OUTRUN YOUR COMPETITION

Best Practices for Accelerating the Sales Process

zoominfo
Powered by DiscoverOrg

Introduction

More often than not, sales leaders strive to accelerate their deal cycle, but it's critical to also consider the opportunity cost.

Think about it, with outbound prospecting, requests from management, scheduled demos, and inbound calls, chaos can quickly work its way into your strategy, deeming a "speed wins" selling mentality downright ineffective.

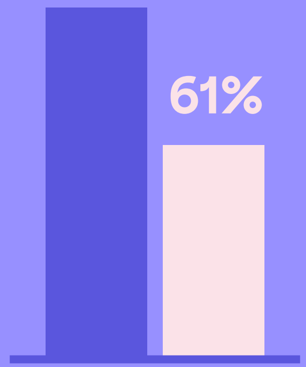
The bottom line is that, in B2B sales, speed is useless without control. This eBook takes a look at three headache-free strategies you can employ today to accelerate selling the right way. Read on to learn how to adopt specific workflows and approaches that append your existing processes to deliver value to your prospects and internal counterparts.

What's Covered:

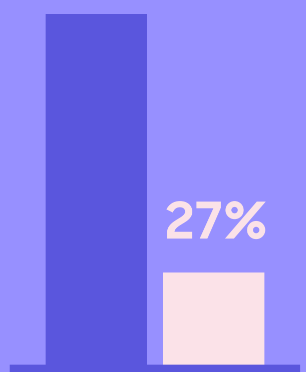
- Targeted Prospecting
- Efficient Outreach Strategy
- Solution-Centric Mentality

Targeted Prospecting

Who's really qualified?
61% of B2B marketers send all leads directly to sales.



Yet only 27% of those leads are qualified (source).



Think about your existing outreach strategy, and then put yourself in the shoes of your prospects. Ask yourself: would I take the time to respond to the message at hand, and listen to the sales pitch on the other line?

Fortunately, this winning situation isn't far from reach if your database is full of "qualified leads." First, let's break down what this really means.

The qualified lead = an individual with an organic need for your product or solution.

Once you've gone through the process of gathering qualified leads, your enhanced database will work to alleviate the headache caused by stagnant outreach. From here, you can quickly and easily target the right leads.

But assuming only a handful of even your qualified leads are in-market for your solution or product, how do you cherry-pick that right lead, aka your ideal buyer?

Get to Know Your Buyers

To better understand your potential buyers you'll want to establish an ideal customer profile (ICP), or a profile comprised of firmographic and behavioral characteristics of your existing, best customers. After all, it's all about attaining as much insight as possible on your key prospects.

According to an Accenture study, 94% of B2B buyers conduct online research at some point in the buying process (source). Your buyers are out there, and they're more informed than ever, so it's imperative you become aware of their challenges (and successes) before picking up that phone.

It's also important to remember why your ideal customers chose you in the first place. Recall their business dependencies, such as the software they relied on and what firmographic contingencies existed. All of this will serve as a good reminder during your conversations.

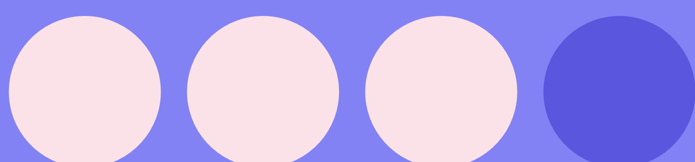
Engage!

Today's crowded digital landscape calls for you to communicate with your prospects across various channels. In a nutshell, you need to be where your customers' eyes are. For example, an IDC study found that three out of four B2B buyers rely on social media to engage with peers about buying decisions, and word-of-mouth recommendations from peers influence over 90% of all B2B buying decisions (source). Make sure to stay abreast of what's trending in the marketplace in order to effectively tailor your approach to your ideal buyer.

Take Me to Your Decision-Maker

A successful sale is defined by your ability to quickly determine an organization's decision-maker(s). According to Brent Adamson, Principle Executive Advisor at CEB, the average number of customer stakeholders involved in a B2B purchasing decision is 6.8 (source). Make sure you're not hindering the sales process with a contact who doesn't have a direct line to the decision-maker. Having an understanding of a team's structure allows you to bypass gatekeepers if the process begins to stall.

3/4



Three out of four B2B buyers rely on **social media** to engage with peers about buying decisions.

90%

Word-of-mouth recommendations from peers influence over 90% of all B2B buying decisions.

(source)

Efficient Outreach Strategy

Sales and marketing leaders report that only 1/3 of their sales reps' time is spent in front of customers (source).

There is no shortage of automation tools and data providers out there with the ability to accelerate the sales process. However, in order to better reach your set objectives, you need to adopt an efficient outreach strategy for ongoing success. It's important to implement and streamline the following methodologies into your sales process: lead scoring, routing, outreach, and reporting.

Lead Scoring and Routing

An agreed upon lead scoring system can make a significant difference in your selling strategy, and can help you to more quickly identify and close high quality leads. While time-consuming and far from exhilarating, companies with effective lead scoring schematics in place have shown boosts of 77% in lead gen ROI over those not using scoring (source). To set lead scores, it's best for both marketing and sales to determine key characteristics of the prospect, such as demographics and firmographics, the level of interest they've shown in your organization, and their current position in the buying cycle.

Similarly, a strategic lead routing system will ensure the right sales reps call on the right leads. Routing can be based on a variety of factors relating to your particular sales process, including parameters such as territory, revenue, company size, etc.

Sales Cadence

Once you're ready to engage in outreach, your sales automation tool quickly becomes your new best friend. However, effective sales automation is only as good as the data powering it, so it's paramount to include dynamic data points (e.g. contact and account information) into your functional workflows and preferred CRMs.

Each organization and sales rep employs a unique approach to outreach strategies, but at the basic level, you should identify, connect with, and engage ideal prospects in ways that work best for you.

Know who to involve at every step of the sales process. For instance, it's most cost-effective to have your more senior sales representatives talk with the leads that you unquestionably deem qualified. At the same time, there's a good deal of potential in the more raw leads – this is where your sales development representatives (SDRs) come into play.

Know what tech to rely on and when: To ensure a smooth outreach process, prioritize CRMs that integrate with the rest of the tools in your technology stack. Remember, the goal is to maximize productivity and streamline current workflows to accelerate the sales process.

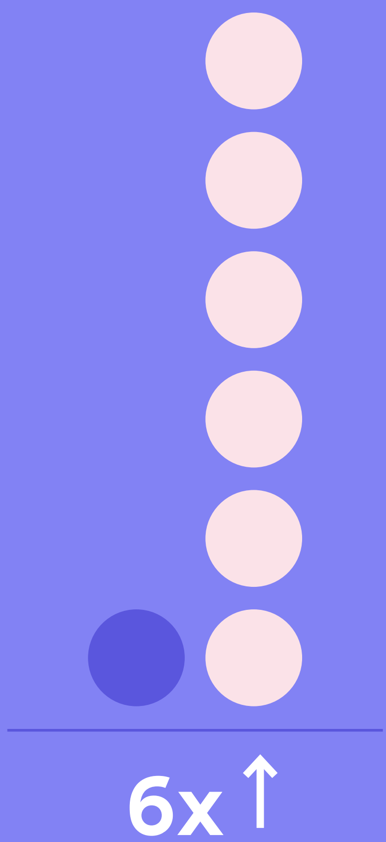
Know what pace of outreach works best for you. Test the number and frequency of touches, to ensure the right balance.

Reporting

Similar to lead scoring, reporting takes time, patience, and diligence. Analyzing metrics is not the most exciting step in your process, but it's critical for understanding your selling initiatives; determining successes and misses can lay the groundwork for campaign success in the future.

Solution-Centric Mentality

Personalized emails, for example, can generate up to 6 times higher revenue per email than non-personalized emails (source).



Let's take a closer look at how the pieces involved in moving the needle with your prospects throughout the sales cycle work to accelerate the entirety of your process.

First off, it's key to offer prospects solutions for their pain points. By offering them solutions, it can easily address specific problem areas they face, and push them further down the funnel. One prime example of this is through integrations. When companies offer help for, lets say, their teams pipeline, it gives confidence in outlining their sales playbook.

It's also important to make sure these integrations align with your platforms. When a CRM's technologies and integrations work together, processes become streamlined and efficiency is heightened. The integration of these technologies enable sales and marketing to work together to find, engage, and track more opportunities for profitable growth.

Having effective integrations is impossible without bad data. To ensure this information powering your sales and marketing is consistent and complete, it's worth investing in a B2B contact data provider.

Make It Easy On Your Buyer

Your leads are busy. It's important to stay proactive in your sales process and prepared to answer your buyers' range of questions even before they reach out to ask. It's helpful to simplify their time spent with you over email and phone. Use these tips to create a pain free experience:

- Your contact wants to book a meeting – make it happen, fast. You hate those back-and-forth emails attempting to schedule a time that works. So be precise. Get on the phone if needed, anything to nail down the meeting quickly and painlessly.

- Send pricing information sooner rather than later to set realistic expectations. In hindsight, they'll appreciate your transparency.

- Make sure the contract signing process is simple. You're more likely to see a quick turnaround from a prospect, along with a faster sales cycle.

Conclusion

The sales cycle is (and will remain) an involved process. And while accelerating it will take some time and practice, there are strategies and tools available today to help streamline your efforts tomorrow.

ZoomInfo Powered by DiscoverOrg's dynamic go to market platform helps you identify, access, and connect with the right leads at the appropriate time. With access to the world's most comprehensive B2B database, sales and marketing teams are in a position to effectively meet their goals, track their progress, and prioritize premium accounts.

> The level of detail we get from ZoomInfo's data gives us a better understanding of a client's organizational structure — which helps us create successful sales strategies geared toward them.
>
> **Pierre Bouchard**
> Director of Sales, Linkage

> Bad data was handcuffing the sales, marketing, channel, client development, field services, customer experience and sales operations teams, ultimately making a big impact on our productivity, people and revenue.
>
> **Sean Goldie**
> Senior Segment Marketing Manager, Concur