

Bryan: All right great. Well, Gino, thanks so much for joining me. Just to get started, can you just let everybody know a little bit about yourself and what you do for a living? Your role?

Gino: Sure, sure. I have a technology background. I focus quite a bit on how to introduce technology in the business and make it [inaudible 00:00:28] for our partner base as well as for employees in the business. That's my operational responsibilities in terms of managing the performance of the business as well.

Bryan: What's your official role? Or title?

Gino: VP Technology in Sales Operations.

Bryan: Okay. How do you incorporate your normal day-to-day with what you have to do, all the internal commitments you have, and then people trying to sell you things?

Gino: In general, I tend to, if I'm getting solicited by cold callers, whether it's by phone or email or some other form, I tend to ignore those inquiries. Generally, if it's an email, I throw them into my junk. If it's a phone call, I will generally just delete the messages and try to filter that out. I would say if I get 100, 200, or more contacts, maybe one of them I'll listen to.

Bryan: One you'll listen to? As far as having a meeting or like listen to the message?

Gino: I'll consider whether I'll listen to the messages or read the email or pick up the call or something like that.

Bryan: How do you feel when people are soliciting to you or selling to you?

Gino: In general, a couple of different ways. One, I'm not always the right person for them to contact, so many times I feel like they're needing to speak to somebody else, but I try to respect the fact that most of my peers and colleagues who may be the right point of contact may not be interested in fielding the same types of requests, for contacts generally.

I don't provide them with the appropriate person to contact. If I am the right person, generally, again, I don't ... I'm not as responsive as if there's a specific need or demand, then I have ... that would be appropriate for that time. If they're contacting me on something that I have done for a time, it's generally [inaudible 00:03:09]. Politely say, "Thanks but no thanks."

Bryan: What frustrates you about this whole thing, or what annoys you? [inaudible 00:03:18]

Gino: I guess just the volume, the number of mishits. It's not targeted enough for something that's specific, which I understand why that would be, but it's just a lot of inquiries that are ... Don't really need to have a lot [inaudible 00:03:39].

Bryan: How much outreach do you receive, like on a weekly or monthly basis?

Gino: Probably a couple hundred a week.

Bryan: So a couple hundred, just solicitations?

Gino: Yeah.

Bryan: Any idea how many emails you get? Like on a daily basis, or just even normal voicemails? [inaudible 00:04:09] a lot?

Gino: Probably around 200 a day.

Bryan: 200 emails? How many voicemails do you get? On average?

Gino: Not as much, not too many.

Bryan: Not too many ... Like under ten?

Gino: Under ten a day, yeah.

Bryan: How else do people get in touch with you other than, say, email or phone?

Gino: That's the primary way that they reach out, but there could be somebody who's passed on through another point of contact. I guess you could call that maybe word of mouth.

Bryan: What about LinkedIn? Do people reach out to you on LinkedIn or Twitter or Facebook or anything?

Gino: Yeah, social media somewhat as well, yes. I do get contacted by social media, but generally I kind of bucket that into the email pool as well. Generally those social media tools, they're generating email notifications.

Bryan: Right, so social media then is an email notification?

Gino: Correct, yeah.

Bryan: How many salespeople do you think have reached out to you over all your years?

Gino: A lot.

Bryan: If you were to guess. Or how many companies have reached out to you?

Gino: Thousands.

Bryan: What do they typically sound like? What do the emails sound like, or what do the voicemails sound like? You've heard thousands of messages.

Gino: They're mostly pretty consistent, very informative, have a special focus area that they want to understand whether or not there's a specific need in that area. Generally, they're pretty well scripted. Many times they're outsourced. You can tell just by the pause at the start of a phone call that it's getting routed to a call center. You can tell many times that ... I don't even wait for it to be passed over, I hang up at that point. I hang up before they pick up the call.

In some cases they're a little bit more creative. Whether it's email or phone, they'll open with something that's a little bit more kind of atypical. Not go right into the sales pitch. Those individuals tend to get a little bit more of my time, in terms of how long I'll listen to what their story is, but not a hell of a lot more to be honest.

Bryan: What are the emails look like, that you receive typically?

Gino: They're typically marketing pieces. Many times they'll actually, a lot of times I'll even get meeting invites, another format that they come through, which is ... rather than sending an email, they try to put something on my calendar, thinking that would be something that I would be more responsive to. I just delete them, I don't [inaudible 00:07:42] with that.

Bryan: How do you feel about getting the meeting invite? Is it unsolicited meeting invite?

Gino: Yeah, about the same. It doesn't really ... I'm not bothered by it, it's not like ... it doesn't anger me. It's just another mechanism for them to get to me. I think the meeting invite is a little more creative, though I don't think it's anymore effective [inaudible 00:08:08].

Bryan: Have you ever taken a meeting when somebody just sent you a meeting invite? Like accidentally?

Gino: No.

Bryan: What percentage of the time do you respond to email versus voicemail versus LinkedIn or social?

Gino: Less than half a percent.

Bryan: Is there any medium that you're more likely to respond? Email, phone, or LinkedIn for example?

Gino: I would say probably more likely to pick up the phone call.

Bryan: Okay.

Gino: What happens is with phone calls, I generally screen them, but I can't screen every single phone call out. Whereas email, it's much easier to screen.

Bryan: How do you decide who to respond to and who not to respond to? For the times when you do respond. Say it's not an accidental pickup on the phone. How do you typically decide?

Gino: Most of the time, if the individual's being referenced by somebody I know, then I will respond. That's generally the only time I will respond. There may be a sporadic, outside chance that somebody's offering me something that happens to be, in the moment, what I am looking for. I think if that were the case, I would probably go back and do some research to identify potential partners in some other way.

Bryan: How do you prefer to be reached out to? Say you're talking to all of the sales reps out there, what would you say as far as speaking on behalf of all the VPs of IT and CEOs out there. What would you say?

Gino: I would say if there was something that I'm interested in I would probably come and find them and research them more than them finding me, and that the best opportunity is to maybe get engaged in some type of ... some conferences, or events where I'm more of a captive audience. Probably the best opportunity.

Bryan: Let's see, I have a couple more questions. When have you bought from, say a solicitation, in the past?

Gino: I don't think I ever have.

Bryan: Really? In all the years there's never anything that was something that you were going to ... that was relevant?

Gino: If it was routed to me from somebody else, then yes, but not any kind of unsolicited contact from somebody. I don't believe I've ever purchased from anybody like that.

Bryan: Okay, so if somebody was [crosstalk 00:11:45]. How could people improve their approach to you? Say you were talking to the sales guys at your own company, what would you tell them? They go to trade shows and events, what else?

Gino: I would say to understand what it is that is in my world. Many times, I receive contacts for things that are not anyway remotely related to something that I'm, either A, directly responsible for, or would have an interest in. I guess it's better understanding the audience. People go after titles, I think. I don't think titles alone, necessarily, represent all the different aspects of what somebody may be interested in.

Bryan: That's a really good point as far as understanding your world. For example, for you, like right now, what does your world look like or what do you care about or what's important to you?

Gino: It's mostly applications, for the most part, and business performance and business process. Because I'm in the distribution world, my industry is very focused on streamlining the process and performance, that a lot of the technology aspects of what we do have some type of business component related to things that are more relevant to a distributor. Understanding the channel is pretty important, where distribution would make investments.

Bryan: That's awesome. Any other ... Last question, any other parting notes to the folks out there?

Gino: I think the most important thing is always to know your audience, so any sales contacts that are being made, it's the more information you have about your audience the better. I realize it's not always easy to get information about companies and contacts. Data mining is pretty important, but there's information available out on the internet. In terms of analytics that you could put into, that would help to better target the audience, I think that would probably limit the amount of time that individuals are investing into reaching out to people who may not be interested.

Bryan: Yeah, more targeted and more relevant, and everybody wins. Where ...

Gino: Get into those individuals' worlds, as well. Make investments beyond ... I would say message sent doesn't mean message received. Make investments beyond just an outreach type of contact approach, because a lot of times people tend to hit the delete button, so you don't want to be a victim of the delete button. Find a way to make physical contact with people.

Bryan: What are some of the events or trade shows that you attend? If people were trying to reach guys like you, where do you go?

Gino: They're mostly industry conferences. If you look at our businesses through distribution, we work with suppliers. Many times we're at supplier or manufacturer related conferences, or conferences, or reseller communities, which are also part of the channel. Then from time to time, there's various industry conferences that are attended by all parts of the channel, not just resellers and manufacturers, but other channels. Those types of events have a more active audience as well.

Bryan: Can you think of any specific names of conferences that you've gone to that you liked?

Gino: The RSA conference is pretty good. Cisco does an annual conference which is pretty well attended, as well.

Bryan: So Cisco and ... What's RSA?

Gino: What do you mean, what is RSA? Is that what you're ...

Bryan: Yeah, what does it stand for?

Gino: RSA is ... it's a manufacturer.

Bryan: Okay, got it.

Gino: I'm not in fact sure what it stands for.

Bryan: All right great, well listen I really appreciate it, I will stop our recording.