



Boost Event Effectiveness with B2B Telemarketing

How telemarketing increases event
attendance and improves follow-up

by Jeff Kalter, Co-Founder and CEO

3D2B 
BUILDING THE BRIDGE TO SALES

Tampa
3D2B Inc.
205 S. Hoover Blvd.
Suite 100
Tampa, FL 33609

Tel: +1 813-320-0500
email: info@3d2b.com

Rome
3D2B Srl
Piazzale Luigi Sturzo, 15
00144 Rome
Italy

Tel: +39 06 978446 60
email: info@3d2b.com

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Executive Summary

84% of top leadership say in-person events are essential to their business' success.¹ In-person events enable marketers to communicate messaging, engage with customers and prospects, and generate leads. Even in today's digital marketing landscape, the power of face-to-face events is unmistakable.

Despite the opportunity afforded by event marketing, many marketers find difficulty in making the most of their events. Studies show that the top objective for tradeshow exhibitors is lead generation, but the top challenge in event marketing is lead follow-up. As many as 80% of marketers fail to follow up on leads generated at events.²

At the same time, B2B marketers are forced to prove the value of their event marketing efforts. As with many marketers today, budget constraints and a lack of resources pose significant challenges. On the whole, events are an inherently expensive marketing channel, and marketers must measure their ROI. Generating a high quantity of qualified leads is crucial to this endeavor.

As we'll show in this white paper, B2B telemarketing promises to resolve these challenges and offers the solution to disjointed sales and marketing teams who need to make the most of every event. Ultimately, telemarketing enables B2B organizations to increase event awareness, improve attendance—particularly among marketers' most valued prospects—maximize the use of time at the event, and follow up after events with targeted, individualized conversations that lead to increased sales.

Market Drivers

Events Prove Critical in B2B Marketing

Increasingly, in our digital world, events prove powerful in B2B marketing and enable companies to break through the clutter and spend quality face time with their customers and prospects. Almost

three in four B2B professionals report that events are becoming more important to their company's success.³ Half of marketers say their primary reason for investing in events is for lead generation/sales and building community.⁴

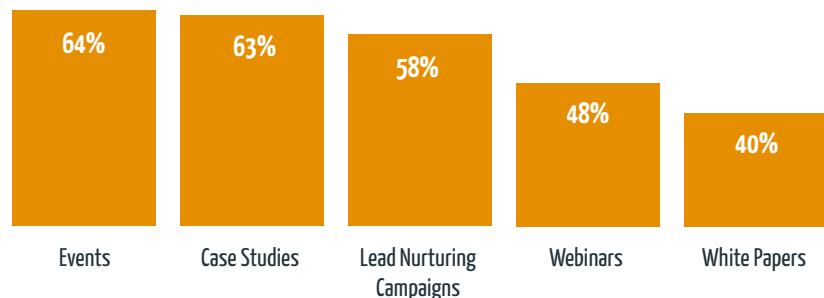
On the whole, when a marketing organization invests the time and money to attend or sponsor an event, they authentically engage with their targeted audiences, encouraging them to not only purchase products and services but also to become outspoken proponents of the brand. When customers and prospects experience this relevance and authenticity, it improves both short-term sales and long-term engagements.

The 2019 Demand Generation Benchmark Survey confirms the power of events in customer engagement. In-person events are considered successful "for engaging prospects throughout the entire funnel. Of the 47% that said it was one of their top three channels, 46% said it was the most effective at driving early-stage engagement, while 44% said it was most effective at driving conversion later in the funnel."⁵

Events are popular because they drive results. 64% of marketers say events are their most successful tactic for converting and accelerating leads at the mid and late stages of the sales funnel, more than any other tactic.⁶ Also, the companies that are growing fastest, those that have grown 30% or more over the last two years, have increased their investments in events the most.⁷

Trends indicate that event popularity as a marketing tool is on the rise. 93% of large company business executives say their organizations prioritize hosting events and 40% say they will invest more in events in the coming year.⁸ Also, one in three reports spending 20% of their marketing budget on events.⁹

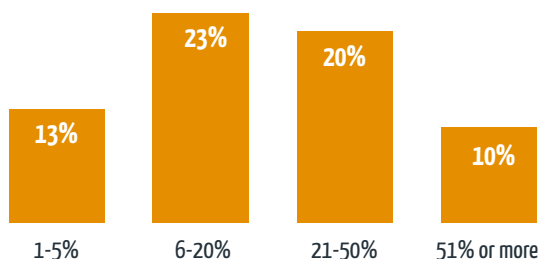
In 2018, which tactics were most successful in helping to convert and accelerate leads at middle and late stages of the funnel?



Source: Ceros Survey Results at <http://view.ceros.com/g3-communications/dg093-survey/p/15>

For their part, customers and prospects are willing to spend time interacting with a brand if the event engages them at the right moment, in the right place, and in a way that is valuable and relevant. Nine in ten attendees report that trade shows impact their buying decisions.¹⁰ Plus, 77% of executives say they found one or more new suppliers at the last trade show they attended.¹¹

One-Third Spend More Than 20% of Marketing Budget on Events
Percentage of marketing budget spent on events



Note: 35% of respondents answered "don't know"

Source: Harvard Business Review Analytic Services Survey, March 2018



Challenges

Contending with Difficulties at Every Stage of the Event Lifecycle

Despite such a strong belief in the power of events, from both marketing organizations and their targeted prospects and customers, significant challenges remain. These challenges affect every stage of the event lifecycle including:

- Generating awareness and promoting attendance before the event
- Gathering quality information from prospects at the event
- Following up on leads after the event

Before the event

Primarily, events are promoted via email, on a company's website, and through mailed invitations. Few marketers take the time to call prospects to individually and personally invite them to attend. Of event marketers' most significant challenges, the top five cited by survey respondents relate to event attendance. Just 39.5% of B2B professionals feel confident in their ability to maximize the number of event attendees.¹²

Typically, the vast majority of leads never receive follow-up. A research study by Salesforce Training showed 85% of companies did not follow up on leads.

During the event

In addition to the challenges marketers face in promoting event attendance, many have difficulty in maximizing their time during the event. Many B2B marketers take an “if you build it, they will come” approach with trade show exhibition in particular. Many will send out a mailing and hold a giveaway, but when it comes to ensuring quality face time with qualified, targeted prospects, the efforts are slim.

At the same time, many event marketers find it challenging to gather quality data on event attendees. Scanning badges and gathering business cards should be only the tip of the iceberg in gathering attendee data. When marketers gather information specific to the prospect’s need for the solution, their purchasing authority, their purchasing timeframe, and more, their ability to follow through on the lead is greatly improved.

After the event

This brings us to the third and final phase of the event lifecycle: after the event. Too many marketers pack up and go home, doing little more than passing a list of names on to the sales organization. In fact, “7 in 10 B2B professionals find their sales hand-off is ineffective.”¹³ Typically, the vast majority of these leads never receive follow-up.

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Source: 2018 State of Event Marketing

A Salesforce Training survey confirms this. For their study, the organization handed out business cards at a major business tradeshow, specifically requesting a call. Shockingly, 85% of businesses never followed up in any form. Of the 15% who did, some took as long as 50 days to follow up. And at that, follow-up was unfocused and untargeted, with companies taking a shotgun approach (glossy mailers, CDs, random emails, etc.) because they had no idea what the prospect’s need was.¹⁴

On the other hand, when quality leads are generated, they often aren’t included in the event’s ROI. These cherry-picked leads represent prime opportunities, but often, the sales rep manning the booth will pocket the lead’s business card and follow up without informing marketing.

The resolution to these challenges lies in the power of B2B telemarketing. Every challenge faced by marketers before, during, and after events can be eliminated with telemarketing specialized for B2B events.



Solution

B2B Telemarketing Boosts Event Effectiveness

Clearly, the many challenges B2B marketers face throughout the event lifecycle pose key obstacles in a company's ability to maximize event participation and sponsorship. Given that events are inherently expensive and consume as much as 20% of the B2B marketing budget, as noted above, the B2B event marketing industry cannot continue with the status quo, especially in today's era of tight budgets and resource constraints.

The resolution to these challenges lies in the power of B2B telemarketing. The challenges faced by marketers before, during, and after events can be eliminated with telemarketing specialized for B2B events. An effective telemarketing organization can initiate personalized, individual conversations to generate event awareness, encourage attendance, set up appointments for face-to-face meetings during the event, and follow up with attendees after the event for improved sales and event ROI.

Telemarketing improves attendance

With so much invested in B2B event marketing, generating awareness and encouraging attendance is crucial to the success of events. In their event planning, marketing organizations must ensure a good quantity of attendees while also making sure that the company's most valued customers and prospects attend.

B2B telemarketing helps marketing organizations achieve this goal. No matter how event invitations are sent out—through the mail, email, website promotion, press releases, and more—telemarketing plays a key role in boosting attendance. Telemarketing offers an individualized approach to an event invitation, and personalized calls not only increase the probability that a prospect will attend but also help prospects remember the company at the time of the event.

What's more, telemarketing improves attendance from VIPs or key decision-makers within the targeted organization. Often, these people hold C-level positions and hold great sway over purchasing decisions. When a marketing organization makes the effort to individually call each one of these VIPs to personally invite them to the event—while communicating how the event is relevant to their needs—the effects are powerful. No mailer or email can match the power of engaging with VIPs in conversation.

Finally, event marketing best practices indicate that reminders play a crucial role in boosting event attendance. Individual phone calls placed a day or two before the event help ensure customers and prospects attend the event, and these calls help the company stay top of mind among attendees at the event.

Telemarketing maximizes the use of time at the event

The power of telemarketing doesn't stop when the exhibition floor opens or when the first presenter starts talking. It helps B2B marketing organizations maximize their time during the event itself. As mentioned above, when calls are made before the event, attendance among prospects and VIPs is vastly improved.

On the other hand, low attendance has costly effects. Typically, companies send their top-level executives and their most seasoned salespeople to events in an attempt to turn every event interaction into a sale. Yet when they find themselves sitting around a booth that gets very little traffic, an important resource is wasted.

In addition to boosting attendance, telemarketing can help executives and sales reps get the undivided attention of customers and prospects. When inviting people to attend, the telemarketing organization can schedule face-to-face meetings with sales reps or other top executives at a predetermined time at the event.

Not only has time been set aside for these meetings, but also, sales reps already know who the prospect companies are and can gather background information before the meetings take place.

Sales reps are then able to customize the information presented during the meetings, directly addressing the prospects' needs and challenges. In addition to improving the likelihood of a sale, this tactic proves very effective in building customer relationships.

What's more, telemarketing proves useful for company-sponsored and virtual events. When calls are made before the event and key information is captured, presentations can be tailored to the exact specifications of the people in attendance, directly addressing their pain points and key areas of interest.

Telemarketing improves lead generation and follow-up after the event

As mentioned above, as many as 85% of leads gathered at events are never contacted after the event. When follow-up does occur, it often takes place weeks after the event ends. Plus, among the 15%

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of leads that do receive follow-up, most receive random, untargeted information since the company didn't take the time to understand the needs and interests of the lead at the event.

Telemarketing has the power to dramatically transform the effectiveness of events by ensuring proper follow-up. Leads are followed up quickly and with targeted information that addresses the lead's specific needs and challenges. It provides the all-important human touch, through a personalized, individual phone conversation, that no email or brochure can ever accomplish.

Several best practices guide B2B marketing organizations in their use of telemarketing when following up with leads after events.

Follow up and do so immediately

In B2B event marketing, all leads are perishable. When a B2B marketing organization goes to the effort and expense to attend an event, follow-up must happen immediately. In fact, research shows that 35% to 50% of sales go to the vendor that responds first.¹⁵ When follow-up is delayed, companies open the door to allow the competition to make the sale first.

Ideally, all qualified leads should be contacted within three or four business days after the event, when the event is fresh in their minds. If follow-up happens much later than that, you'll likely be behind your competitors. Plus, the prospect loses their memory of the event, and the contact seems odd and out of context.

Even if the prospect isn't ready to purchase right away, follow-up should still happen immediately after the event. A telemarketing organization can place a phone call to acknowledge the prospect's interest, further communicate the company's messaging, and gather information specific to the prospect's needs.

Personalize follow-up communications

Personalized communication tailored to the prospect's interests enables prospects to see that the company understands their needs and offers relevant solutions to their challenges. The best opportunity to gather personalized information is at the event via an unobtrusive survey and through detailed note-taking after the prospect leaves.

Telemarketing plays a key role in personalized follow-up. An email or brochure may be able to address the needs as understood at the event, but a phone call is much more individualized and personable. Any additional needs or challenges that the prospect

Personalized communication tailored to the prospect's interests is much more effective and enables prospects to see that the company understands their needs and offers relevant solutions to their challenges.

didn't communicate at the event can be understood, and the company has a chance to reiterate their messaging and personally respond to any objections the prospect may have.

Provide value in follow-up

When a B2B marketing organization follows up on a lead after an event, every bit of communication must be relevant and on point. When follow-up is irrelevant, at best, it will be ignored. At worst, it will damage the integrity of the brand.

When the marketing organization provides value and ensures relevance, it is less likely to come across as aggressive and sales-hungry. Follow-up communication should also stay casual. Rather than selling, marketing should follow up with thought-leadership content, like white papers, or with an invitation to a virtual event.

Telemarketing ensures B2B marketing organizations respond in a way that resonates with the prospect and doesn't come across as aggressive or irrelevant. In addition to positioning the organization as a thought leader, this strategy provides purpose to follow-up efforts, giving marketers a reason for reaching out.

Nurture every lead

Many of today's sales organizations, focused on the next big opportunity, are quick to dismiss event leads unless they are ready to buy right away or in the near future. Typically, any lead that requires nurturing doesn't get the attention it deserves. Often, the lead is added to a CRM database and is quickly ignored.

Consistent contact with every lead, no matter their purchasing timeframe, helps ensure that the company stays top of mind well after the event concludes. Such contact extends past event follow-up to create year-round strategic nurturing and relationship building.

Consider an outsourced telemarketing organization

As we have shown, telemarketing plays a crucial role in filling the gap between disjointed sales and marketing organizations that fail to make the most of every event. No matter the type of event, telemarketing can resolve challenges at every phase of the event lifecycle. Whether the need is to invite VIPs through personalized phone calls or follow up on leads after the event with immediate, relevant phone calls, telemarketing plays a crucial role.

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Outsourcing the telemarketing function to an agency that specializes in B2B marketing can relieve a major burden and help ensure that no lead falls through the cracks. Often, marketing will attempt to perform the telemarketing function on its own, yet this often proves ineffective and expensive. By the same token, this function should not fall to sales reps who are working on closing the next big deal.

In an article titled *Voice of the Experts: Why Do Most Tradeshow Leads Never Get Followed Up, and How Can That Be Fixed*, industry expert Mike Drohan states, “Partnering with a company to handle [the telemarketing] process is a great alternative if the inside sales or marketing teams are not in a position to truly dedicate themselves to the process. The key here is that a highly skilled outsourced company can jump in exactly when you need them, quickly grade all of the leads, and exit until your next show, all without being an ongoing expense.”¹⁶



Case Study

3D2B Performs Telemarketing before Industry Event

A 3D2B client in the enterprise software business was preparing to attend Sibos, an event that typically draws 7,000 top decision-makers and experts in the financial services industry. The client asked 3D2B, a B2B telemarketing firm, to call event participants to prequalify them and to set up appointments with sales reps at the event. With only two weeks to call before the event, 3D2B surpassed its appointment-setting goal by 70%.



Conclusion

For today’s B2B marketing organization, in-person and virtual events hold great promise in generating quality leads, improving customer engagement, and building brand awareness. Trends show that event participation is on the rise and that marketers and their customers and prospects find them highly valuable, even in our digital age. Perhaps, as the business landscape becomes increasingly digital and virtual, face-to-face events become all the more important in creating lasting, relevant relationships between a brand and its customers and prospects.

Despite the strong belief in the power of event marketing, challenges lie at every phase of the event lifecycle. B2B marketing organizations have great difficulty in getting the

attention of their targeted prospects, with as many as half finding that invites are ignored. What's more, the vast majority of leads generated at events receive no follow-up whatsoever.

B2B telemarketing holds great promise in transforming this process, filling in the gaps to personally contact customers and prospects to ensure they attend the event and to follow up after the event and throughout the lead nurturing cycle. The personalized human touch offered by B2B telemarketing ensures that every event lives up to its greatest potential.

Endnotes

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- 4 [2018 Event Marketing Benchmarks and Trends](#), Bizzabo, 2018
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About the Author

Jeff Kalter, Co-Founder and CEO

Jeff Kalter is the co-founder and CEO of 3D2B, a B2B telemarketing firm that helps sales and marketing organizations across the globe generate qualified leads, cultivate relationships with targeted buyers, and grow existing customer accounts.

Jeff co-founded 3D2B in 2003 after recognizing a need for high-end global telemarketing services for B2B companies. What started as a small, two-person company has grown to a multinational business with more than 100 employees. Today, he leads the company in all strategic endeavors, including marketing, business development, and operations.

Before founding 3D2B, Jeff held key positions in advertising, marketing, and sales for companies in high-end apparel, industrial waterworks, and technology. This experience includes the companies Bruce Supply Corporation, Central Foundries, which he co-founded, Toshiba, Cisco Systems, 3Com, and ESCADA in Germany.

Jeff earned his bachelor's degree in architecture from the New York Institute of Technology. His background includes experience in graphic design, and he is a certified Salesforce.com administrator.



About 3D2B

Established in 2003, 3D2B provides B2B telemarketing and lead generation services to help foster customer relationships and boost sales across all industries. With offices in Rome, Italy and Tampa, Florida, 3D2B assists sales and marketing organizations across the globe.

Founded on the principle of providing quality, specialized B2B telemarketing and lead generation services, 3D2B prides itself in the fact that its agents are highly educated, natively speak the languages they cover, and have industry-specific experience. For more information about 3D2B, visit www.3D2B.com.

Learn More

To learn more about how 3D2B can help you generate leads and improve the effectiveness of your sales and marketing organizations, contact us at **+1 813 320 0500** or **+39 06 978446 60 (EMEA)** or visit us at www.3D2B.com.

Contact

ROME

3D2B Srl
Piazzale Luigi Sturzo, 15
00144 Rome
Italy

Tel: +39 06 978446 60
email: sales@3d2b.com

TAMPA

3D2B Inc.
205 S. Hoover Blvd.
Suite 100
Tampa, FL 33609
USA

Tel: +1 813-320-0500
email: sales@3d2b.com