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Choosing Telesales or Telemarketing to Get Results

Taming the Classic S & M Challenge

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The folks in Marketing have a strategic vision for exciting customers or prospects and increasing sales. The folks in Sales have a tried-and-true process for connecting with people, developing needs and closing in a field sales operation. So, whose leadership runs your inside sales initiative? If you are in the start-up phase, which group should you link with most closely? If you think this is not important to define, you are in danger of spending a substantial corporate budget on an unproductive year.

In our practice, we are often called upon to help B-to-B clients set up a phone sales initiative. They look to our expertise in field sales, telephone sales, customer service, and telemarketing to set up a program that will meet their goals on time and within budget. Here are some ideas of what we see and how we try to help companies succeed.

Worthy Goals

Usually, companies are looking for a way to reduce the cost of sales by:

- Using the phone to reach more clients or prospects in a day than they can reach using field sales time
- Taking travel expenses out of the cost of selling
- Identifying top tier prospects quickly
- Moving prospects through the sales cycle faster

Or, get more sales by:

- Selling to small accounts which have been ignored by their field sales representatives
- Closing small “add-on” solutions to current clients
- Offering low-end solutions at “promotion pricing” to prospects

These are worthy goals. But, they are not without challenges. Before you begin, you must come to an educated agreement about what you are doing, why and when. If not, your dream team may turn into a nightmare.

Tele-Sales Vs Tele-Marketing

If Marketing Directors have never sold and Sales Directors have never sold by phone, here are a few facts you must understand.

1. Tele-Marketing exists for the purpose of finding “low hanging fruit”. They call prospects or clients looking for those who are already in the process of evaluating a solution like yours. They create interest, desire and action in 1 or 2 calls. If the sale is more complex, they hand the “lead” off to Sales. Marketing should manage Tele-Marketing.
2. Tele-Sales calls clients or prospects who may or may not already have shown interest. Starting high in an organization they map the “field sales” model for fully uncovering all opportunities and closing deals. If relationships can lead to repeat business, this is the group who can win now and later. This team needs 2-4 highly effective different “types” of calls in order to sell. Sales should manage Tele-Sales.

Tele-Sales Can Map Field Sales Model to the Phone

| Similarities to Field Sales | Differences to Prepare for |
|--|--|
| Contact same decision-makers or influencers in the same order. | If you do not have correct top officer names you must make a pre-call to get them or you will be screened out or forwarded too low in the organization. |
| Use same words and ideas to create interest in working with you. | You are creating interest in a phone conversation instead of a face-to-face meeting. This means a first contact must be a lot more productive and move prospect farther into the sales process. |
| Selling process can have same steps such as creating interest, developing needs, understanding buying process, presenting solutions, cost justifying, providing testimonials, closing sale and post-sale follow-up. | Tele-Sales should have a shorter sales cycle without skipping any of the steps. This means defining what happens on each specific conversation so salesrep knows exactly what to aim at. |
| Calls should end with agreement to next steps. | Next steps must be clearly defined and next contact pre-scheduled or you may waste a lot of time chasing a decision-maker who never takes your call again. |
| Salespeople must be aware of activities to do during business hours and what should be done when no customer contact is possible. | Tele-Salespeople need targets for activity that covers every step of the sales process. It’s not enough that they are busy, they must be using phone time very productively or they will fail. |
| Teach salespeople what to do at every step of the sales process plus the right consultative selling behaviors for your market. | In addition to field sales training, Tele-Sales must know how to do all of this by telephone. Teach them to conduct several different kinds of phone calls including the “first contact with decision-maker and its goal”, “needs development call with influencers and its goal”, “presentation and closing calls and its goal”, “follow-up for more new business call and its goal”, for examples. |
| Campaigns are a great way to get current clients to add on more products as long as this is not the first time the salesperson has met the client. Salespeople must be thorough enough to understand the situation and problems before pitching any solutions. | No different here. Trust and rapport are even more important in a Tele-Sales relationship where a handsome smile and honest eyes don’t work to compensate for being too aggressive. |

Hiring Tele-Marketing Vs Tele-Sales

Tele-marketers spend 100% of their time prospecting for new business by cold calling or by making contacts inside client accounts. This is a repetitive job that is closely monitored and requires focus. You need people who:

- Can stay in their seats and dial without the need to break the monotony
- Expect their time to be managed for them so they hit specific activity targets
- Understand that activity drives outcome
- Understand that it may take 90 minutes of dialing to have 1 actual decision-maker conversation and can focus on that single goal alone
- Do not want to think strategically about account development
- Will learn a new script or strategy for a new product or campaign without needing to know every detail about the product
- Accept coaching on tiny details such as nuances of tone, listening for buying signals, call path management, creating rapport and closing
- Are motivated by recognition and respect more than they are motivated by money

Tele-salespeople need to be able to sit in their seats and dial, but their job has more strategy and variety. Like their colleagues in the field, Tele-salespeople spend 30% of their time prospecting, 30% of their time analyzing, 30% presenting and closing with 10% left over for paperwork and follow-up. With some variation based on your marketplace and sales strategy, you need people who:

- Can manage their time to hit several different activity targets, call goals, milestones and outcomes
- Understand that activity drives outcome
- Understand that it may take 90 minutes of dialing to have 1 actual decision-maker conversation and can focus on achieving that goal as 1 of many
- Will use scripting and sales materials as learning tools while they develop their own styles
- Will do their own homework outside of prime calling hours in order to improve their product knowledge, customer knowledge or gain a competitive edge
- Accept coaching on sales strategy, product strategy and telephone sales strategy with a desire to change and grow in order to succeed
- Are motivated by money as well as recognition while automatically assuming they deserve respect

Consequences of Trying to Blend Tele-Sales and Tele-Marketing Together

Even as I review the 2 different hiring profiles and see that we have very different people suited for each of these jobs, I can still understand the temptation to try to find a way to make a blended group work. Often, companies who set-up a telephone-based department like to remain open-minded and see which strategy works. So, they try a bit of both. It's the old "throw enough spaghetti against the wall and some of it has to stick" theory.

Without a clear vision, concrete training, repeated coaching to support specific behaviors salespeople always fail. And, if salespeople – Tele-Sales variety or Tele-Marketing variety – fail, then leadership gets blamed. People lose their jobs.

You have to make an educated decision about how you're going to approach your market using the phone. Low-hanging fruit or professional prospecting? It's your call. Then, you have to follow your plan through for at least a year to get payback on the investment in hiring, training, equipping and managing.

The good news is that there are many experts out there who can help you make choices you can live with. Look for seasoned Managers who've been through this process before. You can look to a Consultant.

Whichever approach you take, be aware that it won't be easy to cast off the mis-information of your colleagues and stick with a plan until you succeed. But it will be worth it. Businesses want to buy using the phone and it makes sense to sell this way. You can be the trusted source, the profitable division, the wave of the future. Just stay away from the S&M.

CARAS *Marketing & Training* provides consulting on telesales and telemarketing. We offer customized curriculum design and training services for companies who do business by telephone. We help to improve every day behaviors so that clients increase sales results and customer satisfaction concurrently. Please contact Ronna Caras at 978.531.2022 x55 with any questions about this article, or for ideas that will help you meet and exceed your goals.