



Your opening statement should include benefits available to any client in dealing with the TCS as well as specific, personalized information about how the local company can benefit.

Here is an example of a trade-oriented opening statement:

“Ms. X, other (local country) companies in the (sector) industry – key executives like you - tell me that doing business with Canadian companies has helped them open new markets and increase revenues, as well as lower costs by providing alternative sources of material supplies. Are these issues important to you?”

When prospecting, your message should be tailored to the needs of each company or local contact that you meet. It should be as personalized as possible while still drawing on common themes (e.g., the TCS’s six core services).

Select two or three success stories in which interaction with a trade commissioner has benefited local contacts. Remember, local contacts do not care how you have helped a Canadian company. They are only interested in how you can help them.

These success stories must be specific enough to be meaningful, but broad enough that the majority of your contacts can relate to them. If you do not have this type of success stories, ask your colleagues or staff, or simply contact other posts and ask them to share their stories.

3.3 Using an opening statement

Working from a prepared script is important in order to ensure your key message is communicated clearly. Use a script even if you are comfortable with initiating a telephone conversation. Take care to ensure that your script does not make you sound like you are reading from one, otherwise your message will sound impersonal, insincere and the call will be lost.

A script should never be read directly to local contacts or into their voicemail. It should serve only as a visual reminder of the key points to be covered. You should let the conversation develop as naturally as possible.

Remind yourself to always be in the optimal mindset for a call: do not think about trying to sell something; focus on simply starting a conversion.

The first rule about voicemail is that you should never leave a voicemail for a new local contact is when you have been referred to this person. There has already been a connection established between you and your contact, so he/she has an incentive to call you back.

The second rule about voicemail is that you should use it only as a last resort. Too often, we give up as soon as the voicemail kicks in on a call, either leaving a message or simply hanging up.

In fact, when you have reached someone’s voicemail, there are options you can exercise while still on that call. It all starts with hitting zero. By hitting zero, you will likely be forwarded to a receptionist, an