

# Hiding Behind Technology

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You've heard that technology is great... when it works. And when we know how to use it.

Add to the above: when we know *whether* to use it.

When salespeople want to “hide out” to avoid initiating contact, to avoid stepping out of their comfort zone, technology can come to the rescue like Batman flying to the damsel in distress.

The biggest culprit, or rather, the favorite escape route, is email. Yes, there's always email that needs to be answered. OK, fine - when it's from clients or prospects. But just open your email and you'll find a candy store of ways to get goal diffused and lost in a maze of distractions.

**#1 recommendation**, therefore, is to **work with client email ONLY, except for those designated “administrative” times of the day.** 4:00 PM is a good time for administration, since our energy is usually lowest at that point. Why waste good energy on low-priority email?

Next, most salespeople would rather send an email to a prospect than make a phone call. Once they gain access to a prospect's email address, that prospect may never hear the salesperson's melodious voice on the phone again.

Outside salespeople can escape into the use of face-to-face visits and email. Period. This works great in only ONE scenario. That scenario is: when the prospect or client hates getting phone calls himself or herself, and hides behind email also.

**Something to ponder:** picture yourself out of the country, alone. You get contacted by a loved one, after your long absence. Would you rather interact by email, or hear that person's voice?

Our voices are powerful, whether we say the perfect words or not. One sentence can portray everything from joking to anger to critique to playfulness. It's all in the tone, and there's less left to interpretation. Our writing, on the other hand, can be misinterpreted by the tone in which the *recipient reads*. I know of salespeople who say they spend

inordinate amounts of time crafting emails, to avoid misinterpretation, instead of spending one minute talking on the phone or leaving a voicemail.

My point: instead of using email to *enhance* our client work, to *add more* to our interactions, we sometimes tend to hide behind it to avoid making contacts, especially contacts by phone.

**So #2 recommendation is to use email to enhance contacts, or to expedite contacts, or to back up contacts, or to clarify contacts.** Don't use email to replace contacts. If your prospect never returns phone calls but always answers email, it means *they* don't like to make calls. It may not mean that they don't want to hear your voice.

Moving on to the next type of technology, we discover that salespeople also hide behind **voicemail**, especially if they have unpleasant news to deliver. Have you ever received a voicemail, then said to yourself, "That person deliberately called me when she knew I wouldn't answer." You know when people are hiding, and other people know when you're hiding also.

**#3 recommendation**, then, is to make sure you're using **voicemail** for the purpose it was intended – **as an alternative to talking with a person, not as an avoidance.**

The Internet technology, and its sub-technologies, have brought about many new ways of hiding, too. Consider Customer Relationship Management systems, or CRM's. The name sounds good, and CRM's can deliver powerful information.

But what's the complaint about them? That it takes too much time to enter the information. It can require well over an hour a day to keep a CRM system humming with all the appropriate information, and even more time to analyze its recorded contents.

Aha! What does that mean? It means that CRM's can be fertile hiding places for salespeople who are avoiding the marketplace. "I have to enter my stuff in the CRM system." These are words that can give a call reluctant salesperson many hours per month of safe reprieve... and lost visibility. (Visibility = Money)

**#4 Recommendation** applies to CRM systems, as well as *any* technology that has been or will be invented. That is: **Use technology to get more done, and to do it better**, rather than as an end unto itself, or as a way to avoid what makes us money.

Technology has not changed the key predictor of success, which is:

**The number of contacts initiated  
with prospective buyers  
on a consistent basis.**

We need to stay vigilant and make sure we're moving toward our end result, not hiding behind technology!

May you earn what you deserve,

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*Jeffrie Story helps organizations and individuals achieve the earnings they deserve, and the money they want. A summa cum laude graduate of the University of Iowa, Jeffrie spent 25 years in sales leadership at a Fortune 1000 corporation, where she was known for getting results. Combining scientific tools with experience and a passion for transformation, Jeffrie helps create behaviors that are consistent, sufficient and effective.*