



Telemarketing

The phrase “cold calling” sends chills down the spines of many businesspeople. It’s often viewed as an intimidating, difficult, and boring process ... and that means it doesn’t get done as often as it should.

Additional Tools

- ▶ Recruiting
- ▶ Vendor Selection
- ▶ Return on Investment

Telemarketing campaigns help companies reach a group of targeted prospects or customers to communicate a message, gather feedback, and determine a next step for the relationship.

Telemarketing can be an important part of any marketing strategy – for example, you can use it to:

- ▶ Generate leads
- ▶ Qualify prospects who have downloaded information from your website or attended a webinar
- ▶ Follow up on a direct mail or email offer
- ▶ Take orders for special promotions
- ▶ Keep your marketing database current
- ▶ Conduct marketing research

In many companies, sales reps should make hundreds or thousands of cold calls every month to set appointments and/or generate leads. But busy reps usually prefer to work on closing their existing pipeline. Prospecting often slips on the priority list; as a result, the sales pipeline isn’t always filled with new prospects.

If cold calling is an effective way to introduce your company to new prospects, don’t ignore it. Instead of forcing a sales team to devote time to prospecting, many companies use an in-house or outsourced telemarketing group to make a high volume of calls, find decision-makers and qualify leads for the field sales group.

When telemarketers handle prospecting, salespeople can spend 100% of their time selling and closing. Your company can produce more revenue in the same amount of time; your reps earn more commission, they’re doing what they love, and they’re more satisfied with their jobs.

You can use a telemarketing team in a variety of campaigns:

OUTBOUND LEAD GENERATION

Company A's telemarketers call targeted lists. They identify the decision-maker, ask qualifying questions, and gauge the prospect's needs and interest level. If a prospect meets certain criteria, the telemarketer sets a followup appointment for a sales rep.

OUTBOUND CAMPAIGN SUPPORT

Company B increases their response rates by including a phone call in campaigns. For example, when they hold an event at a trade show, they call prospects before mailing an invite to lifts their response rate. They also follow up with those who don't respond.

INBOUND SALES SUPPORT

Company C makes sure that prospects who visit their website can call and speak with someone immediately. They use an inbound sales support team to answer questions and probe callers. The reps send followup materials and a field sales rep follows up with the most qualified prospects.

With the right strategy and proper management, a good telemarketing operation can produce great value for your company.

BEST CASE

You have a team or vendor to prequalify leads and handle inbound and outbound calls for marketing campaigns. Your team successfully represents your brand to your market. You have strong management in place and can easily report on key statistics: contacts per hour, stats by rep, etc. You set goals and hit them consistently.

NEUTRAL CASE

You have a vendor or in-house team and their performance is average. If they're in-house, you have some statistics, but not enough, and there's a fair amount of turnover in the position. In fact, you're always training someone new. You see the value in using telemarketing and you think your operation could improve.

WORST CASE

You don't have a telemarketing operation. Sales reps make their own cold-calls but they simply don't make enough. When prospects call from your website, there frequently isn't a person available to talk with them live. And when you need to include a phone call in a marketing campaign, it's an enormous battle to get reps to make calls.

Key concepts & steps

Before you begin

If you can immediately gain new prospects and customers, don't hesitate to launch a telemarketing campaign right now. You may also decide to pursue telemarketing after developing your annual **marketing plan**.

Set your goals

You can use telemarketing in many ways; brainstorm the campaigns that will work best for your company. For example, you may need to generate leads for your sales team or use telemarketing to support other marketing campaigns.



Forecast and budget; determine whether to build in-house or outsource

- ▶ Estimate your call volume, then think about hours of operation, fluctuations in call volume, and the skill set you'll need in your reps.
- ▶ Your call volume also drives your headcount, software, phone system and the office space you'll need.
- ▶ These requirements will help you decide whether to use a vendor or hire and manage a team in-house. If you look at vendors, the requirements will make your discussions easier and faster.
- ▶ Budget for everything including headcount, software licenses, bonuses and management.

Develop good scripts

Reps will need to capture attention, build value, and close; a good script will help them do it consistently.

- ▶ Make your scripts conversational, simple, and focused on the end goal.
- ▶ It helps to make and listen to calls as you're developing and refining your script. What looks good on paper may not work on the phone.
- ▶ Get feedback from your team as well.

Train and coach your team

Regular coaching and quality assurance is crucial.

- ▶ Engage your reps, role-play and guide them through calls.
- ▶ Listen to calls regularly, evaluate your reps and coach them to improve their performance.

Make it fun!

Telemarketing is a tough job and turnover is a big issue.

- ▶ Make things fun with contests, events, and other incentives.
- ▶ Make their space comfortable and interesting – tiny cubes, old chairs and windowless rooms don't put a smile in anyone's voice.

Report your results

- ▶ Define the reports you'll need -- your system may not be able to provide all of the data, but you can probably find an alternate solution.
- ▶ Use reports to consistently evaluate progress and improve your campaigns.

What's next?

It's all about execution, so manage your team and devote the resources necessary for success. Telemarketing can be very effective and is often underutilized in B2B marketing plans.

