marketmakers

Benchmarking Report

What you should expect from a telemarketing provider in 2017

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Inbound marketing is now used by 86% of B2B marketers*



Introduction

Whether you are in marketing, sales, procurement or business development, you might at some point need to source a new telemarketing provider.

In a world where inbound marketing is now used by 86% of B2B marketers*, agencies with a traditionally outbound approach needed to quickly evolve to keep up with the needs of modern businesses.

Most organisations cannot solely survive on inbound alone – outbound telemarketing is still very much a part of many B2B strategies in some form. But times have changed, what was innovative and unique before (such as digital call recordings), is now very much a part of a standard spec.

So, what should you be looking for when looking for the best agency for your needs?

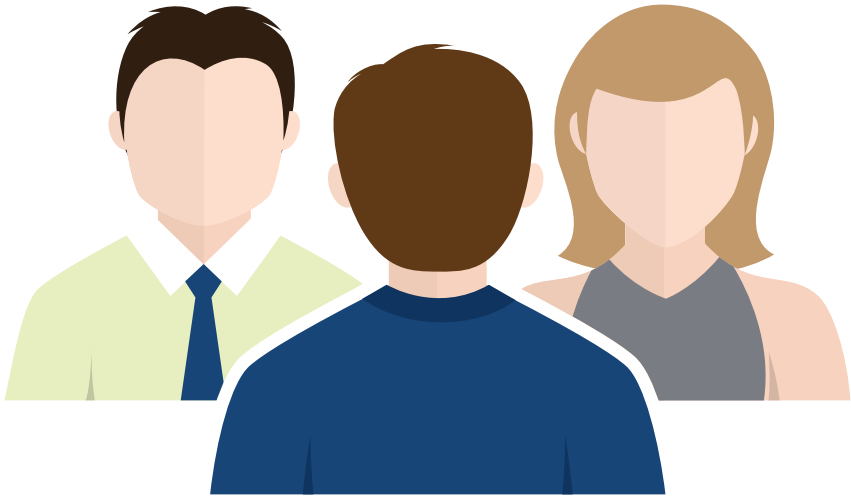


*http://blog.imaginellc.com/7-stats-on-why-you-better-be-on-the-inbound-marketing-bandwagon

Do they have the ability to deliver both outbound and inbound leads?

Can they generate inbound leads by integrating other marketing channels to complement outbound telemarketing activity?

This works towards getting maximum traction. One manufacturing client reports that since appointing a telemarketing agency that takes this approach, they have seen their sales revenue increase by 20%.



How happy are their staff?

It's useful to look into the awards and accreditations that the telemarketing supplier has, that relate to measurement of employee engagement and satisfaction.

There is a direct link between levels of employee engagement and improved business performance. The latest analysis published by the Employee Engagement Task Force found that the 25% most engaged companies enjoy the benefits of:

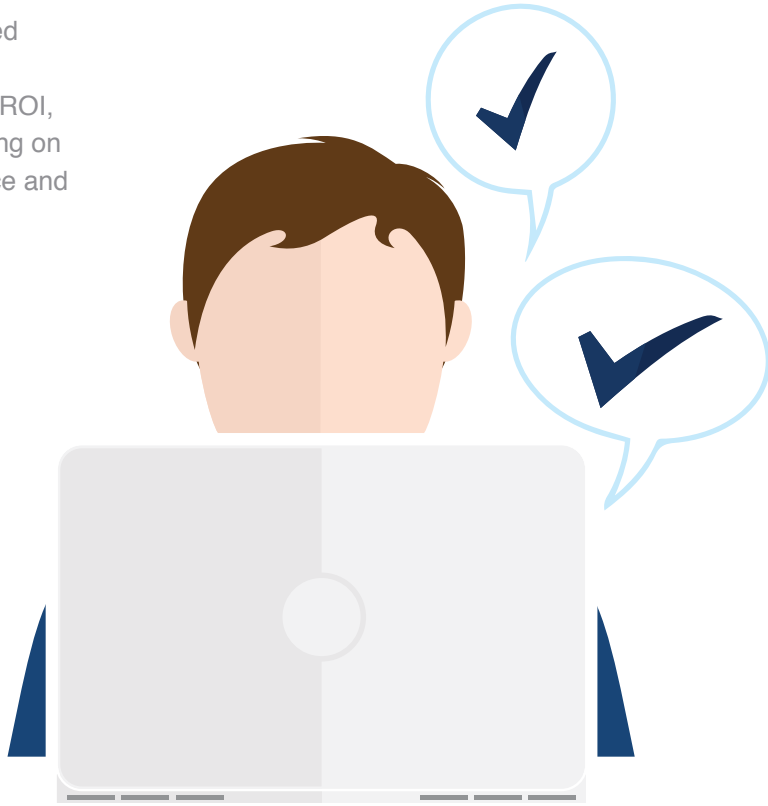
- **200% annual net profit**
- **18% higher productivity**
- **250% revenue growth**
- **12% customer advocacy**
- **50% fewer sick days**
- **87% less likely to leave the organisation**

….compared with the lowest 25%.*

How does this benefit you as a client?

If you appoint a telemarketing agency or call centre who can show evidence of an engaged team, you are far more likely to see better campaign performance and results, a better ROI, an enthusiastic and hardworking team working on your campaign – and with lower staff absence and staff turnover, limited disruption to your campaign.

Look for a supplier who has accreditations from an independent body such as Investors in People and awards from organisations that specialise in measuring employee engagement like Great Place to Work®.



*http://www.greatplacetowork.co.uk/our-approach/what-are-the-benefits-great-workplaces

Allowing your sales team to access their leads remotely means they can prep more effectively for meetings



How good is their training?

Top performing, successful agencies will be able attract the best performers in the industry and retain them. Their expertise lies in designing and delivering successful telemarketing campaigns – everyone within the business from management to diallers are working towards the same goal.

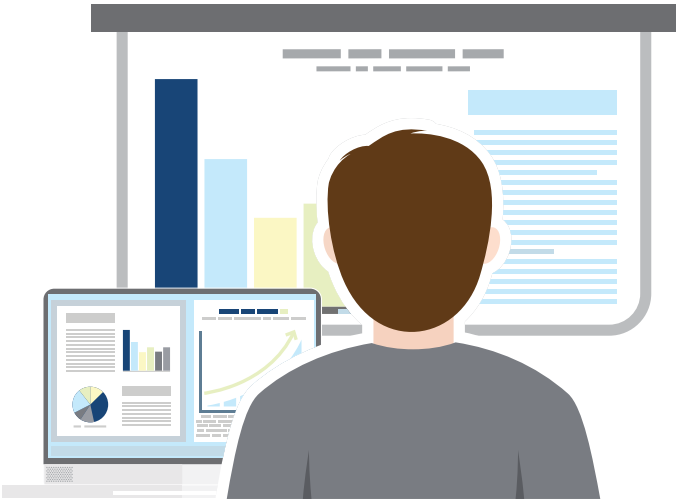
It's one thing to know you have the best people delivering your campaign, but how can you ensure they have the knowledge they need about your business and its products or services to successfully represent and sell your business to your prospects? Surely you can never give them enough training so that they are just as informed as your internal team?

It's essential you ask prospective telemarketing suppliers how they train their staff. At the very minimum, they should have a dedicated learning and development department. Look for trainers who hold qualifications from the likes of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. The best agencies in the industry will have their own business schools or learning and development programmes that are focused on bespoke, interactive training and mentoring sessions.

Finding an agency who are committed to forming a partnership with you is important. Whilst part of the reason for outsourcing is to reduce the amount of resource requirement from your internal staff, you should expect and demand to invest time before and during any campaign when it comes to campaign briefing.

It should set alarm bells ringing if an agency expects you to exclusively train their staff on your products and services, but it's an equally bad sign if they don't ask for your input. No one knows your business better than you. But a great agency can come pretty close.

Selecting an agency who can boast the best trained telemarketers in the industry to represent your brand, adept in intelligent and knowledgeable prospect engagement, will result in a team that consistently delivers real ROI for your business.



Selecting the right agency will result in a team who consistently delivers ROI to your business



Are they using the most up-to-date technology?

When researching telemarketing partners, it's important to think about the use of technology, both in your business and the telemarketing suppliers.

What CRM system do they use and is it able to be integrated with yours? If you can find an agency who have expertise in building bespoke client portals, your campaign will benefit from much improved transparency. Access to full and real-time visibility of your campaign performance and results will help guarantee increased productivity from your own sales teams and help gain a quicker ROI.

What to look for when it comes to telemarketing technology

- **How advanced is their CRM?** Ask to see it in action. At the very least their sales representative should be able to run you through the system in demo mode. It should be able to manage data deduping and contact blacklisting to ensure you do not target existing prospects or clients. It should be functional and user friendly for the telemarketers – a telemarketing CRM system which fails at doing what it should will always result in frustrated and demotivated diallers, every time.

- **Can their CRM be fully integrated with the systems you use internally?** If you are using sales platforms like Salesforce or Microsoft Dynamics or marketing automation tools like Marketo or Hubspot, you'll get the most from your investment in both the software and the telemarketing, if the two can be aligned.

- **Can they offer technology add-ons to boost campaign performance?** Lead Forensics is a good example of a lead generation software tool that complements telemarketing activity. By identifying visitors to your website who haven't yet made an enquiry, you can then make a timely telemarketing call reducing the time spent on pure cold calling and increasing the quality of the sales leads generated.

- **Is their technology mobile friendly?** If you are looking to outsource to an agency, it's highly likely that you will have a field sales team who will be receiving leads and appointments from the telemarketing provider. Giving them access to their leads remotely, means they can prep more effectively for meetings and manage their diary when out on the road. It also means the telemarketer knows the sales rep's real-time availability and can avoid double bookings and enable them to report on appointments immediately… resulting in better, closed-loop feedback on quality.

Who else is using them?

It's easy enough nowadays to visit a prospective supplier's website to find out more about their client base and the work they do for them to identify what experience they have in your industry.

You may even be able to download case studies or read testimonials from those clients. However, it's worth bearing in mind that companies won't always want to publicly advertise their most valuable clients or may be restricted from doing so as part of the contractual agreements with their clients.

Ask your colleagues and industry contacts for recommendations. Getting an honest opinion from live clients is the best way to shortlist suppliers. Asking for feedback from your connections on sites such as LinkedIn or Twitter is a great way to get a conversation going with peers – or you can go a step further and start up your own discussion within a relevant LinkedIn group.

And if you're making a switch from a current supplier to a new one, try and find out who else has made a successful switch and why. It's a great question to ask a prospective agency:

> *"Can you give me some names of businesses who have made the decision to switch to you from another supplier?"*

They should be able to give you immediate answers to that question, and you should be suitably reassured if they can provide you with case studies focusing on this scenario. Better still, they could put you in contact with those clients to hear about their experience first-hand.

Look for an agency that is able to show you evidence of campaigns where their client has switched to them from a competitor and they have seen an increase in performance and results as a direct result of the new partnership.

Speaking of competitors, find out who your competitors are using? Yes it's important to question whether there is any risk of a conflict of interest, but most marketplaces are large enough to mean that there is enough opportunity for this not to be a problem. If you identify that certain suppliers are working with a large share of the top players in your industry, then you need to make it your priority to speak with them.



In summary

- **A multi-channel approach gains maximum campaign traction and ROI**
- **Engaged, motivated telemarketers = optimum campaign performance**
- **Find the right balance between world-class training delivery from your agency and a desire from them for your valuable input and support when it comes to educating them on your business**
- **The right complementary software can turbo-charge your telemarketing activity**
- **Find out who their clients are and why. Don't be put off if they are already working with your competitors – it probably means you should be too**

To find out more about how the right telemarketing partner can help increase your sales opportunities, revenue, and profits speak to one of our experts on:

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