cold call best practices

Companies are changing professional service firms more often. Research is often done on the Internet to consider a new professional service firm relationship. Consider that an "A" client could actually call your firm and not have a contact in mind. Prepare to handle those cold calls well.

Train your receptionist and back up receptionists to know what to do when someone calls who does not ask for specific staff member. This may be a potential client or a member of the media; either way you have spent money branding your firm just so this would happen.

Teach the receptionists how to ask a few discerning questions. This one might help: "We have so many great people at this firm and I would like to make sure your call is directed to the right one. Is there a certain kind of information or assistance you are looking for?"

Make sure your receptionist knows to "own the call." If someone asks for a business accountant, sending the caller to voicemail is not enough. Make sure the caller is connected with a live person if possible.

Brainstorm a list of potential client needs and designate a spokesperson and back-up for each one. Be sure to teach spokespeople and back-ups how to ask a few good questions to discern the needs, and to make an appointment with the caller if possible. The spokespeople need not be the practice area leader, who may be too busy to take these calls. Choose someone who is good at communication and drawing people out.

Have a procedure for cold callers. Ask some basic questions about their needs, make the appointment with them, send them out directions and a confirmation via email, and bring along any team members who can help you. Spend a few minutes at their website so you have a general idea of who they are.