If not, you're missing many valuable cues. Body language often reveals what people don't say. Watch for it so you can leverage it during your sales conversation.

Whenever possible, inform the prospect ahead of time that you will be using video. This is rarely a problem these days as almost everyone has a web cam built into their computer or mobile device. You may need to ask or remind the prospect to turn on the webcam.

Have you ever noticed your level of engagement just listening to someone's voice as opposed to also seeing them as they speak? People are more engaged in that they focus on the words more when they can see the speaker.

Selling is all about engagement. A majority of sales reps assume the prospect is engaged just because the salesperson is talking. The only way to know a prospect *is truly engaged* is to make sure they're talking as well. One must think to speak. Therefore, when someone is *involved* in the conversation they are *engaged* in the conversation.

Keep prospects involved right from the start! Ask great questions and check in with them regularly. Remember, if you do all the talking on a Skype or Zoom meeting, it's not a virtual sales call; it's a broadcast. Your goal is to generate a relevant conversation, not produce an infomercial.

Since the prospect can see you, don't be afraid to be animated and show emotion. Make it look like you believe in what you're selling. Use normal gestures and facial expressions. And smile. Let me repeat, SMILE!

Video offers an vintage not available via the telephone. You can use images and even show video clips. You can also present a product demonstration.

If for some reason you can't show visuals, or are not using video during your virtual sales call, ask if you can send images via SMS text messaging.

What do you do if the prospect says s/he wishes s/he could handle or touch the product? That's a no-brainer. Make it happen! Offered to send it to them or to bring it by for a live presentation.

While you're presenting, maintain eye contact with your camera so the prospect feels like you're making eye contact. At the same time, try to observe their body language by glancing at the screen or using your peripheral vision so you can gauge their emotions.

Closing during a virtual call is no different than closing during a live, in-person meeting. Ask for what you want!

Again, keep virtual sales calls as short as possible. If you've established good engagement and rapport, the prospect may want to go longer. As long as s/he takes the lead on that, no problem. If a virtual sales call goes too long though, it starts to feel like watching a video and will be less effective.

With the exception of placing your product in the prospect's hands, almost anything that can be done during an in-person sales call can be accomplished during a virtual sales call. In fact, you *can* place your product in the prospects hands if you send it to them ahead of time.

Summary

There are many reasons for using virtual sales calls. These include a need for reduced physical exposure, such as during an epidemic or pandemic, geographical challenges that occur with large territories, and even that virtual sales calls are preferred by some HCPs to having a sales person show up in their office.

Regardless of the motivation or reason, virtual sales calls are a useful and powerful tool. It's worth planning a few, practicing, and giving it a try. You're likely to become competent in no time.

Remember, just using a great virtual sales platform won't make you a great medical sales representative. That takes hard work and great selling skills. If you'd like comprehensive training that gets HCPs and other decision-makers to see your solutions as specifically relevant to their needs and challenges, then check out [Medical Sales Academy](#), my online 24/7/365 virtual training and support platform for Medical Sales Professionals.

If you have any questions about virtual selling, feel free to hit me up on [LinkedIn](#) or to [email me](#).

Here's to your virtual and in-person sales success!

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Are you prepared to deal with \$\$ pricing objections from your accounts? [CLICK HERE](#) to get my free report, "10 Steps to Handling the Price Objection in Medical Sales." The next time you're challenged on price, you'll be better prepared.