The many faces of telesales: growing sales on multiple levels



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Sales strategies in the B2B sector are changing in response to advanced communication technologies, new customer preferences and evolving business models.

According to research by McKinsey, buyers are growing more comfortable engaging remotely, rather than face-to-face, with sales professionals. This is transforming the way that companies sell, with fewer organisations focusing on field sales and more prioritising Inside Sales – the art and science of building a healthy business pipeline and delivering sales growth **remotely**.

Simultaneously, given the rise of "as-a-service" business models – where subscriptions, memberships, contracts, event registrations and so forth need to be renewed regularly, the ability to nurture and sustain customer relationships has become critical to ensuring ongoing revenue and business resilience. And sophisticated sales teams are therefore aligning themselves closely to the long-term success of their customers.

How can telesales add value in this new context?

The telesales model has evolved in line with this shifting B2B sales landscape. The term 'telesales' is often misunderstood, with many organisations thinking that telesales focuses

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purely on high volume, transactional sales. In reality, however, telesales is a powerful, multi-faceted discipline that covers a really broad spectrum of remote phone-based sales activities and strategies.

Depending on the skills and expertise of the sales team, and the systems and strategies that support these agents, telesales can be an interchangeable term for Inside Sales. When managed by highly skilled and knowledgeable Inside Sales professionals, telesales can take an integrated approach that uses multiple channels to generate leads, set appointments, give presentations, conduct demos, make direct sales, cross- and up- sell, and nurture complex B2B relationships – all remotely rather than out in the field.

Phone-based sales also provides a cost-effective way for businesses to expand into overseas markets, testing the water with minimal risk and overhead. Organisations with customer bases in more than one country would traditionally have shouldered the expense of satellite offices, a larger salesforce and frequent travel. Today, however, an Inside Sales team with multilingual skills can be equally effective in developing and servicing those overseas markets.

These approaches allow B2B sales functions to harness the power of phone-based contact at every stage of the sales process, including direct selling, solution selling and account-based marketing.

Debunking telesales myths

Before exploring the many aspects of phone-based remote sales, it's important to address the common misconceptions:

- **Remote does not equal impersonal**
  When managed by skilled and experienced agents, phone-based selling is just as personal as traditional field sales, because it is based on real, live, one-to-one conversations that maintain the human connection.
- **Telesales is not a one-trick pony**
  Telesales can come in many shapes and forms. When conducted by a high-calibre team of sales professionals, remote sales campaigns can be ideal for both high volume and high value sales.
- **It's not heavily scripted**
  The style of calls should be conversational, natural and intuitive in order to build rapport and trust. However, this does depend on the skills and experience of the telesales agents. For telesales to truly add value, agents must be skilled at positioning complex solutions, articulating sophisticated value propositions and engaging senior decision makers.

- The phone is not the only channel used

  When managed by digital systems that include CRM integration, email and marketing automation, web demos, webinar hosting, and hotkey/live call transfers – telesales allows organisations to boost the productivity of the sales team, make governance and compliance processes more efficient, and deliver a better return for every penny of the sales budget spent.

Telesales: the different dimensions

When conducted by experts and supported by purpose-built systems, remote selling is ideal for a spectrum of sales approaches, from high volume transactional sales to high value, complex solution sales.

Telesales can be used to drive and support the following sales activities:

- Calling into cold data
- Lead generation and lead qualification
- Fact finding and intelligence gathering to feed into effective sales strategies
- Prospect nurturing
- Direct sales, such as managing online, inbound and in-store generated enquiries
- Up-selling and cross-selling
- Re-engagement of dormant accounts

Let's explore the facets of telesales in more detail and discuss how your business could harness this powerful channel to support your end-to-end sales strategy.

• Direct sales

When it comes to **direct sales**, there are multiple propositions that you can sell remotely – including consumer goods, professional services, education and training programmes, paid events and conferences, and even subscriptions to online assets, or professional and corporate memberships. If you don't have the necessary skills in-house, or your in-house resource is stretched, this type of selling can be easily outsourced to a specialist team.

Whilst physically remote, an outsourced sales function can be closely integrated with in-house resources, systems and processes – providing a seamless customer experience across the end-to-end sales process. Current technologies, such as hot key transfers, call recordings for calibrating calls, CRM/systems integration and diary management tools, ensure in-house and remote teams are fully aligned.

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Some outsourced telesales teams are also able to manage campaigns or sales processes that need to **comply with regulatory requirements**, using FCA authorised telemarketing agents, call recordings and a robust QA process.

Once a sale is closed, an external team may fulfil the payment transaction or they may hand this final piece to an internal team. When completing financial transactions on behalf of a client, it is essential that an agency's processes are fully compliant. For example, an agency would need to use call obfuscation to ensure protection of sensitive payment details taken over the phone, or hold the necessary Consumer Credit License to carry out consumer credit activities on behalf of clients.

• Solution sales

With the right expertise and approach, telesales can also support **solution selling** – higher value, consultative selling, where ROI is high.

Conversation-based selling over the phone allows agents to build rapport and nurture customer relationships to support medium- to longer-term sales processes. This is also a powerful channel for carrying out more complex lead qualification strategies, on accounts where there are multiple stakeholders and there is no clear-cut decision-maker.

There are, therefore, many solutions that can be strategically marketed and sold remotely, including complex technologies, healthcare products, advanced engineering applications or products and services subject to regulatory compliance, including utilities, financial services or insurance products.

By engaging customers in real dialogue over the phone, skilled solutions sales specialists are able to understand customers better and unearth insights that enable their organisations to tailor and personalise solution benefits for each customer. However, this requires the right mix of skills and experience – including:

- The **emotional intelligence** to manage and nurture a human, emotional connection with customers that allows the agent to identify preferences and pain points, and then tailor the solution accordingly
- The confidence and ability to **engage decision-makers** at various levels of the organisation
- Other **soft skills** such as assertiveness, which helps salespeople to ask the right questions and make smart decisions when qualifying leads

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- Account-Based Marketing

Telephone account marketing is a more strategic approach to telesales with a targeted message and/or proposition that is based on a more in-depth understanding of client needs. This type of telesales campaign is targeted at a subset of existing customers – often those with the highest potential for profitability.

Frequently, account-based marketing is conducted with the goals of reducing erosion in the existing customer base, reaching under-penetrated customer segments and extending the sales life of legacy solutions – while new ones are introduced through other sales campaigns.

Account-based marketing requires deeper levels of engagement and relationship building – whether your goal is to unveil valuable insights that enable you to prioritise the most profitable accounts or re-activate lapsed customers. And phone conversations are an ideal way to achieve this. Through ongoing dialogue, your agents can gather a deeper level of account insight, so you can build a better understanding of the account. You can also build rapport with and gain the trust of senior decision-makers and influencers within the organisation.

How to harness the power of telesales

As discussed, the success of any telesales campaign depends on the calibre of the sales agents and the quality of the systems that support these teams. Depending on the level of Inside Sales skills and expertise you already have in-house, you may want to consider outsourcing the skills, systems and processes you need rather than investing all the resources required to build and manage these in-house.

When you outsource to a specialised agency that is wholly dedicated to outbound calling, you have access to an entire team focused exclusively on building pipeline and responding to prospect needs, without disruption. You can also choose an agency that uses the latest customised calling platforms to drive greater productivity and efficiency gains.

A well-chosen telemarketing agency can also offer multilingual skills through a team of native language agents and experience of working with a diverse set of clients across cultural divides – valuable skills that can connect you with a much broader, multi-national market.

Outsourcing is a smart way to introduce more flexibility into your sales workforce. With an outsourced telesales solution, you have on-demand capacity, so that you can easily scale your remote sales function up or down in line with changing business needs, or to cater for seasonal spikes in demand.

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Why partner with us?

Partnering with an expert telemarketing agency like The Telemarketing Company can be an ideal solution for an organisation that's looking to augment, upskill or add value to an in-house telesales function.

We provide you with instant access to the highest-calibre Inside Sales agents who have deep experience working on a wide range of campaigns, from cold call and transactional sales to account management with executive decision-makers. We have a wide pool of talent to pull from and can therefore carefully select the best agents for each project.

Working independently or as an extension to your in-house sales team, we can tailor our services to suit you – devising an end-to-end sales solution or adhering to your tried-and-tested sales processes. If required, we're able to run the entire end-to-end sales processes, even in regulated industries (our robust compliance and QA processes are part of an externally audited set of industry best practice standards).

All these benefits help to reduce on-boarding costs and save the time it would take to train and up-skill new telesales hires. Outsourcing allows you to swiftly gain ROI from increased call activity and selling volume.

In conclusion

When businesses consider telesales, they often perceive it as a sales strategy that is best-suited to selling fast-moving goods and services, at high volume, B2C. But when the right skills, expertise, strategies, systems and processes are included in the mix, telesales becomes an entirely different and multi-dimensional animal – and one that can be used in the B2B sales environment to really drive business forward.

With its capacity for building human connections, generating leads and nurturing relationships efficiently and cost-effectively – telesales can be applied to direct sales, solution sales and account-based marketing models in a way that optimises resources and delivers exceptional value.

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the telemarketing company

Hopefully this article will have inspired you to think a bit more about telemarketing and the value it can bring to your business. For more information on our services visit our website, or give us a call to discuss your requirements and how The Telemarketing Company can help support your sales and marketing strategy.

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