

Also, don't start your initial approach by saying, *"You're probably busy right now..."* Or *"I'm sorry to bother you."* These statements give the prospect an excuse for not engaging with you before you even explain why you're there.

So, instead of asking a question, start right off by making a statement and telling the person exactly who you are. For example, *"Hey there, I'm the garage door guy..."* or *"Hi, my name is Lenny, I'm with XYZ Garage Door..."*

Icebreakers should only be used when it's obvious, and if it's not, just proceed with your initial approach. If you do use an icebreaker, ask a follow up question or two about the icebreaker. For example, *"Hey there, I'm Lenny, just the garage door guy, by the looks of your jersey, you must be a big Cardinals fan?"* Once the potential customer responds you could say, *"How do you think they're going to do this weekend?"* And *"Do you think there's any chance they make the playoffs this year?"*

Understand, there is such a thing as spending too much time icebreaking, so keep it concise. And remember, breaking the ice isn't mandatory, so don't force it.

A couple of other points to consider about icebreakers is that people love compliments and giving advice to others. Thus, after introducing yourself you could ask, when applicable: *"You have the most beautiful landscaping in the neighborhood! Do you do it yourself or hire it out?"* Or *"I'm hoping you can help me out, I'm actually in the market to buy a new home, how do you like living in a cul-de-sac?"*

## Step 2: Why You Are There

Establishing why you are approaching the potential customer is the second part of an effective initial approach. Namedropping is the most important element to this step. There is a good chance the people you talk to will know their neighbors. Thus, if used correctly, namedropping will increase your credibility, and people inherently treat you better if they know that you know who they know.

Never make up a name or drop the names of people the person you are talking to is unlikely to know. Relevant namedropping is key to this step. The most effective techniques for namedropping are using previous customer names, or the names of people you recently spoke with.

For example, *"Hi, my name is Jackson, I'm with XYZ Garage Door, I'm sure you know Jared and Brandee a few houses down, they're customers of ours..."*

Depending on how much visibility your company gives you with its customers, it might take a little effort on your part to get to know the names of previous customers, but reps who make this effort will find that it pays off as they use names of customers who their prospects are likely to know.

When getting the names of people you recently spoke with, remember the most effective way to do this is when a prospect has declined your offer, and before walking away you might ask, *"Like I mentioned my name is Abby, and what was your name?"* Once the name is given you could say, *"Thanks again for your time, please let us know if we can be of service to you in the future."*