

As Seen In...

# OPTIONS

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For Dental Laboratories That Mean Business®

## WINNING THE COLD WAR

Fear of phoning? You're not alone. Plenty of sales professionals will tell you that making a cold call is the toughest job there is. But New Jersey entrepreneur Amanda Puppo has a winning strategy for ending the procrastination: she'll make the calls for you.

MARC DAICHMAN of Asteto Dent Labs in Maplewood, New Jersey, wants to have a telemarketer calling dentists within a two-hour radius of his laboratory on a regular basis. "I'm one of two owners," says Daichman. "We've each got a thousand other responsibilities. We could never find enough time for a serious telemarketing effort."

Instead, he purchases lists of general dentists from a list broker, removes the names of his existing clients and any prospects he knows he doesn't want, and turns the lists over to Amanda Puppo, CEO and founder of MarketReach, Inc. The seven-year-old company telemarkets on behalf of clients in a variety of fields, but has found a niche with dental laboratories and currently cold calls for almost 20 labs. Puppo works with her clients to understand their competitive advantages, determine their goals and customize her firm's telemarketing to each customer's unique needs.

In Daichman's case, the objective is to set up in-person meetings with prospective clients. But because he believes that a sales call to offer the services of one of hundreds of dental laboratories in New Jersey is not the best way to generate interest, the calls begin with information about one of the many educational seminars Asteto Dent sponsors throughout the year. *Would the dentist be interested in attending?*

Puppo and her associates use their

telemarketing expertise to know when to take the call to the next level. If a dentist or office manager is interested in the seminar, they are able to transition into something like, *"By the way, the laboratory owner, Marc Daichman, would be willing to come and meet with you if you'd like to learn more about Asteto Dent."* Prior to the calls, Daichman gives MarketReach a list of available appointment times so that a telemarketer is able to immediately seize an opening and schedule a personal meeting.

Daichman buys a block of telemarketing time each month. He's worked with another firm, but says of MarketReach, "They get me great appointments. I have information about each dentist before I walk in the door." In the last year, MarketReach has scheduled 55 appointments for Daichman and 19 of those dentists became clients worth a total of \$40-\$50,000 annually in new revenue (or four to five times Asteto Dent's investment in telemarketing). In Daichman's view, "Except for continuing education, telemarketing is the most powerful, most profitable tool a lab can work with—but also the most underused."

When you consider the number of calling hours spent to get each appointment (Puppo estimates three or more hours and 50 or more calls per appointment), the process sounds daunting. But the numbers Daichman shared

with OPTIONS confirm telemarketing's potential.

According to Amanda Puppo, "The classic cold call still works. The key is to understand what sets your lab apart and to explain that clearly to someone who will give you a few minutes at most."

Puppo started her company to fulfill a specific need in the marketplace. Although business owners and salespeople need face time with their prospects, they rarely have the time or skills for making introductory calls to set up appointments. Puppo and her employees call across the business spectrum, making connections for MarketReach clients with small businesses and Fortune 500 companies.

While most MarketReach business centers on appointment setting and lead generation, the company also handles other business-to-business outbound telephone marketing functions such as customer satisfaction surveys and database clean-up. According to Puppo, "It's a professional, articulate, conversational manner that makes MarketReach employees successful."

And they are successful. When OPTIONS called John Hackman, owner of Hackman Dental Labs in Philadelphia, to ask about his experience with MarketReach, he said he wouldn't cooperate on an article that explained his successful marketing strategy to other labs. He was joking about talking to us—but serious

about how effective MarketReach has been for his business.

When Puppo first contacted Hackman about using her company, he had been handling his telephone marketing effort in house. The amount of rejection had already convinced him that it wasn't a job he and his employees could do well. He agreed to try MarketReach and got three new accounts in the first month. The profit from just those three accounts has been more than enough to cover the telemarketing time he has continued to buy on a monthly basis.

While Hackman uses direct mail to expand the business he gets from existing clients, he depends on telemarketing to develop new accounts. When dentists or their office managers express an interest, MarketReach will not only set up an appointment but, upon request, can fax further details about Hackman Dental Labs and its services.

According to Hackman, "The dentist has a lot of information about my laboratory before I get there. And I have information about the practice that MarketReach has provided to me—including the name of the person I'm saying 'hello' to when I walk in the door." In a sense, the doctor and the laboratory are *mutually qualified* at this point, giving Hackman an opportunity to show samples, explain his laboratory's policies and pricing, and get a commitment.

In Amanda Puppo's view, "Consistent appointment setting is the clearest way to continuously fill the sales pipeline." But her company also works with dental laboratories looking for something other than in-person appointments.

Take Chromeworks for example. The Chico, California laboratory is primarily a wholesaler of partial frameworks made

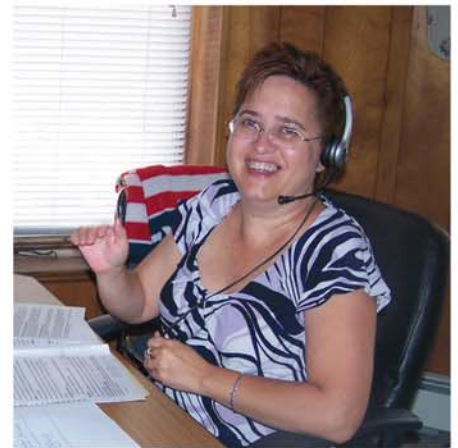
for other labs. Since February 2008, Chromeworks has used MarketReach to generate telephone sales leads.

General manager Matt Tait, RDT, had just bought some books about cold calling and was planning to try it himself when Amanda Puppo called him "out of the blue and at exactly the right time." Chromeworks and MarketReach worked together to develop the information telemarketers would need to make calls on the lab's behalf and to understand its products and terms. "In the first week there were several calls for clarifications," says Tait, "but now that happens only occasionally."

In a half year, the results have not yet been huge, but Tait and Chromeworks owner Jerry Robinson, CDT, see a positive trend, have a high opinion of the telemarketer who handles their account and intend to continue their telemarketing outreach. "We've spent about \$6,000 with MarketReach, have gotten 82 hits, and have received work from seven labs that's generated \$8,000 in revenue," says Tait, who also measures the benefits in terms of the time that isn't coming out of his or Robinson's schedules. "We have a national clientele. In the past, Jerry's done some extensive traveling to build business. When you consider the costs of fuel and accommodations—and the fact that you are not in the lab when problems arise—this is a much better option."

And because Chromeworks currently plans to expand the number of *dentists* it works with, there may be an additional group of prospective clients to call.

Although MarketReach works for several dental laboratories, the company is careful to avoid calling the same pros-



Carol Golden (above) and Allie Borenstein (below) are two of the MarketReach team who have earned praise from laboratory clients for the new business they have helped to create.



pect on behalf of more than one client. As long as a lab commits to enough hours to exhaust a specific geographic area, it is guaranteed exclusivity in that area.

"Some of my clients managed to develop their laboratories strictly through word-of-mouth and referrals," says Puppo. "That's great. But when competition increases, you have to consider other ways to reach prospective customers. That's where we come in." ■



**"The classic cold call still works. The key is to understand what sets your lab apart."**

Amanda Puppo  
CEO  
MarketReach, Inc.

Founded in 2001, MarketReach, Inc. was a finalist in the category of Most Innovative Company in the 2004 Stevie Awards for Women Entrepreneurs. Its founder, Amanda Puppo, has been awarded the prestigious SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award from the state of New Jersey. To contact MarketReach, call 609-448-6364 or e-mail [info@MarketReach.biz](mailto:info@MarketReach.biz).