How to prepare inside sales for the first touch of a prospect

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Sales development representatives (SDRs) play a critical role in identifying qualified prospects. As a link between marketing and the inside sales team, they also help ensure that leads are followed up on and converted into sales.

How to prepare an SDR or inside sales team for the first outreach to a prospect has become increasingly challenging. Quality leads aren’t as predictably convertible as they once were. Clients now demand transparent answers and proven reasons to spend money on what you offer.

In this post, we take a look at how you can build a strategy that helps your sales team improve their first touch with prospects and deliver qualified sales leads.

What is a “First Touch” in Sales?

A first touch model gives 100% of the credit for a conversion to the first marketing touchpoint, be it a channel or activity that gained the prospect. The defining feature of first touch attribution is that it's a top-of-funnel effort. In sales, the funnel top typically shows a large number of prospects, and the bottom signifies the smaller number who decide to buy.

There are multiple ways a B2B business might reach out to prospects for the first time. No matter which approach is used, the first interaction is key to establishing trust, providing value, gathering critical information, and even securing a follow-up meeting. Use the wrong tactics, and prospects will be less receptive to your message—and that's assuming they engage at all.

Finding the right first touch approach for your inside sales team can often be a hit-or-miss endeavor. These tips can help your SDR and their team connect with prospects in a more assured way. Some you might already be using, but others can be exactly what you need to take your sales efforts to the next level.

How to Prepare Your Inside Sales Team for the First Touch

Inside sales professionals must make fast and strong connections with prospects if they hope to get and keep their attention and earn their business. Here's how to do it.

Follow a Modern Approach to B2B Sales

Marketing and sales teams dedicate considerable time and energy into developing outreach campaigns. Unfortunately, these campaigns often read well on paper but break down when prospects attempt to engage.

To cure the growing disconnect between traditional sales methods and what experiences modern buyers expect, B2B businesses need to:

- Create a collaborative sales culture that focuses on customer satisfaction.
- Involve all departments in the sales process and building long-term relationships.
- Develop a flexible approach that allows sales reps to remain the first touch point for prospects but also connects leads to product experts and senior staff.

Understand Your Business and Their Business

Effective outreach is possible only when sales teams thoroughly understand the product or service they're selling. What is its unique value? What is the company's branding, and how can they reflect that in their outreach? What are the key attributes and traits of your target audience?

Sales reps must also do company and target contact research so they're prepared to have meaningful conversations with prospects. Understanding a potential lead's business and motivation helps them:

1. Communicate intelligently about their industry and sector.
2. Speak persuasively about how your company's product or service will address a lead's pain points.
3. Better engage with prospects and help them meet their goals.

Have a Conversation

Once contact is made, it's critical not to launch immediately into a sales pitch. Instead, team members should be prepared to listen and ask questions.

Making a connection is one of the most important (and challenging) parts of inside sales techniques. Reps talking to prospects as if they're having a friendly conversation instead of a sales call can ensure the process is smoother and more enjoyable for everyone involved.

For instance, a team members can avoid introducing themselves as a salesperson and instead present themselves as a fellow business person who can help solve a prospect's problems. From there, they can steer the conversation in a way that reveals shared interests and establishes their investment in seeing the prospect succeed.

Personalize Sales Messages

By tailoring their interactions, sales reps can let potential customers know they've done their research and taken the time to learn about them. This is a particularly useful strategy when sending cold emails, which can easily be customized to target audiences. Use information like the prospect's industry, their needs, and case studies of similar companies that have had success with your product or service. This simple yet effective personal touch can help you gain a prospect's trust.

Mastering the art of the first touch takes time, tact, and personality. Your sales team's first touch success rate depends greatly on how prepared they are for the task. Helping them hone the skills that foster relationships and teaching them how to converse in a way that keeps prospects engaged will go a long way in building the trust needed to boost conversions.

To learn more about how to prepare your inside sales team for a prospect's first touch, book a consultation with 3D2B today.

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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