

Harnessing the Critical Role of Business Development Reps in Lead Management

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Sadly, when it comes to lead generation, marketing has long had a problem. They can build marketing campaigns and event promotions to generate plenty of leads. But marketing's problem is one of reputation.

Sales reps believe that marketing leads are worthless. The conversion rate on poorly qualified, tire-kicking, lousy leads is so low that sales reps see them as a waste of their time and energy.

So, worthless marketing leads pour in, then disappear into a black hole of neglect, never to receive so much as a follow-up email. Gartner estimates that about 70% of

leads are lost and forgotten.

If you're ready to inject more quality into your leads, then it may be time to hire a team of business development reps (BDRs) whose sole job is to get the right leads into your pipeline.

Recruiting and Onboarding Your BDRs

Typically, BDRs are young reps just starting in sales. Onboarding these raw recruits is your opportunity to shape their skills and build your future sales force from the ground up. You can do this by:

- Training them to identify accounts that match your ideal customer profile
- Encouraging them to open up the lines of communication between marketing and sales to help shape more targeted lead generation campaigns
- Building their product and industry knowledge base while teaching them how to engage prospects so that the qualifying and nurturing process becomes the basis for building a relationship

Of course, if you're not ready to increase your headcount, you can outsource your lead management to a full-service telesales provider. Their professionals will work with you to understand what you expect in a qualified lead and assign dedicated BDR specialists to handle everything from lead qualification and nurturing to response management. An added benefit of outsourcing is the speed with which you can scale up to meet your needs, and leverage best practices.

Establish Your Lead Management Objectives and Procedures

If you're ready to put your own BDRs in place, start by structuring your BDR program.

- **Define your BDRs' role and how they'll fit within the sales organization**

Will they work as a group to support your sales force? Or will you assign a BDR to each sales team?

Make it clear to whom they report and what they are expected to deliver. BDRs are not closers or account reps. Their primary responsibility is to develop sales opportunities by identifying, qualifying and nurturing leads with a high likelihood of

converting into sales.

Create quality standards that run across the team to ensure that individual sales reps do not create their own criteria for their assigned BDRs.

Provide BDRs with room to grow to help keep the best ones on board. Encourage them to identify new market opportunities that will expand your company's sales reach.

- **Support your BDRs with the technology to manage leads effectively**

At a minimum, you'll need a CRM system that's integrated with sales analytics to track leads and prospects through the buyer's journey and sales automation tools to keep administrative tasks to a minimum.

Also, predictive lead scoring can empower your BDRs. Instead of simply calculating and prioritizing leads based on how they score against a predetermined set of variables, predictive lead scoring factors in historical data. It identifies patterns in past sales and uses those to predict sales outcomes (wins-losses) for new leads.

Further, a content management system integrated into CRM will make it easier to share the right content (e.g., videos, whitepapers, articles, podcasts and reviews) throughout the early stages of the buyer's journey.

- **Set Goals for Your BDRs and Track Their Progress:** With goals set, put key performance indicators (KPIs) in place to monitor and measure results. Use these metrics to offer feedback, set discussion topics for one-on-one meetings and identify any issues before they become problems.

Put Your BDRs on the Path to Success

Make it clear to your BDRs that they must master two tasks:

- Qualify only leads that are a good fit for your company
- Nurture qualified leads to turn them into engaged buyers

Teach them the art and science of effective sales tactics:

- **Be persistent and responsive**

Stress the importance of following up quickly. And if at first they don't connect, to

keep trying. Help BDRs develop a sequence of emails, calls, voicemails and social connects that will enable them to break through.

- **Be authentic**

Discourage BDRs from using sales scripts and prepared questions. Instead, they should become fluent enough with product and industry information to engage prospects in a natural conversation.

- **Learn to listen**

The only way to determine if a prospect is a good fit and identify their potential problems and pain points is to give the prospect plenty of opportunities to talk. BDRs need to ask probing questions, then sit back, listen and take notes.

- **Respond with potential solutions, benefits and results that intrigue**

BDRs are in a position to prep prospects for the sales process and initiate the conversion from prospect to buyer. Also, they can help shorten the sales cycle. As they begin to build relationships with prospects, they should offer ideas and suggest solutions that will stimulate interest and drive prospects to want to speak with a sales rep.

- **Be professional**

Throughout the qualifying and nurturing process, BDRs who act professionally will build trust. By meeting deadlines and delivering on promises, BDRs reflect well on the whole company. Also, if they are friendly and approachable, prospects will feel comfortable reaching out to BDRs and sharing their business issues.

When it comes to leads, quality beats quantity. When your BDRs deliver qualified sales-ready leads, your sales reps can be more productive and your ROI will increase.

Call us at +1 813-320-0500 (US) or +39 06 978446 60 (EMEA), or contact us online for help meeting your sales goals.

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