# Round Peg in a Round HoleK

## How Telemarketing Fits with Modern B2B Marketing



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# How Telemarketing Fits with Modern B2B Marketing

> **Almost 60% of the buying process is completed prior to a B2B Buyer wanting to engage directly with a Salesperson.**

The marketing world has had to change in response to the way that B2B Buyers now interact with potential suppliers.

With so many channels to reach Buyers, does Telemarketing still have a role to play?

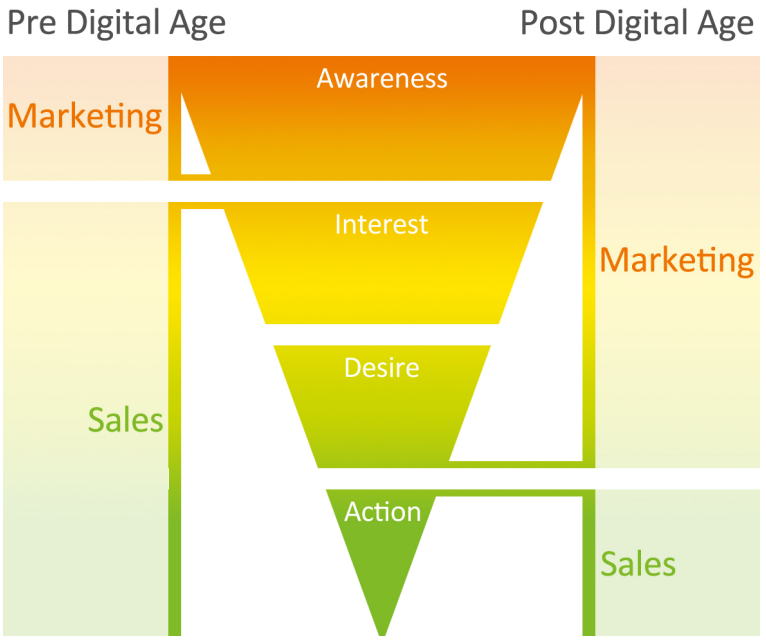
And how does it adapt and fit with digital, social and other marketing techniques?

## Changes to B2B Buying

The digital age has altered the B2B buying process considerably. Buyers are engaging with Sellers much later in the buying process than they used to. Research conducted by the Marketing Research Council and published in the Harvard Business Review suggests that on average almost 60% of the buying process is completed prior to a B2B Buyer wanting to meet or engage directly with a potential supplier.

This delay in Buyer engagement with Sellers has proved a challenge for B2B companies reliant on traditional methods of Lead Generation and Sales.

Fig 1: Marketing now plays a bigger role in the Sales process



> **60% of B2B purchases are made from a Seller that was previously known to the Buyer.**

> **Telemarketing is viewed as the 2nd most effective marketing channel, after events.**
> **(Research by B2B Marketing)**

## Marketing Takes on More of the Buying Process

Where marketing used to be focused on initial identification and generation of Leads before passing them onto Sales, it has now become the driving force behind the majority of the buying process. Marketing must now provide information and positive messages throughout a number of buying phases and nurture the Lead right up to the point at which the Buyer is ready to engage with Sales.

B2B Buyers are often fearful of engaging with a new supplier or an alternative solution. It's the marketing team's responsibility to provide positive messages that will ease the anxiety that the Buyer may have over a purchase.

Trust is the foundation of this reassurance. Only 30% of B2B purchases are made from a Seller not previously known to the Buyer, according to a CEB/Motista survey. Purchasers need to feel that they can trust a Seller.

Continued nurturing and engagement lay the foundations for this trust.

## How Does Telemarketing Fit into the New Buying Process?

In the traditional model, Telemarketing was focused on generating interest during an initial call and passing this tentative lead to the Sales team. This functioned well because Buyers would be interested in talking to Salespeople at an early stage as part of their initial evaluation to learn about new services and market offerings. Now Buyers want to do more of their own research before meeting a Salesperson.

This means that Telemarketing is no longer simply about pushing the Buyer to meet with a Salesperson, regardless of the Buyer's level of interest or stage in the buying-cycle.

In addition to generating well-qualified Leads, the value of an effective telemarketer is in generating opt-in data from qualified Decision Makers, along with market intelligence and information captured during the human interaction between the telemarketer and the Buyer.

This is invaluable in enabling an ongoing nurturing programme of personalised, relevant and timely interaction.

Telemarketers that still try to use traditional methods and push too hard for a Sales meeting are not only ineffective but risk alienating the potential Buyer. In B2B markets, where there are often a limited number of high value potential customers building relationships matters.

Skilled Telemarketing resource is expensive, so careful data selection to ensure the organisations targeted have a high likelihood of a purchase is an essential starting point.

> **Capturing valuable data that cannot be bought is one area where Telemarketing really comes into its own.**

## Telemarketing to Build High Quality Data

Bought data will usually be sourced based on:

- Type of business
- Size of business
- Geographical location

However, more insightful information that can be critical to successful marketing is more difficult to ascertain, such as:

- **The Relevant Buyers in Each Business**
  There may be multiple Decision Makers and it is not always easy to identify relevant individuals from job role alone.

- **Full Buyer Contact Information**
  Personal email addresses are still the key to allow on-going nurturing campaigns to be effective.

- **Qualified Organisations**
  It may not be possible from their sector alone to identify the specific needs of an organisation and whether they have a requirement for your products or services.

- **At What Stage the Business is in the Buying Process**
  Understanding this enables communication to be appropriate and relevant. There is little to be gained, for example, in pushing for a Sales meeting with a Buyer who has just completed a purchase decision!

- **Existing Contract Situation and Competitor Relationships**
  This can help you to tailor messages based on competitor capabilities, but also to ensure you communicate with the prospect at the right time.

- **Current Pain Points**
  There may be particular issues that the individual or their organisation face that you can assist with. Emotional messaging that highlights current pain points can help overcome Buyer inertia.

None of this key information is readily available and this is where Telemarketing really comes into its own. Skilled telemarketers supported with good technology can capture this information during a two-way dialogue, create a database of valuable intelligence and target relevant, compelling ongoing communication to these Buyers.

Without these interactions and insight Sellers can be blind to their market, the opportunities that exist and the stage of the buying-cycle their potential customers are at.

> **"Informative content and positive messages can combat resistant work cultures and personal anxiety."**

## People Buy From People

Human interaction allowing for a two-way dialogue is key to building relationships with potential customers. Building the initial relationship is a skill that underlies all effective Telemarketing. In situations where the Buyer is not ready for a Sales meeting this can still be important. The Seller can influence future decisions by providing memorable and persuasive human interaction. Even if nothing develops immediately, there may be significant value in future opportunities that develop subsequent to the initial relationship being established.

## Support Telemarketing with Content

The integration of Content Marketing is not just about sending relevant information after a call. With Telemarketing leading the initial conversation and establishing where the Buyer is in the purchase process, specific nurture campaigns can then be implemented to develop the relationship. The more relevant the information is that the potential Buyer receives, the more likely they are to develop confidence in the Seller.

Content can be distributed via email, made available to the buyer on a website or via other channels such as Social Media. It can take a number of forms including White Papers, blog posts, videos, ebooks, infographics or FAQs. The content should address emotional factors - personal wins or fears - as well as the need for factual information, as Buyers may feel anxiety about the risks of making a bad purchase decision.

It is important to remember that whilst individuals may be keen to purchase they may work in an organisation that has a risk-averse culture, or one that resists change. The more information a Buyer has, the more easily they will be able to build support for the purchase they want to make.

## Linking Marketing !pproaches

Marketing across a range of channels is a great deal more effective than a single approach. This increases brand awareness, the sense of capability and scale of the supplier.

At its most simple an email follow-up after a call, with a link to the website, is an important reminder of the conversation. There are limits to the number or regularity of calls that can be made without appearing desperate or unprofessional.

Other communication can continue reminding the Buyer about an issue they face and your capability so that it remains in their consciousness. The latest Marketing Automation Software enables B2B marketers to connect their different marketing activity through a common platform and to ensure that there is traceable Return On Investment. This also provides an integrated view of each prospect, making it easier to understand the interactions that they have and to make them complimentary.

## Qualifying Leads

Telemarketing has another significant advantage over many other forms of marketing in its ability to qualify a lead as either marketing-ready or sales-ready. A traditional BANT scoring system asks a series of questions that establish readiness to purchase:

- Budget - Does the budget exist for the purchase, or will it need to be sought?
- Authority - Does the contact have the authority to make the decision? An Administrator might be very interested, but have no authority to put a purchase into place.
- Need - Is there actually a need for this product, or is the contact simply enthusiastic about the idea?
- Timing - Is the buyer at a point where Sales can come into play, or do they need more nurturing? Will they need the product now, or in several years?

BANT scoring is an effective method of discerning whether a Buyer is appropriate to pass on to Sales.

## The Pitfalls of Purely Digital Information

The rise of Marketing Automation means that increasingly businesses are gauging the apparent level of interest of a potential Buyer using their online behaviour. For example; tracking and measuring the number of website pages a prospect visits or what they have downloaded.

Scoring of each interaction means that those who show the most interest can be prioritised by Sales follow-up, even before they have made an enquiry.

There are however risks in relying solely on these methods. Without any human interaction, it may be difficult to distinguish between those downloading White Papers for research purposes and genuinely interested potential customers. It is also the case that multiple touch-points don't always equate to a particular interest. You may be dealing with a very thorough researcher who has already established that your business does not meet their needs.

Following up these engaged leads with a Telemarketing call can establish whether they are genuinely Sales Qualified and worthy of follow up, should be qualified out as having no requirement, or returned to a nurture programme because they are not yet ready. Sales Qualified Leads can be prioritised by the Sales Team who will recognise that they are worth their time and resources.

# Conclusions

The B2B environment has changed over recent years with Buyers delaying their interactions with Salespeople while they evaluate suppliers and undertake their own research through the early stages of the buying process.

There are two ways in which Telemarketing plays a key role in the process.

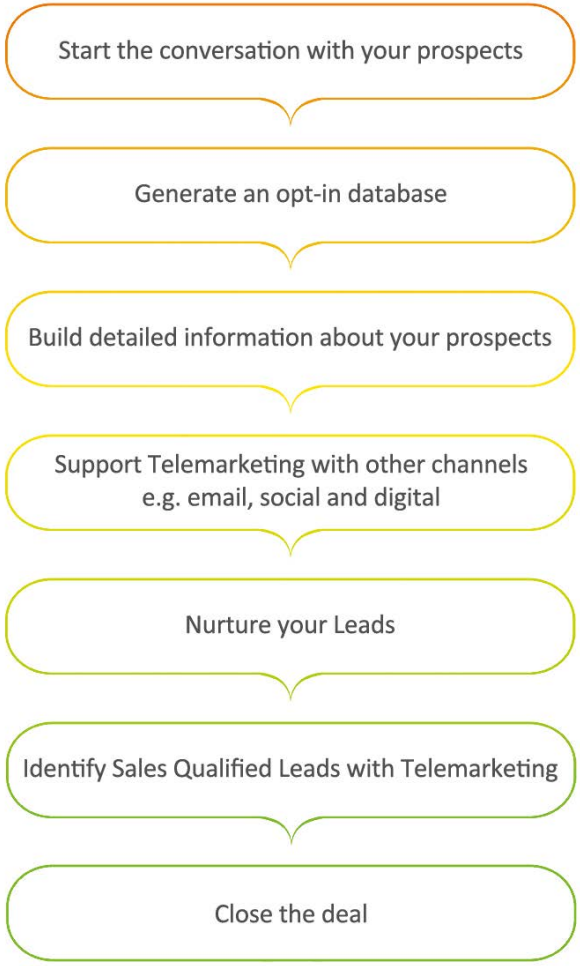
The first is in building a comprehensive database of both the organisations where there is a genuine requirement and the individuals who are relevant in the decision making process. Telemarketers can also gather other critical profile information on timing and other criteria that can support ongoing communication.

Only two-way human interaction can establish this crucial market intelligence and this level of opted-in, permission based marketing database. There is no other form of marketing that can provide the same level of information or the start of a genuine relationship with a Buyer.

The value of the database created through Telemarketing can be maximized through the use of ongoing marketing through other channels, including email, social and digital. These nurture campaigns present relevant content to Buyers; building awareness, interest and engagement. Buyers who are early in the buying cycle are able to undertake their own evaluation whilst being presented with relevant marketing messages until they are ready to engage with a Salesperson.

The second role of Telemarketing is in contacting prospects who have been engaging with the business and demonstrated interest. Telemarketing can contact those who appear to be the most engaged, ask questions about their need and then pass them over to a Salesperson if they meet the criteria for a Sales Qualified Lead.

Telemarketing still plays a vital role in the modern B2B sales process. To be utilised effectively in the digital age means adapting the Telemarketing approach and integrating it alongside other techniques within the overall marketing strategy.



# About Beanstalk

At Beanstalk we help our customers to win new business. We are an integrated marketing agency; providing a full range of B2B Telemarketing, Content Marketing, Marketing Automation, Lead Nurturing and Lead Generation services. We are a professional team of marketing, sales, design, content and digital marketing specialists.

Beanstalk can identify, engage and nurture prospective customers on your behalf; generating high quality Sales Qualified Leads and Appointments. We create and manage qualified prospect databases that are very specific to each customer's needs. These databases become critical business assets that underpin all of their marketing activity and form the basis of the future sales pipeline.

Beanstalk builds long term customer partnerships. To find out more about how we can deliver profitable sales growth for you please call us on **0845 474 2047** or visit **www.beanstalkmarketing.co.uk** for more sales and marketing insight.

