# Leave Cold Calls to a Superhero

**Junior salespeople should do the lead qualification, and hand the qualified opportunities to superhero sales veterans, right?**

Some might call the superheros “sharks.” Go to any large organization, and the division of labor in their sales organization tends to be split that way. We put these junior reps out there without much training, and the ones who survive may eventually swim among the sharks.

Though most of the experienced reps would prefer to focus on fully-qualified opportunities, it may not be the best thing for the experienced professionals. Let me explain.

First, a question: Would you rather have A) an opportunity where the client already knows that they need what you are selling, or B) one who is facing problems in their business, but may not know that what you offer can help them? The client who already knows they need your services is generally identified as HOT. But, once they feel they know the service or product they need, they might perceive anyone who matches that criteria as a commodity. If not, their purchasing department is trained to make you believe that this is the case. However, the prospect who has a problem you can solve, but hasn’t yet discovered a potential solution is one where you can help them not only realize their situation, but also be the one who helped them identify the solution.

The greatest impact you can have on sales success happens at the beginning and the end of the process. Meaning, the initial conversation and first meeting is where we define the plan for the rest of the interaction. We manage expectations, build rapport, and define the process we will follow together. Most importantly, the first dialog is where we can find, in a non-threatening way, whether or not this opportunity is a good fit for us, and whether or not we want to invest our resources in its pursuit. Is this something you want to entrust to your least experienced team members? By the end of the process, everyone might agree that you have a fit, but some horse-trading might take place in a complex sale. Of course, nobody would argue to leave behind our experienced professionals at that step.

The most successful sales professionals take the time to get involved early in the sales process. In fact, the top performers will often not allow others to touch their prospects in the first couple of meetings. Once they have determined if the opportunity is worth pursuing, then they can hand off some of the intermediate steps to a protege who can coordinate conversations, track details, and keep the opportunity on track under the watchful eye of the superstar.

So remember these three keys to success:

1. The best opportunities recognize the problem, but have not yet identified the solution;
2. The greatest influence you can have on how a deal closes has to do with how you start. Get your superstars engaged early to ensure focus on the right opportunities;
3. Your junior sales people will quickly learn what makes a good prospect.  After taking several prospects through the process with oversight from the superstar, the junior people will be able to start getting involved early in the process

Though some seasoned sales pros may not love the suggestion that they need to qualify their own opportunities, the best ones know that it is the key to becoming outrageously successful targeting and winning business.