

## **B2B Sales Acceleration: How to Help Buyers Buy**

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Part of it may be that most buyers don't want to meet in person. According to Sales Benchmark Index, 70% of purchasers prefer not to have a face-to-face meeting. They're quite happy with virtual meetings. After all, today, everyone needs to get more done in less time, and face-to-face meetings tend to eat up more hours than necessary. In virtual meetings via the web or teleconference, you can educate buyers, helping them find the solution that fits their needs. In most situations, there's no need to sit across the desk from them.

Given that inside sales can shorten the sales cycle and is also more cost-effective, it's no wonder that there is an ongoing shift in the composition of sales forces. The ranks of road warriors with their hefty travel budgets are shrinking, while the number of salespeople inside the walls of the building — yours or a vendor's — is

expanding.

## **How to Use the Phone as a Sales Accelerator**

So the phone works, but how exactly should you use it most successfully? Here are some tips.

- **Get Ahead of Your Competition**

When you're in a race against your competition, it only makes sense to get out of the gate first. Many salespeople, however, don't look at it this way. And that's where you could gain a strategic advantage. The big bald fact is that field salespeople, in general, prefer to work with prospects who know what they want. After all, they tend to be short-term oriented and, more than anything else, love to close the deal. Inside salespeople, on the other hand, are predisposed to bridging the gap between marketing and field sales, and usually have a long-term orientation. In other words, they are ready, willing and able to help buyers buy. To do so, they need to get in at the fuzzy front-end of the purchase decision-making process, when business leaders have identified a problem but don't yet know how to go about solving it. At this point, salespeople can act as consultants and help shape the scope of the project. They are not responding to a request for proposal; they are helping to craft it around the capabilities of their organization.

- **Nurture the Relationship**

While you can cultivate relationships with email marketing, sending out content that helps your prospects, forming a deeper and more personal connection takes one-on-one phone calls. Through telephone calls, the business development specialist becomes the voice of the company. Instead of B2B relationships, they become person-to-person (P2P) relationships. Of course, you should not drop your email marketing program. It serves an important purpose. You may be wise, however, to add tele-nurturing into the mix at opportune moments. Rather than calling your prospects at random intervals, let them dictate when you reach out based on their actions. For example, if a potential customer attends a webinar or has been using a free trial, you might want to call them to see if they have any questions. At that time, you can assess their readiness to make a purchase.

No one ever said that B2B sales acceleration was easy. So, whatever you do, be persistent. Given the long sales cycle for complex B2B purchases, don't abandon your prospects after a couple of tries. It can take between seven and 12 touches (emails, phone calls or other communications) to build a strong connection and trust. Even an accelerated B2B sales cycle can still take months.

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