

Telemarketing

A B2B Marketer's Secret Weapon!

The Mx Group

Many B2B marketers are underleveraging the tactic that has been successfully generating leads and closing sales for decades.

In this ebook, you'll get:

Four common missteps
B2B companies make with telemarketing that lead to disappointing results

Six specific methods
to increase revenue through telemarketing

Three tips
to target the right audience with your telemarketing program

Introduction

As the number of marketing tactics has multiplied, marketers are finding it more difficult to determine where they should focus their resources. Digital marketing, in particular, has become increasingly sophisticated and offers opportunities for highly targeted and effective demand generation campaigns.

Yet as B2B marketers design integrated programs, many overlook a tactic that has successfully generated leads and closed sales for decades: **telemarketing**.

Strategically deploying telemarketing to enhance engagement, nurture prospects and improve your data can make the difference between revenue that goes to your bottom line and revenue that goes out the door.

Telemarketing is a direct, one-to-one form of communication that has a natural connection with the B2B world — a field built around relationships, a complex buying cycle and tightly targeted audiences.

But, before we dig in, let's define our telemarketing terms.



Tele**marketing services** are a broad range of **phone-based** tactics that take the most **effective** aspects of person-to-person **outbound** phone calls to amplify digital **marketing campaigns**.

Tele**marketing**

Technically, the use of outbound telephone contact to conduct any marketing activity counts as telemarketing. It's an umbrella term that encompasses our other terms, as well as other activities like market research, lead nurturing and post-sales follow-up calls.

Tele**qualification**

Leads are one thing, while qualified leads are quite another. Telequalification uses a telemarketing team to qualify leads that have hit your contact database. Maybe they attended a webinar or dropped their card off at your booth at a trade show, but you don't have the key information you need about the lead to determine whether it's worth pursuing (marketing-qualified) or ready to hand off to Sales (sales-qualified).

Tele**prospecting**

Simply put, teleprospecting is lead generation occurring over the phone. It allows you to qualify a prospect and encourage interest in your offering at the same time. Appointment setting is a good example of a teleprospecting tact.

Why It's Underleveraged

Many B2B companies have used telemarketing in one form or another. But some of these programs have not delivered the expected results, generally due to one of these common telemarketing mistakes:

1. Keeping it in-house

Rather than dedicating a team, some companies try to leverage existing resources such as customer service or support personnel for telemarketing. Often this means the program takes a back seat to those people's main responsibilities—so you only see small volumes of calls, made by a team that is not fully focused or highly proficient. Instead of having to develop a new in-house team with new competencies, outsourcing an experienced, well-trained telemarketing team is a cost-effective way to find dedicated resources exactly when you need them.

2. Outsourcing to an inexperienced team

B2B marketing is more complex than B2C marketing, involving intricate sales dynamics, multiple decision-makers and specialized vocabularies. Telemarketing teams without experience in dealing with these subtleties will not be able to successfully interact with B2B gatekeepers, customers and prospects. This is another good reason to outsource B2B telemarketing efforts to a team that specializes in these tactics.

3. Not investing in technology

If you're serious about telemarketing, you need to use the technologies designed to support your calling programs. A list of phone numbers in an Excel spreadsheet is not the basis for a successful campaign. Your team should be using technologies that facilitate efficient calling and information updates, connecting seamlessly with your other systems. Integrating your dialer system with your CRM keeps your data fresh in both systems.

4. Isolating telemarketing from other key tactics

Telemarketing campaigns should not be done in a vacuum. The real power of this tactic is unleashed when your telemarketing campaigns are integrated into your entire marketing and sales strategy. Calling initiatives should be part of comprehensive prospect journeys—along with email, direct mail, advertising, trade shows and other tactics.

6 Ways Telemarketing Can Help You Grow Your Revenue

An effective telemarketing strategy can deliver real results across the entire B2B sales funnel. When integrated into your overall sales and marketing program, telemarketing can help you:

1. Build Your **Database**
2. Generate **Leads**
3. Qualify **Leads**
4. Gather **Insights**
5. Nurture **Your Leads**
6. Supplement **Your Sales Team**

1 Build Your **Database**

A thorough, up-to-date database is essential to the success of B2B marketing, including demand generation, digital marketing and ABM. But unfortunately, many companies have not refreshed their contact database in some time, or are not able to utilize the information they do have to its full potential.

Whether you need to update your current contact database, acquire data for a targeted campaign, or build a database from the ground up, your data points need to be of the highest quality and tailored to your business goals and customer profiles.

Experienced, well-trained telemarketers know how to speak to and navigate around gatekeepers to get the information needed for efficient data-point gathering. Ensure greater success with your B2B marketing efforts in the short term and long run by using a database that's as up to date and detailed as possible.

Call in extra help

Consider utilizing a telemarketing team to augment your contact database by:

- Updating records — contacts, titles, and email and physical addresses.
- Acquiring custom data not commonly available from a database provider, such as detailed technographic information and buy-cycle insight.
- Determining who the influencers / decision-makers are in the buying process.
- Learning about company / contacts' challenges and current initiatives.

2 Generate **Leads**

B2B marketers consistently cite lead generation as one of their primary goals and biggest challenges. Quality leads are, of course, the lifeblood of a marketing and sales operation. Lead generation tactics abound, and effective marketers are always testing new approaches.

Telemarketing engages your customers and prospects in a one-to-one dialogue that is not possible through other tactics. The idea that prospects want to do all their research online is a myth. They definitely want digital content, but a full 76% of them also find it helpful to speak to Sales during their initial research phase. Making early contact, an efficient use of a telemarketer's time, positions your company as a partner, not just a vendor.

Make a lasting connection

Many calling strategies have been used successfully to generate leads, including:

- Offering a piece of content (e.g., a white paper).
- Directly asking if the prospect would be interested in your products or services.
- Gathering information about the type of products and solutions the prospect has in place now.
- Encouraging a free expert consultation.

Source: *B2B Lead Generation Report, McKinsey*

3 Qualify **Leads**

Qualification should be part of a scoring process that identifies qualified leads to send to your sales team, ensuring that their time remains focused and productive. Deploying skilled telemarketers to qualify leads also allows you to capture valuable intelligence that will help your sales team follow up more effectively. And when you integrate your telemarketing dialer tool with your CRM solution, your sales team will have the full scope of updated intel about each prospect.

Your fulfillment process is a great place to add a qualification step: Call prospects whom you haven't engaged with in a while, to confirm that they have received materials or follow up after an event — and in the process, find out more about their needs.

Using telemarketing to gather information about a prospect does more than identify qualified leads for Sales. It provides Sales with the critical intelligence they need when calling prospects. After all, when narrowing their vendor pool, 94% of B2B buyers seek out a sales team that brings specific insights into their problems.

Fill in the gaps!

One of the biggest challenges in B2B lead management is qualification. Incorporating telequalification into your sales and marketing operation helps you fill the information gaps in your lead flow. Using telemarketing can help you answer essential questions, such as:

- Is the prospect truly qualified demographically (e.g., size of company, industry, systems)?
- Are they actively looking for solutions?
- Is the contact a decision-maker or key influencer?
- What are their biggest challenges?

Source: *2017 B2B Buyers Survey Report, Demand Gen Report*

Telequalification supports your channel partners, too.

Qualifying your leads before you distribute them to your channel partners will help you:

Build credibility with your partners, which will help your product lines **get more of their attention**.

Help ensure that your channel partners **sell more of your product**, not your competitors' products.

Build your data and maintain control. Once you've handed over a lead, it can be difficult to gather additional insights.

4 Gather **Insights**

In addition to qualification, there are numerous ways that telemarketing improves the effectiveness of your follow-up and ability to gather critical information about your prospects and your sales process.

Post-event Follow-up
Trade shows remain a B2B juggernaut for lead generation and making face-to-face contacts. That's why PricewaterhouseCoopers estimates that the B2B trade show market will continue to grow over the next few years, hitting $16.8 billion in 2021. Fast follow-up with prospects met during an event maximizes your company's investment in trade shows. A telemarketing team can telequalify leads and quickly identify the hot opportunities that should go to Sales immediately, before your competitor gets to them. The same goes for follow-up after a webinar, as well.

Evaluate Sales Team Follow-up
Every marketing and sales executive wants to find out how well the sales process is working. Are reps following up in a timely manner? Are prospects getting the information they need? Telephone outreach is one of the best ways to find out what's really happening and pinpoint ways to improve your follow-up procedures.

> It may only take
> **1 call**
> to convert a trade show lead to an order, compared to the
> **5.1 calls**
> needed to close the average industrial sale.

Source: *Selling Power Magazine*

4 Gather **Insights** (continued)

Post-Sale Follow-up
The period immediately after a sale can be a critical moment in a customer relationship. It's a great opportunity to demonstrate your focus on customer care. It's also a moment when a happy customer might be receptive to upsell, and an unhappy one can change their tune if their concerns are addressed. Leverage your telemarketing team to continue strengthening the connection built during the initial sale.

Lost Sales
When you lose a sale, your sales team will be focused on moving on to the next deal. It's a numbers game, after all. But there's a wealth of potential information available from prospects who didn't convert. What drove their decision? What were their impressions of your offerings compared to those of the competition? Telemarketing is a low-pressure, cost-efficient way to gather this valuable intelligence.



Get the real scoop

In some instances, such as following up with lost sales or evaluating sales team follow-up, it's particularly helpful to use an outside telemarketing team that doesn't have a direct relationship with your sales, product development or customer service teams.

Having a barrier between the team collecting sensitive information and in-house employees can ensure forthright conversations.

5 Nurture **Your Leads**

Smart B2B marketers have robust nurturing programs in place, continuously engaging their prospects with content and tools until they are sales-ready. Nurturing journeys are part of the core promise of marketing automation platforms. However, many marketers' nurturing strategies are limited to a series of emails.

A more effective nurturing strategy encompasses a wide range of channels, especially telemarketing. Just think of the impact it can make on the sales cycle. Research consistently shows that Sales only makes one call to 30–40% of leads, while the majority of sales require an average of five calls. Properly trained telemarketers can uncover real opportunities to escalate them to Sales, saving the sales team's time and shortening the sales cycle. Information gleaned from these phone calls can then be integrated into your messaging and nurturing programs.

If you haven't mapped telemarketing into your lead nurturing journeys, you're missing out on a tactic with significant potential to move the right leads quickly down the sales pipeline.

Join the journey

Here are some ways you can incorporate telemarketing into prospect journeys:

- Don't just email your new white paper to your prospects—call them to make sure it was received.
- Call prospects with a survey to find out if they're in the market for new products.
- Offer additional information or the opportunity to talk to an expert.
- Invite your prospects to a webinar—and call to follow up.

Source: *Hubspot*

6 Supplement **Your Sales Team**

Your sales reps can't or won't work every account. It's a fact. Some customers are simply too small or too remote. Commissions for these accounts are too low to justify the work Sales would have to invest. And it doesn't make sense for your company either; you need your sales team focused on the bigger accounts.

A virtual selling or inside sales team is the perfect solution. Let a group of telemarketers serve as an extension of your sales department, calling these smaller accounts, providing quotes, answering questions and closing sales. You can set up a team in-house or work with an outsourced partner. A key benefit of working with an outside firm is that you don't need to support the overhead of an inside sales staff.

Telemarketers can also support your sales team by helping them identify and qualify customers ripe for an upsell or cross-sell opportunity. While sales reps stay focused on bringing in new customers, a virtual sales team can maximize the lifetime value of your current customers.

Get personal

- Companies appreciate a potential partner who truly gets to know their business, needs and challenges.
- Especially smaller companies, which may have been overlooked in favor of larger accounts.
- A team of well-trained B2B telemarketers can efficiently build relationships servicing smaller accounts, turning them into loyal customers and strong referral partners.
- The most successful telemarketers are trained on your offerings and buyer pain points and can persuasively position your company as the solution.

Source: *Hubspot*

Telemarketing can help with account-based marketing, too.

60% of companies using ABM for at least a year reported an increase in revenue of at least 10%, and 19% reported a revenue impact of 30% or more. Using telemarketing to help you identify your targets and gain crucial insights about them will give your ABM program a huge boost.

Take advantage of telemarketing to **lay the groundwork** for an effective ABM program.

The rise of ABM **requires knowledge** about high-value target companies, their strategic goals and their decision committees.

Collect intel about buying committees with telemarketing. Learn about buying cycles, key decision-makers, and specific motivations.

Source: *Demand Metric*

Getting Started

Tip #1

Focus Your Efforts

You'll have the greatest impact if you focus your programs on the most-promising accounts and contacts. **Start with solid metrics to identify your best prospects**.

The 80/20 rule applies here—focus 80 percent of your efforts on the 20 percent of your market most likely to result in high-value sales.

Tip #2

Acquire Good Data

A successful telephone lead-generation program starts with a quality list. **Make sure your list has accurate data about qualified companies and contacts** with real purchase authority or influence in your space. If you don't have a strong or well-targeted list, work with a skilled data-sourcing partner to assemble one.

Be careful—there are a lot of disreputable services that will sell untargeted, inaccurate data!

Tip #3

Measure Your Results

As with any marketing tactic, you should be measuring the ROI of your telemarketing programs. **Review your metrics on a regular basis, and adjust the program as needed**.

There's always room for improvement, even in a highly successful campaign. You should continuously be testing new approaches.

Conclusion

This ebook touches on a few of the powerful and wide-ranging ways that telemarketing delivers impact across the sales cycle. If you're not employing the full potential of telemarketing, you're missing out on one of the best tactics for gathering information to engage your market and move your leads all the way through the sale pipeline.

Stop leaving money on the table! Start putting together a plan that integrates B2B telemarketing into your marketing and sales programs. Let's discuss your marketing challenges; contact one of our B2B telemarketing experts today!

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The Mx Group

The Mx Group is a digital and demand generation agency that empowers companies with the competitive edge of modern B2B marketing. To do this, we integrate a broad set of services: Strategy. Design and content. Web and app development. Demand gen and lead management. And we make it all work together so that companies attract, convert and retain more customers.

Want to talk about launching a telemarketing program?

Request a quote!

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