How to Set Up Your Business Development Function and Measure Its Success

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If you're thinking of building a team of business development representatives (BDRs) but are having difficulty justifying paying someone who doesn't close sales, read on.

You might need a new perspective along with a program designed to get the most of your business development reps.

BDRs are essential because they free your salespeople of many burdensome tasks that take them away from selling. They can :

- Qualify leads that arrive from marketing campaigns
- Research prospective companies and market segments
- Prospect with new customers by calling, emailing, and leaving voicemails
- Build awareness with social engagement using LinkedIn
- Handle the follow-up calls and nurturing that help turn a lead into a prospect
- Deliver sales-ready qualified leads, with the buyer's interest, intent, and an urgency to buy
- Thoroughly document all background information about a prospect in your

customer relationship management (CRM) system
- Set meetings with the prospect and sales representative to make a warm handoff

By relieving salespeople of these day-to-day tasks and ensuring they have a supply of highly qualified leads, BDRs can boost sales productivity. However, that will only happen if you set up your BDR program correctly, then track and measure success.

Setting Up a BDR Program for Success

To get the most out of your BDR program, take these three critical steps:

1. **Hire good people**

Hiring is always a challenge, especially in an economy where people jump from job to job, and young candidates tend to expect everything to be given to them. You will need to check references and make a judgment on a candidate's personality and intelligence.

Look for outgoing individuals with positive attitudes. They should have a competitive drive but enough resiliency of character to move on from a loss. While intellectual curiosity and eagerness to learn are essential, they must also be willing to listen and are teachable.

2. **Define their roles**

Determine the BDR's job responsibilities and reporting hierarchy. Explain to new hires what you expect of them, so there are no surprises.

3. **Put them through an extensive onboarding**

Introduce BDRs to sales reps and marketing people. Give them a thorough grounding in the business and its products and services. For instance, you might want to have product managers provide a demo. Train them on the CRM system and any sales automation tools they will use. Finally, make sure everyone understands the foundational sales techniques—listening skills, follow-up, relationship building, and more.

And here's a tip: If this is the first time you've set up a BDR program and are not sure what to expect, start by hiring just a couple of BDRs. While you may have some idea what to expect in terms of performance, this will be a learning experience for you. It's best to have at least two employees to compare and contrast. Plus, they'll likely compete to achieve more while also helping each other out.

To Keep Them on Track, Measure Their Progress

Even though you can't measure a BDR's sales, you can measure their progress through the process. You should be looking for contacts and conversions. In other words:

- Are they calling enough people each day, leaving voicemails and following up with emails? Are they persistent in calling each contact? Are they leveraging social? It can take as many as eight to 12 touch points to reach a prospect.

- Are they breaking through with a prospect and making progress? Do the follow-up and nurturing result in a sales meeting? Are the leads being well qualified and then becoming prospects and opportunities? And once the BDR turns the opportunities over to sales, how frequently do they convert to customers?

Finally, make sure handoffs to sales are going smoothly. The sales process can break down if the transition is sloppy. Are the prospects well prepared to be handed off to a sales rep? Have they seen a demo and been thoroughly briefed on the product to know that it's a good fit? Are the call notes and contact information transferred accurately and comprehensively into your CRM system?

Set the Right Metrics for Success

To set the metrics for a new program, you can use your experience with your sales reps as a starting point. Or you can work backward from your ideal outcome or goal as a starting point.

For example, if you want ten deals to close each month, determine your average conversion rate from sales-qualified leads (SQLs) to closed/won, from marketing qualified leads (MQL) to SQL and number of calls needed to qualify a SQL. These conversion rates will give you a good starting point. However, with time, you'll have enough data from your BDRs to be more precise in your metrics.

Here are some KPIs to track:

- **Calls Per Day:** Set your benchmark, for example, 100 calls. Track the number of calls each BDR makes.
- **Contact Attempts:** Track how many follow-up calls reps make.
- **Contact Conversion Rate:** Track how many contacts are ready to learn more, want information sent to them or request a demo. These metrics help you understand whether the BDR and your messaging effectively bring a contact into the pipeline.
- **Meetings Scheduled:** For each BDR, track the number of meetings they schedule with a sales rep each month. This metric indicates whether prospects are moving through the pipeline.
- **Records Added to CRM:** To make sure BDRs keep up with their CRM documentation, track whether the records added to your CRM system align with the number of prospect contacts. Also, make sure the sales reps have the information they require.
- **Meeting Completion Rate:** Track the number of prospects who show up for calls with the sales rep and are ready to move the conversation further. By doing so, you'll know whether BDRs are effectively qualifying leads and prospects, then completing the warm transfer to the rep.

By hiring right, onboarding thoroughly, and measuring performance, you can get value from building a BDR program to assist your sales reps.

If, however, you don't want to take on BDRs as full-time employees, consider a professional tele-services provider. Your sales force can benefit from agents dedicated to your account and who already know how to turn leads into opportunities.

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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