

How to Use Conversational Sales to Accelerate Your B2B Pipeline

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Your sales reps can sell more by talking with customers and prospects and not at them. In other words, they need to have a conversation.

I'm talking about conversational selling. Instead of developing a standard pitch for inside sales reps to follow or giving them a script, give them the skills and tools to engage.

The best field sales reps have long perfected conversational sales, and the good news is that inside sales reps can do so too. It's all about engaging with the customer or prospect—talking, listening, learning and sharing—to understand the buyer's wants and needs.

Such engagement helps accelerate the B2B sales cycle and build long-term relationships that increase the lifetime value of a customer.

Here's how.

No Sales Pitches Here: How to Use Conversational Selling

While many telesales groups have long relied on sales pitches to move a product, or scripts that help an inexperienced rep deliver a canned message, experienced professionals have long known that the best sales calls are natural. They engage buyers, learn about their goals and expectations, answer questions and recommend the best solution.

Conversational selling is a simple, intuitive sales process:

- **Be Responsive** : Dr. James Oldroyd's Lead Response Management studies dating back to 2007 have shown us how quickly a hot lead can cool down. He found that reps who responded to a lead inquiry within five minutes were 100 times more likely to connect with the contact.

The fact is, we've all been conditioned for instant gratification, and if we don't receive it, we move on. The inside sales rep who responds to an inbound inquiry promptly sets the tone for the whole sales process.

- **Build a Two-way Dialog** : Reps need to treat buyers like people. Instead of launching into a script or pitching some product that the company wants to sell, they need to engage. By developing a two-way dialog, they take the first steps toward building a long-term relationship.
- **Ask Some Pointed Questions** : While the conversation should feel natural and engaging, it doesn't have to be 100% organic.

The sales rep has an opportunity to dig into the buyer's specific situation. With some very pointed questions, the rep can determine:

- **Who** is the contact? They could be a key decision maker or someone just collecting information. They could be one of many on a buying team. And be sure to learn about the company and its competition.
- **Where** are they in the buying journey? The buyer could be just tire kicking or about to make a purchase.

- **What** is the buyer's problem or need? Remember, it's not about the pitch; it's about getting to the heart of the buyer's perceived issues.
- **Why** are they're reaching out now? Has something changed recently that made this problem a priority? If so, what happened?

Interjecting some pointed questions into the conversation can help accelerate the sales process and shorten the sales cycle.

- **Respond to Both a Buyer's Wants and Needs** : Armed with a full understanding of buyers' immediate goals and perceived opportunities, inside sales reps can provide specific sales guidance. They can get to the heart of the issue. They shouldn't focus only on the need. Reps should also respond to the emotional side, including the individual's dreams of how solving this problem can help make their lives easier or provide professional recognition.
- **Become Their Trusted Advisor** : When sales reps give freely and the information they provide is based on a solid understanding of the buyer, they can elevate their status. They can become a trusted advisor—someone the customer turns to first and respects their insights. It's an inside advantage that must be earned.

Get to Talking: Focus on Conversational Sales Tools

For the longest time, face-to-face meetings and phone calls were the means for conversational sales. As I've said before, the best field reps perfected conversational selling.

Now, we engage differently, relying on digital connections more and remote engagement. But people have not changed. If anything, they are more conditioned to quick responses. They're also sophisticated enough to see through the practiced pitch and canned script.

The good news is some tools can help the inside sales rep use conversational selling effectively:

- **Phone and email** : Still the inside sales reps' best tools, the key is to use them effectively with the conversational sales process in mind. Be responsive and engaging.
- **Chatbots** : Newer on the scene is the chatbot. Inquiries that come in via chat

need to be transmitted to reps quickly, ideally in real time, so that someone can enter the conversation with the contact. Rather than being a way to deflect inquiries away from human engagement, chatbots can be set up to collect essential information, which can serve as a foundation for sales reps.

- **Video conference calls** on platforms such as Zoom, Skype, Google, Cisco WebEx or Microsoft Teams help bolster the remote sales approach with a real time, visual meeting experience. Take full advantage of the technology and encourage engagement.

If you want to accelerate your B2B sales and build long-term relationships with customers, engage in a satisfying two-way dialog. It's the conversation and relationship that sells.

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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