



How to Yield an **85%** Response Rate with Top Decision Makers?

You've just finished your sales event and you're ready to follow-up. You need to re-connect with your prospects, reaffirm your offer, and coax them into reaching for the phone, or meeting you in person. Where do you start?

Regaining the attention of top decision makers after a sales event requires a creative and original approach that acknowledges the needs and pressures faced by today's information-overloaded executives.

You start with a letter (yes, the old fashioned kind). But a letter that is unlike the same old sales letter you've seen a hundred times.

The concept of the VITO letter (Very Important Top Officer) took off in the mid-nineties from a best selling book by Anthony Parinello called "Selling to VITO." To this day it is a valuable sales tool thanks to its targeted effectiveness. Selling to VITO is a whole art unto itself, but mastering the VITO letter can be achieved after a little research and practice.

The value of the VITO letter lies in its structured components, each of which is designed to trigger certain psychological reactions. Here are the five critical components of any VITO letter:

1 Tone:

Avoid salesperson language and assume the tone of a businessperson. You must position yourself as a knowledge leader in your particular sales field. You are writing to provide current and tangible evidence (think numbers and percentages) as to why your product or service can benefit VITO's company.

2. Headline:

You have about eight seconds, or 30 words to convince VITO to keep reading. This means your headline needs to be a shocker. Headlines that work tend to be quotations from reputable research sources that highlight one of VITO's biggest pains. Italicize it, and format to a larger font.

3. Action:

VITO leads an extremely busy and time-constrained life, and tends to skim through text. But before skimming, VITO will read the first 30 words to get an idea of the letter's purpose, and then skip down to the last 30 words to find out who sent it and "see what the catch is."

Your last 30 words should be in the form of a P.S., right after your signature, and should designate a time when you will call VITO's office. Most importantly, it should call out VITO's assistant/secretary – "If you will not be in, please have Sam tell me when I should return the call." Sam will most likely be the one reading the letter first, and will be impressed by how personal it is. He will also appreciate the recognition of being part of VITO's business world. He will check VITO's calendar, and may even call you back.

4. Strip out the B.S.:

VITO doesn't have time for introductions, pleasantries, or small talk. Your first two sentences should be very brief, and lead to your core message. This brief "set up" section should also tie in the headline, and indicate how it relates to the body of your letter. Remember to leave out industry jargon, buzz words, and the name of your product/service.

5. The Benefits:

This critical component should list four to five key benefits of your product/service. Benefits are not features – rather, they are short, meaningful and results-oriented snippets such as, how to increase revenue, maximize the efficiency of revenue-generating employees, protect market share from the competition, or reduce expenses. Features are nice, but how they will impact the bottom line is nicer.

It takes some time to research VITO's needs and to make these five critical components flow, but you can be assured of a strong response rate as a result. Anthony Parinello guarantees that you will reach VITO in your follow-up call about 85% of the time – not bad for a "simple" letter.



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