



The Playbook for Evolving Inside Sales Pipeline Generation





Introduction

To generate pipeline, you still have to

Inside sales, sales development reps (SDRs), business development reps (BDRs), appointment setting, teleprospecting, business development, telemarketing, cold calling, sales prospecting... The terms differ, but the objective is the same: reach out to a prospect by phone to introduce your product or service. In the digital age, businesses must go beyond face-to-face meetings to achieve their sales growth targets, and it shouldn't be a surprise that inside sales is growing 15 times faster than outside sales annually.

As B2B leaders, we know that an inside sales program is a bastion of sustainable revenue generation. However, we also know sales and marketing is evolving and we want to transform our tactics in tandem. We'll want to be prepared in case the performance of our long-tenured third-party partner starts to fade. We'll want to respond to the push towards more digital and inbound marketing and away from cold calling. We may be weighing the options of outsourcing or insourcing inside sales.

So how can B2B firms achieve a true inside sales transformation? They outsource the function and work with experienced inside sales support. Beyond outsourced business development, there are three key components to strong inside sales performance. In this strategy paper, we will explore best practices for maximizing the pipeline value that comes from your inside sales program.

1. Prioritize quality, not quantity
2. Four best practices that guarantee tele success
3. Three characteristics of great outsourced inside sales support

¹ Ken Krogue, "What is Inside Sales? - Our Definition of Inside Sales". *Inside Sales*, April 3, 2019. <https://blog.insidesales.com/remote-sales/what-is-inside-sales/>

Why Businesses Fail at New Market Entry



It's common for sales and marketing leaders to begin to think of sales as a numbers game. The more meetings you've set up with prospects, the greater the odds are for success. But all too often, multiple meetings with prospects only result in one or two actual purchases and sometimes even none at all. Why?

Whether you're conducting field sales or inside sales, there is one fundamental element to every successful deal: a sense of connection. Ultimately, you're endeavoring to persuade prospects that you can provide a product or service that meets their needs. To do so, your sales team must approach each prospect not merely as one of many potential buyers, but as a business partner that you have specially targeted. No prospect wants to feel that they are just another name on your call list. Your inside sales team must do the homework to understand the unique environment of the prospect – their industry, their buyers, their objectives and challenges.

Devoting research into these areas will allow you to significantly impact the prospect on the other end of phone. The more confident prospects are that you understand them, their needs, and the right timing, the better they'll feel about lending you their time and a listening ear. However, gathering intel on your clients is a gradual process and it may mean lower numbers of calls or appointments. This more than compensates for the loss in efficiency with better quality sales partnerships. It means establishing a rapport with a prospect, and building a firm foundation for a sales cycle with much higher conversion rates.

Four Best Practices That Guarantee Tele Success



60% of your prospects will already have made their decision before ever speaking with you. So the importance of doing your homework before picking up the phone cannot be underestimated. Data analytics is a fundamental component of this info-gathering stage of your inside sales transformation.

There are two phases to the research process. The first is discovering who your prospect is, why their product exists, what they stand for, and what they need to meet their business goals. During the second, you have to determine whether the products and services you're offering can fill their existing gaps.

There are four steps you can take in every sales opportunity to optimize the data available to you.

¹ Martin Moran, "7 Data-Backed Sales Best Practices", *Inside Sales*, 13 Feb 2019.
<https://blog.insidesales.com/best-practices/7-data-backed-sales-best-practices/>

Four Best Practices That Guarantee Tele Success



Always deal with a qualified target audience

Developing complex scoring models will amount to nothing if you're not first filtering for the optimal target audience. To some, target audience may consist of functions and departments. To others, it may be the level of the lead (manager, director, VP, etc.), industry, company size (defined by revenue or employee count), or geographical region. Ideally, it should be a combination of all of the above, narrowed down to the prospects who are most likely to buy what you're selling.

Doing the legwork to identify the ideal target audience and ensure all of your calls and meetings are honed in on this segment is of paramount importance. You must be discerning about the prospects you meet to ensure that your meetings will actually result in sales. You only want to contact prospects who have a gap you can fill and who are high-level enough to take decisive action about your products.



Gather the 1:1 information

This is where strategic intel-gathering can be employed. Do in-depth research about your prospects and learn about the issues that are preventing them from being successful and about the people you must contact to make a sale. But don't just stop at the problems and pains they have. Delve into the history of the business and find out what ideals they stand for, what kind of change they are passionate about effecting, and how they describe their company. The more closely their business vision aligns with your pitch, the more likely you are to get their attention. Knowing and connecting on their unique environment ensures that before you've even had the appointment, you'll already know that you're meeting up with a kindred spirit.



Use inside sales professionals who know your audience

Now that you've identified the right targets to approach, you must send the right people to talk to them. Of course, the ideal inside sales rep should be a compelling speaker who can keep prospects on the phone for more than a few seconds. But what will really set your calling program apart from most is its ability to relate to the prospects in their personal situations. Your salesperson should be familiar with professional and cultural nuances that are close to home for the prospect. If there is any kind of socio-linguistic barrier between your salesperson and prospect, it's highly unlikely that a sale will result.

Build a team that can straightaway establish a sense of commonality and camaraderie with a potential client and half the battle will be won. This often means keeping inside sales calling efforts on-shore, and in addition it means prioritizing knowledge of the prospect segments and personas over an engineer's-level depth of knowledge of your products.



Learn from what's not working

It's natural to want to focus on your wins rather than your losses. But your inside sales team has as much to learn, if not more, from rejections than acceptances. If a prospect doesn't end up agreeing to a meeting, you'll gain a lot of valuable information from looking into why.

Did you reach out to someone who wasn't a fit for your product? Does your prospect prefer the offerings of your competitors? Or did you simply reach out to the prospect at the wrong time, when they had no pressing need for your services?

All the data you gather from rejections will powerfully inform improvements. This data must be captured, it must be mined, and it must be used to change the pitch or the targeting criteria.

Three Characteristics of Great Outsourced Inside Sales Support



You've likely gathered that executing all the steps above will require specialized resources and sales expertise, demands that most companies aren't readily equipped to deliver with existing internal teams. Outfitting your business with a brand new sales team is a challenging endeavor, as finding and training the best possible sales candidates will take time and resources that you probably don't have on hand. Even if you do manage to hire sales talent, you'll have your hands full retaining them. Most companies don't have an internal progression scheme or accurate sales metrics to help their sales team continuously improve, making it inevitable that their staff will look elsewhere for better career growth opportunities.

Instead of straining your employees with tasks that they don't have the bandwidth to handle, you should place your inside sale program in the qualified hands of outsourced sales teams. Investing in a partnership with a company that specializes in inside sales is the most common path to scaling inside sales. External inside sales support will come ready with the expertise and resources you need for sales growth, expediting the already lengthy process of finding qualified leads. Outsourced sales teams also already have the correct metrics and the built-in progression scheme that they need to improve sales performance and hit the ground running. They can also work closely with your in-house team to support and train your team in taking an active role in pipeline acceleration efforts.

However, signing on with just any firm is not going to get you far off the ground either. You have to ensure that your vendor has the right focus, specialists, and skillset. What does a partnership like that look like?

Three Characteristics of Great Outsourced Inside Sales Support

A focuses on quality, not quantity

There are many vendors that exclusively emphasize appointment setting. Their main value add is the number of meetings they can secure for you within a short time frame. Beyond that, their involvement ends. As we discussed in the previous section, the number of meetings you get with leads doesn't mean much if you don't eventually convert them into sales. If all they can do is put you in touch with people, all your contract will result in is a great deal of time wasted with the wrong prospects.

Before you join forces with a vendor to do targeted inside sales, you must determine if it puts care into obtaining the right contacts rather than just any contact at all. The company should be reaching out to decision makers whose needs align with what you can give them. With this piece in place, it's a fast track to a fulfilling partnership.

Takes the time to do things right

Don't settle for a rushed job. Engaging the most suitable and qualified leads is a lengthy, meticulous process, which means that your relationship with your vendor should be far from transactional. Before you even think of setting an appointment, your inside sales support should be carefully researching prospects and your own database to identify sales opportunities you may not even be aware of.

The collaboration shouldn't end after the appointment is over. In the interest of learning from both your victories and misses, the best outsourced sales teams conduct a post-mortem on both appointments and sales cycles. The purpose is to gather enough intel to form a full picture of what worked and what didn't. You'll be armed with enough information to approach new prospects and uninterested leads with a far more appealing package.

Uses on-shore sales development representatives (SDRs)

A great inside salesperson may be endowed with a silver tongue and the gift of the gab. However, it's not going to matter if what he says isn't resonating with your buyer. For better or worse, this disconnect usually results from a lack of cultural alignment. US prospects are barraged by dozens of calls daily from offshore centers, and every time they answer the phone, their guard is up. The uncomfortable reality is that the most effective inside sales callers must be on-shore and from a similar cultural background to the prospects they are calling. First impressions matter, and cultural alignment is key to making a great first impression.

It is important for the inside sales services you choose to employ highly qualified inside sales personnel that intimately understand your product and your target market. Not only will on-shore SDRs be on the same cultural wavelength as you and your prospects, they'll also be more accessible and much closer to your product than someone halfway across the world. They will be your prospect's first point of contact with you, so it's crucial that your pipeline development services operates like an extension of your team as much as it can.

Conclusion



Ultimately, what you're looking for in every meeting with a prospect is a good fit. You have to be the right service provider for your buyer and they have to be the best clientele for you. With field sales being steadily phased out by inside sales, you'll have to make your virtual channels work doubly hard to retain the personal touch, a crucial component to successful sales growth. The right B2B sales outsourcing company will ensure that you get to know your prospects long before you pick up the phone, and long after.

Building connections is a delicate art that will take a great deal of expertise, personalization, and strategy. If you look to a vendor for outsourced inside sales, ensure it's up to the task: it has to emphasize quality over quantity, take great care in finding the right leads and opportunities, and consist of a team of on-shore specialists. It also has to work closely with your staff and function almost as a seamless extension of your team, conveying your values and services as though they were its own. This is the only way to put your best face forward when breaking through the noise to get your prospect's attention.



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