

5 Ways to Prospect Like Sherlock Holmes

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson were out camping. They pitched their tent under the stars and fell asleep. In the middle of the night, Holmes shook Watson awake and said, "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see." Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars." Holmes asked, "And what can you deduce from that?" Watson paused, and then responded thoughtfully, "Well, if there are millions of stars and even a few of them have planets, it's quite likely there are planets like Earth out there. And if there are a few planets like Earth out there, there might also be life." And Holmes said, "Watson, you idiot, it means that somebody stole our tent." (Source: [World's Funniest Joke](#))

I know, corny joke, right? But there's a point.

Watson did not see what was staring him directly in the face. And neither do we.

Many times when we engage in prospecting conversations with people, we tend to over-complicate our thinking and overlook what's staring us right in the face. In other words, we come at our prospects from where WE are, not from where THEY are, as we try to "sell" them on what we have to offer.

But what if I told you that you don't have to "sell" your prospects anything? What if I could show you how you can get prospects to "sell themselves?"

We might take a lesson (or five) from Sherlock Holmes.

WHO, EXACTLY, IS SHERLOCK HOLMES?



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Sherlock Holmes is the iconic detective created in 1887 by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Played by over 200 actors in radio, theater, TV, and movies since his "birth," he holds the [Guinness World Record](#) as the most portrayed literary character in history.

You might say Sherlock Holmes went "viral" before it was cool.

Why? I think it's because we're fascinated by his mind. We're amazed at his mental prowess. His powers of observation. His ability to focus. His grasp of detail that other people entirely miss. And his eccentricity. All that, and we love a good mystery.

He's become the go-to example of clear thinking and **deductive** reasoning.

And deductive reasoning, my dear Watson, is precisely the process we need to engage when interacting with prospects, if we want them to sell themselves.

WHY INDUCTIVE REASONING IS THE WRONG APPROACH

In learning how to communicate effectively with our prospects, we often fall into the trap of approaching them with our solution before we even know what their problem is. Face it; we're trying to sell them. We're trying to close them. **We want something from them.** We approach prospects from where WE are, not from where THEY are. We start from a conclusion, and then try to bend reality to fit.

That's the exact opposite of deductive reasoning. It's **inductive** reasoning.

Inductive reasoning starts with a conclusion. Once you've settled on it, you start looking for evidence to support that conclusion, to prove you're right. Science builds from this process: **HYPOTHESIS → RESEARCH → EVIDENCE → PROOF.** It's a linear process, where you start at the end and work backwards, looking for everything that supports your hypothesis. If the evidence doesn't support your hypothesis, if you can't bend reality to fit, you'll have to start all over again with a different conclusion.

Here's how that works: "I sell a business opportunity. Your life isn't working the way you want it to. Therefore you **NEED** my business opportunity." Once I've made that inductive logical leap, I'll do whatever I can to bend reality to fit. I'll try to persuade, convince, charm, sell, manipulate, or even bully you into accepting my conclusion.

(I haven't noticed the tent is missing, because I'm focused on the stars.)

That's a PUSH, rather than a PULL. Sure, you might convert some prospects or make a few sales that way. But in the long run, you'll exhaust yourself and turn your prospects off with all the pushing. And when your results fail to materialize, you'll have to come up with a different conclusion. Perhaps the company, the plan, the product is what's wrong. After all, it can't be the fault of my hypothesis!

Let's look at prospecting from the Sherlock Holmes perspective, starting with a quote from ***A Study in Scarlet***:

"It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgement."

5 WAYS TO PROSPECT LIKE SHERLOCK HOLMES

"My name is Sherlock Holmes. It is my business to know what other people don't know." – **The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle**

Sherlock Holmes sees things that most people overlook. Even though people think of him as the very picture of rigid logic, his approach is much more imaginative, much less linear, and requires all of his senses and powers of observation and analysis.

His deductive method works like this: **OBSERVATION → ANALYSIS → THEORY → CONCLUSION.** In other words, Sherlock starts by observing objective reality, looking at cold, hard facts. Then he analyzes the objective facts and arrives at conclusions using all of his senses – including critical thinking.

You can teach yourself to think like Sherlock Holmes, and when you do, instead of pushing prospects away you'll start pulling them in like crazy. Isn't that what "attraction marketing" is all about?

As you get better at this approach, you'll find your prospecting conversations to be richer -- more personally fulfilling, more financially rewarding, and maybe even a lot more fun. Practice these steps:

1. Pay attention to the basics.

When Sherlock says something is “elementary,” he’s not saying it’s simple or easy. He means it’s **basic** (like the elements). In his own words, *“As a physicist begins with the laws relevant to a problem, a detective begins with the facts of a case before adding in interpretation.”*

As a marketer, you have a certain baseline of knowledge and experience – “laws relevant to a problem” in Sherlock’s words. You’ll want to use that knowledge and experience, combined with your present observations, to help you define and deal with the specific issues your prospect is facing. After all, *“There is nothing new under the sun. It has all been done before,”* Holmes points out when Lestrade overlooks the similarities between the current investigation and earlier cases.

Every marketer already knows some basics about their prospects and what might keep them from making a decision or taking action. Here are a few universal “elementary” concerns:

- Lack of knowledge or information
- Lack of money
- Lack of leads
- Fear of failure
- Feelings of overwhelm
- Failure to take action

Armed with that basic knowledge, your job as a prospecting “detective” is to drill down and get specific data (clues) from your prospect before you try to solve their problem. You have to identify what their particular problem **IS** first.

2. Observe the details, using all of your senses.

In Season 1, Episode 1 of the 2010 BBC television series ***Sherlock***, Dr. John Watson appears for the first time. The minute they meet, we see Sherlock’s mastery of observation at work:

Sherlock: *“You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive.”*

Watson: *“How on Earth did you know that?”*

Sherlock: *“I knew you came from Afghanistan... Here is a gentleman of a medical type, but with the air of a military man. Clearly an army doctor, then. He has just come from the tropics, for his face is dark, and this is not the natural tint of his skin, for his wrists are fair. He has undergone hardship and sickness, as his haggard face says clearly. His left arm has been injured. He holds it in a stiff and unnatural manner. Where in the tropics could an English army doctor have seen much hardship and got his arm wounded? Clearly in Afghanistan.”*

Sherlock is observing what’s right in front of his face to draw conclusions about who the man is. It looks like magic or mind reading, but it’s actually just deep observation. He’s looking at how all of Watson’s physicality communicates sickness, injury, and the tropics, and he deduces Watson’s personal history from how it all fits together.

Moving from the literary to the real world, here's an example you might like, using the powers of understanding the basics and objective observation.

I often get spam messages on LinkedIn, offering me all kinds of products and opportunities. I'm sure you do, too. Now I could just delete those messages, grumble, and move on, but here's what I deduce from my basic understanding and by observing the spammers' behavior: *they're spamming because they're desperate to generate leads, maybe frustrated, and probably new. They don't know any better.*

So, based on my observation, analysis, and conclusion, I've changed my approach. Now I'll often shoot them a message right back: "Hey, if sending out messages like this isn't working for you, let me invite you to check out this free boot camp, no strings attached" and direct them right to AMF. And oddly enough, some of them click through and end up buying.

In literally two minutes of observation and critical thinking, I solved a problem and I got a sale, by looking at all the pieces, observing how they fit together, and deducing the spammer's issue.

3. Be 'actively passive' when you're talking to prospects.

Sherlock Holmes listens intently, often with his eyes closed and his fingertips pressed together, taking everything in, observing deeply with **all** of his senses.

Listening is the greatest gift you can give someone, as you give them your undivided attention and take the whole of the person in – what they are saying with words as well as what's being communicated non-verbally.

So when you're talking to your prospects, you probably shouldn't be fiddling with your phone, checking your messages, or worrying about your next appointment.

Focus on the person, not yourself. Ask questions. Be a detective. Don't offer solutions until the right solution become obvious based on your observations.

Let's say a prospect says they are stuck. Part of being "actively passive" is to refrain from jumping right in with a pitch, and instead start asking questions. Where are you stuck? What have you already tried? Did it work? What results did you get? What could you have done differently? What are you not doing that you know you should be doing? What's holding you back?

The point is to dig deep, let each answer lead you to the next question. Listen intently. And when the time is right, the conclusion will become obvious. You can help your prospect make the decision that's **right for them**.

In Sherlock's words from *The Red Circle*, "Education never ends, Watson. It is a series of lessons, with the greatest for last."

4. Say out loud what you're observing.

One of Sherlock's most endearing (or annoying, depending on your point of view) habits is that he talks to Watson about absolutely everything. He says, "Nothing clears up a case so much as stating it to another person."

When you state something out loud, it forces you and your listener to pause and reflect. It allows you to slow down your thinking and consider each conclusion logically. It aids critical thinking. It helps you stay present...in this moment...with this person. That's huge.

If you've been mindful about asking your prospect questions and listened carefully to each answer, the best way to cement your connection with that person is to restate what you've heard.

"So you've tried x, y, and z with limited results, right? And you feel frustrated with the lack of support you're getting from your upline."

...or

"Based on what you're telling me, it seems you've been stuck for a few months with this, right? And it seems like it's not okay with you to be stuck. So tell me, would it be okay with you a year from now to still be stuck like this?"

When you can summarize out loud with the person exactly what you've heard (or observed), you're well on your way to developing a relationship of trust. From that relationship of trust, your prospect will be more open to your solution.

5. Be willing to adapt.

One thing is certain about Sherlock Holmes: he never approaches a case the same way twice. He tailors his approach, depending on the circumstances of the case in front of him.

He greets every new contact in a case as an individual. He profiles them by observing and analyzing their appearance and behavior, looking for ways to take advantage of what he deduces to solve his case.

When you adapt your approach to the person right in front of you, and commit yourself to helping that person create a breakthrough, your work becomes more meaningful and fulfilling. You forge a relationship based on trust. Online, that's no small thing.

"It has long been an axiom of mine that the little things are infinitely the most important." – A Case of Identity

THE GAME IS AFOOT

"Come, Watson, come!" he cried. 'The game is afoot. Not a word! Into your clothes and come!' Ten minutes later we were both in a cab and rattling through the silent streets on our way to Charing Cross Station." – The Return of Sherlock Holmes

Sherlock was operating in another century, with entirely more primitive technology. He literally had to interview his suspects one at a time-- in person and face-to-face, traveling all over England to follow and analyze the evidence and data available to him.

Sounds kind of like "old school" prospecting and recruiting, doesn't it? You "jump into your clothes, hop in a cab, and rattle through the streets" to meet your prospects one at a time to try to force them into your game.

The case **you're** trying to solve is how to grow your business by prospecting and **recruiting the right people in the most efficient way possible.**

But check this out:

Just imagine how insanely efficient Sherlock Holmes could have been if he had been able to leverage the power of the Internet and social media to solve his case, without having to talk to anybody at all – ever. Without having to jump into a carriage or hop on a train in the middle of the night. Without ever having to travel the country and talk to people one at a time. Heck, he might have never even had to leave home!

The game we have afoot today is instant access to over a billion people on Facebook alone -- who willingly tell you exactly who they are and what they're interested in. And you don't have to talk to them face-to-face, ever (unless, of course, you want to).

[Download this free guide right now to learn how to play this game.](#)

It was created by my friend Julie Burke, a multiple six-figure earner in network marketing, who personally sponsored over 270 reps and grew a team of 8,300 distributors, all from the comfort of her home, in just 3 years.

Julie built 80% of her organization using social media, and 80% of her team uses social media to recruit online as well.

She might just be the Sherlock Holmes of social media marketing.

A master recruiter, Julie has tested different posts over the past four years and has dialed in on what works and doesn't work on Facebook.

If you want to be instantly more effective at recruiting and sponsoring online, click the link below to get immediate access to exact scripts, example posts, and critical dos and don'ts on Facebook that will help you prospect like Sherlock Holmes...automatically!

[DOWNLOAD Julie's "Social Medial Recruiting Frenzy" Guide absolutely FREE!](#)

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