

How a Business Development Team Can Help You Land Appointments

Thursday, July 7, 2022 - Written by: [Jeff Kalter](#)



In years past, when companies have considered either onboarding business development reps (BDRs) or hiring a third-party provider of a professional business development team, they've made certain assumptions:

- BDRs traditionally were viewed as entry-level roles that often led to sales.
- Business development teams typically were not recognized as professionals in their own right, let alone the lynchpin to growing a business.

That, however, has changed. The role of the BDR and BD teams is evolving into a wider and more highly integrated role that often works best in a cross-departmental team model. BDRs are not only going to help B2B companies land appointments, they are also going to ensure that sales reps are better prepared for their sales calls and are presenting to highly qualified buyers. The BD model enables companies to book appointments within new markets (e.g., industries and geographies) and do it at scale.

Here's how.

Business Development Evolves

The change in business development started within the field of professional services, which for a long time revolved around rainmakers—the men and women with the power and stature to land large clients.

But the internet and the ability to work digitally, remotely and virtually anywhere have changed many of our businesses. Companies tend to be less focused on working with local businesses, less reliant on personal referrals and more open to seeking out the best services anywhere.

To set appointments in the global marketplace, you need a business development team that can:

- **Scout:** The job requires research into new and existing markets and due diligence on the individual companies within those markets.
- **Uncover the Need:** With research in hand, they need to turn that insight into strategies for approaching the markets/companies.
- **Guide Marketing:** They also have to get their companies recognized in a sea of competition, which requires coordinating messaging and campaigns on websites, social media and other marketing communications.
- **Book Appointments and Provide a Warm Handoff to a Sales Rep**
: BDRs need to provide the prospects, background information, insight into problems/issues and follow-up appointment dates and times.
- **Coordinate the Team:** With so many elements, a team leader must coordinate people and tasks. This is not a job for a sales rep or rainmaker. It is the work of a BD leader.
- **Scale the Operation:** To fill the pipeline, the BDR needs to deliver on these tasks day in and day out.

Business development is the process: research, market development, initial contact, nurturing and follow-up.

The BD team makes the appointment, collects basic information and develops an understanding of the potential problem. They provide this information to the sales rep in a warm handoff process at which time the rep can prepare a presentation and potential solution for the prospective buyer.

Appointment-Setting Techniques

Whether your company relies primarily on inbound or outbound prospecting, and whether they use cold-calling or email to communicate, there are certain steps successful BDRs take to break through and book appointments:

- When inquiries are inbound, they take responsive action. Their objective is to be the first to act on requests for information.
- When making outbound calls, their initial goal is to slip under the radar and get a potential prospect to lower their guard. They start by identifying themselves upfront and showing respect for the importance and time of the person they are calling. Good BDRs acknowledge that everyone they call is busy and try not to waste time.
- With the preliminaries out of the way, they state the purpose of the engagement. Either they are following up on the prospect's request for information, or they believe they have a timely solution that can save time/money and boost ROI.
- With a provocative question or statement of fact that should gain the prospect's attention, they begin collecting information that will be useful to the sales rep during the sales call. They ask a few open-ended questions designed to identify the problem, invite questions from the prospect and try to judge their level of interest.
- The BDR also makes an effort to build rapport and warm the prospect up for the sales call.
- Then, making one final offer of enlightenment that a prospect should find difficult to refuse, the BDR proceeds to set an appointment—always communicating the value associated with the sales meeting.
- To make it difficult to refuse, the BDR offers a choice of two dates and times for the sales appointment.

In today's sales environment, business development plays an integral part in building a business, expanding market share and increasing profitability—BDRs partner closely with marketing and sales to coordinate messages and campaigns.

They also step outside conventional appointment setting to create strategic alliances within the industry to get their company included as part of a sales deal or recommendation.

Today, few companies can overlook the importance of BDRs and BD teams. However, if you don't have the time or expertise to develop a BD team in-house or feel you want to start immediately but it will take months to put together a viable team, consider working with professionals in customer acquisition.

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