

Why B2B Phone Calls Are Popular in 2017

Wednesday, March 22, 2017 - Written by: [Jeff Kalter](#)



It's not only the marketing departments that are reallocating their dollars to reach out directly to prospects and customers. The sales organization is also on board. Companies are hiring fewer field sales representatives. Instead, they're investing in inside reps who nurture leads and close business using the phone, email and social outreach. In fact, according to an MIT Lead Management Study, there are 15 inside sales reps for each field rep.

The phone calls are not the scripted calls of yesteryear or like those that interrupt you at dinnertime at home. These inside sales people have conversations to help solve customer problems. They discuss technology, software and other complex B2B products. It's not a numbers game. It's a strategic process that often requires multiple touches to several members of a buying team prior to closing a sale.

The momentum is moving toward inside sales because:

- **It Costs Less**

Bottom line improvements always guide business decisions. And it's not surprising that inside sales costs less than outside sales. After all, cost reductions come from eliminating travel, increasing efficiency and the ability to hire inside reps at lower salaries than field reps. The net result, according to Josiane Feigon, author of Smart Sales Manager, is that the average B2B field sales call costs \$215-\$400 while an inside sales call typically runs between \$25 and \$75.

- **Customers Don't Want to See You**

The idea that customers might not want the in-person sales treatment goes against traditional thinking. However, a study of 12,500 buyers by SBI proved this to be true. They discovered that 75 percent of the time buyers prefer not to meet face to face. This reality has even led to many field salespeople spending a lot of their time on the phone rather than up close and personal with customers.

- **Phone Calls Enable Instant Response**

Inbound leads are hottest at the moment you receive them. By responding to them within five minutes, you can increase your marketing qualified leads by 2000%. Even when a rep is sitting by a phone in front of a computer, achieving such a fast response rate is difficult. But to do so in person is physically impossible. Despite the challenge, inside sales people with the right processes and technology can attain almost instant response and the associated increase in qualified leads.

- **Inside Sales Reps Have Easy Access to Technology**

Let's talk a little more about technology, today's central enabler. Whether it's marketing automation, a customer relationship management (CRM) tool, or easy access to LinkedIn for researching leads, reps need these tools at their fingertips. With them, they can increase both efficiency and effectiveness. So inside sales people gain the technology edge.

Plus, tools like web conferencing platforms that make it easy for them to share information with prospects help level the playing field with outside reps.

- **Administration Fits Easily Into the Day**

Field sales reps are generally not the masters of paperwork. They often consider it as secondary to meeting with prospects and clients. However, sales people need to

log call results, collaborate with internal staff, research contacts, create proposals and more. The reluctance to take care of such administrative duties is partially due to sales people's preferences, but it's also because tackling these to-dos on the road is not easy. On the other hand, inside sales people can handle them easily, which is good because they are a foundation for success.

Given the advantages of inside sales, if you're building your sales organization, you might consider starting from the inside and working out. Build your inside sales team and see what they can achieve. Then, add field reps to handle technical issues onsite or group presentations to internal teams *as necessary*.

If you already have an entrenched field sales team, supplement their efforts with an inside sales force to see if it boosts results. You don't have to build an inside sales team just to test it out. Because it offers tremendous benefits, outsourcing has become a popular option. Professional B2B telemarketing organizations:

- **Hire experienced business development reps** who can talk peer-to-peer with managers and executives
- Make sure **reps stay focused** on their calls by keeping them in quiet spaces, away from other departments
- Use tools to **clean up databases** and provide quality information to the reps who make the calls, enabling them to be as efficient as possible
- Craft **robust call guides** that enable sales people to have two-way conversations with prospects rather than talking *at* them from robotic scripts
- **Scale up easily** to your needs when you have requirements and back down when there is less activity, thus, optimizing your cost effectiveness
- Provide **flexible hours**, so you can match up your calling times with those when your prospects are able to converse
- Are **cost-effective** because they have incorporated economies of scale involved in infrastructure, management, processes, systems and reporting

To learn more about outsourcing, read “8 Sure Signs You Should Outsource Your Telemarketing.”

So don't stick with the outside sales model because you're accustomed to it. Make sure you create a sales organization that meets your company's need most efficiently and effectively. After all, you have to compete with other companies that are doing just that.

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