

12 Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Business to Business Appointment Setting Company

Wednesday, November 6, 2013 - Written by: [Francesco Adamo](#)



1. Does the telemarketing company specialize in the market you sell to?

Look at the telemarketing company's client list to see if they have clients in your industry. If they have experience in your market, they can hit the road running. And, if the company's representative tells you that they can do appointment setting for any industry, be wary—it's hard to be all things to all industries.

2. What are client experiences like?

Checking out a new telemarketing company does not have to be a trial and error process. Other companies have already worked with them before, and you can learn from their experiences. Look for success stories and testimonials. Then, to learn the details of what it's like to work with this company, talk to a few client references.

3. Will they have dedicated agents working on your job?

Make sure that agents working on your project are not working on any other projects. When immersed with a laser-like focus on your products and services they gain more insight into how they can help your prospects, enabling them to interact more easily and professionally.

4. Does the company employ in-house telemarketing agents?

While it may seem that companies that employ in-house telemarketing agents would be more expensive, there are several benefits to this business practice. A team of agents working together have greater opportunity for sharing experiences. Also, it is motivating to see co-workers successes. Finally, it's easier for managers to supervise the team and assure that they achieve optimal results.

5. Do they have agents who speak in the mother tongue of the countries you are targeting?

We've all had experience of a phone call from a far off nation, talking with an agent who only has a passable knowledge of our own language. It can make for stilted and challenging phone discussions. So if your company's markets span multiple countries, you need to have agents who grew up in those countries. They understand the people they are calling and their culture which is critical in forming a human connection.

6. What type of background and education do their agents have?

Look for agents who have been with the company for awhile. That's because a high-turnover rate means agents won't be as experienced with the company's processes and systems. Plus it can be a symptom of other issues.

You also want to discover how much experience agents have and in what fields. Sometimes other types of sales experience, such as outside sales, are useful in providing perspective on the quality of an appointment. A higher education is preferable for building communication and problem-solving skills. However, an agent can overcome the lack of a college education with experience.

7. Do agents receive training sales and telephone skills?

You don't want agents who are thrown into a sink or swim environment. Make sure the company provides telephone skills training, including guidance on how to get past the gatekeepers, approach decision-makers and overcome dismissal. Also, agents should learn sales techniques so they can determine the correct questions to ask to unearth problems, future plans, budgets and more.

8. How much training would the agents receive on our products and market?

The company and you should jointly provide complete training on your products and sales strategy before starting a campaign as it's imperative for achieving a fluid conversational flow. We include you, because you're the experts on your products!

9. How many calls do they make a day?

This isn't a case of more is better.

You might expect almost 100 calls a day at a call center. However at a business-to-business appointment setting company, you may only see 40 to 50 calls a day.

The difference is quality.

Businesses-to-business appointment setting companies are focused on targeting the right contacts after completing thorough company research to determine how your solution or services fit their needs. If a company is making too many calls a day it's unlikely that they are engaging in quality, peer-to-peer level conversations with their contacts.

10. Do the agents work from a script?

Do you want to work with a company that starts reading from a script? It may seem that a script empowers agents to achieve greater success; however, it will give the impression that the agent is not prepared, resulting in a lack of professionalism. Also, reading through a script does not help in the case of handling questions and early dismissal. Furthermore, the use of a script takes the personality out of the call, thus making it much more difficult to get the client to trust and respond to an agent. Finally, as products are so versatile, it's extremely difficult to create a script that is relevant for all situations.

In conclusion even though during the training period a script could be useful, the intention should be to wean agents off the script once they've internalized it, otherwise it may sound like they're reading. The agents may use reminders throughout the call to help keep the conversation direct and to the point. Ultimately the agent needs to build a relationship with the contact over the phone, and that takes time...which is why you don't want a company where agents make 100 calls a day following a script.

If it's worth doing, it's worth measuring.

Look for a company that provides full reports on calls and their results. This enables you to understand your return, adjust as necessary, and use what you've learned to create future campaigns that are even more productive. Is reporting charged extra, or is it included in the pricing?

12. How do you charge for your services?

While pay-per-appointment may sound attractive, you risk being buried under a pile of low quality appointments that waste your sales representatives' time. When you receive a flat-rate for a campaign, based on an hourly or daily rate, is usually provides a better ROI because the company can focus on quality leads, as long as you are aligned on targets in the beginning.

Once you have answers to these questions, you'll find it easier to narrow down your list of business to business appointment setting companies to the one that's right for you.

For a free consultation on how to use business-to-business telemarketing to boost your sales, call us now at +1 718-709-0800 (Americas) / +39 06-978446-20 (EMEA).

Published in
[Appointment Setting](#)