

# **3 Ways to Improve Your B2B Cold Calling Success**

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## **1. Use Data Insights**

Data provider TechTarget believed that it could use its data insights to improve B2B cold calling results significantly. In a month-long study, the vendor tested data-driven calls head-to-head with traditional calling strategies — pitch-focused calls to leads and non-lead prospects. The data-driven calls were to Qualified Sales Opportunities (QSOs). In these calls, reps used project insights specific to each contact to tailor their messaging.

The results were dramatic. The inside sales reps (ISRs) who used the insights provided as part of QSOs increased their appointment setting by as much as 19 times. On average they scored one appointment for 67 calls.

What this study suggests is that having access to massive volumes of data—what we call Big Data—isn't enough today. What you need are the tools to help you turn

massive datasets into something meaningful. Something that enables you to understand what the data is saying, find your best prospects and talk with them on a personal level.

The more you can use the data to understand your leads and prospects—and in some cases anticipate their buying plans—the better you can estimate outcomes. You'll also know how best to prioritize your efforts.

With predictive programs, you're reducing Big Data down into the right data. A good program relies on three data points: Fit data, opportunity data and intent data.

### **Fit (or Fitness) Data**

Fit data helps you determine if a company is a good fit for the products and services you sell. It provides you with a clear, more comprehensive, identification of your lead or prospect.

Fit data is firmographic data—geographic location, size, revenue, assets, number of employees, industry, years in business, and more. Technographic data, about the prospect's hardware and software platforms and vendors the company currently uses, is also included in fit data. And depending on what you're selling, you may want insight into other datasets that help you understand purchasing habits and history.

At the individual level, fit data will provide demographic information on key decision makers—such as title, current phone number, etc.

### **Opportunity Data**

Now that you know that a company fits your customer profile, opportunity data can help you better determine if they are ready to make a purchase. When you know the opportunities that exist, you can better time your sales outreach.

Prospects love to deflect your call with the excuse, "Now isn't a good time." But when you have insight into the signals that suggest this is the ideal time to be buying, you're ahead of the game. Your reps can feel confident that the time is right and can even explain why the opportunity is ripe for contacts.

Signals that indicate opportunity can vary widely and might include: a new round of funding, an acquisition, a merger, and an IPO or award announcement. Signals can be about personnel as well, such as reports of a C-suite shuffle, a new CEO, layoffs,

promotions or hiring.

## **Purchase Intent Data**

Between the fit and opportunity data, you can focus your sales efforts on your best prospects. Now, what if you could know that a company is actively looking? And what they are looking for?

That's the purpose of intent data. By tracking online behavior across the Internet—either at the individual or account level—vendors are collecting and aggregating the behavioral signals that suggest activity, interests and potential pain points.

Intent data can help you better understand your buyers, identify potential opportunities, score leads and tailor your message to their wants and needs.

## **2. Polish Up Your Sales Techniques**

But cold calling is not all strategy and insight. It's also about presenting yourself as a professional, gaining the prospect's trust and building a relationship.

A few pro tips:

- **Don't stumble on the first sentence.** You may be dialing for a while until you speak with someone live. Don't act surprised! Be ready when that call is connected to that all-famous decision maker you have been trying to reach for days.
- **Leave the script to the amateurs.** Scripts almost always make you sound like an automaton. Learn to engage prospects through the give-and-take of conversation. Talk with people; don't pitch. Ask questions, and listen actively to the response.

- **Practice until your message is second nature.** Just because you're abandoning your script doesn't mean you should wing it. To the contrary, you need to practice, practice, practice. You want to know your subject, your company, your products/services and your message thoroughly.

### **3. Be Persistent**

Back in 2007, Dr. James Oldroyd launched his Lead Response Management study. It's been reviewed, reported on and studied several times since, and the results have remained consistent.

There's one aspect of the study that applies to both cold calling and inbound inquiries — persistence.

Cold calling prospects—even ones that resemble your ideal customer profile—takes persistence. And yet most reps give up after making an average of 1.5 attempts to reach a contact. And 49 percent will make only one follow-up call.

Our advice is to keep calling. When you're cold calling, you're in the earliest stages of developing a relationship. It often takes 6...9...even 12 contacts to set a meeting, move the prospect farther along the buyer's journey and, ultimately, close a deal.

In summary, use today's technology to cold call the right people at the right time with a tailored message that engages them. Also, polish up your technique and persist with your calls. If you conquer all three of these areas, you're sure to increase your conversion rates.

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