

# Five Ways to Justify Outsourced Teleprospecting—and Cost Isn't One of Them

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By Brian Berlin

**O**utsourced teleprospecting is gaining popularity as enterprise B2B sales leaders and their bosses discover they can't develop and maintain a consistent prospect generation system in-house. Everyone agrees that the complex enterprise sale mandates face-to-face meetings with qualified buyers.

But what if your company is struggling with the idea of outsourcing a part of the sales process that seems so personal to the organization?

This article addresses how companies can successfully build the business case for outsourced teleprospecting without using cost as a justification.

# First, It's About Consistency

There are two persistent myths that prevent organizations from achieving high-level sales activity generated through outsourced teleprospecting.

The first is that prospecting is an activity that the reps can do consistently and effectively when they're not selling. The other is that the inside sales team can fulfill effective teleprospecting campaigns.

It's not that your sales reps CAN'T make cold calls. It's that they can't make enough of them consistently AND get in front of enough customers to make their numbers. Making sales is always the higher priority.

## Inside Sales = Selling, Not Appointment-setting

If you built an inside sales team specifically to cold-canvass the market and set appointments for the outside team, *you're wasting the company's money and burning up management bandwidth*. Junior inside sales people do not have the experience or possess the credibility to open a dialog with a high-level decision maker.

Frankly, there are better, more seasoned and experienced teleprospectors available today due to the rise of the work-at-home professional.

***The only reason to have inside sales today is to make sales, not appointments.***

Once company leaders realize they haven't been able to develop a consistent prospect generation program internally, they will turn to third party solutions. One of the first benefits realized is increased sales productivity, or more selling time.

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## Increased Sales Productivity

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**T**he question, “why aren't our sales representatives more productive?” can be easily turned around: “how can we help our sales representatives BECOME more productive?”

Management's job is to remove the road blocks to productivity.

A critical first meeting between the company's sales force and its prospect is a key milestone in the complex enterprise sales process.

Any key decision maker that is willing to meet with a vendor is investing precious time in his buying cycle. This is very different from a contact that responds to a marketing piece requesting more information.

### *It's Still a Numbers Game*

There are roughly 20 selling days in each month. If a sales professional expends 30% of selling time cold-canvassing, the remaining 14 days must result in productive meetings and follow up activities. We must also estimate individual contributors will spend about 15% of their selling month in internal meetings, traveling and administration. There's very little time left for actual face-to-face selling if six days are spent chasing contacts and three in non-selling situations.

Companies can easily justify off-loading this activity to an outsourced teleprospecting firm to gain back lost productivity and produce more real sales activity.

## Shortened Time-to-Market

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**W**ant to gauge market receptivity to a new product launch or initiative? A teleprospecting campaign to the targeted buyers will help you get traction *faster*.

A lot of the success of a new product or service launch relies on sales' ability to not only introduce the new solution but target the best fit companies in their patch. This consumes precious time when the window of opportunity is small.

Utilizing a third party teleprospecting firm companies can generate interest faster and obtain important meetings based on the new solution. This enables the sales team to hone their pitches and gain critical time-to-market.

Companies that have grown through acquisition have the additional challenge of integrating the newly acquired solutions into the current selling system. If a company goes on an acquisition binge, sales will have a tough time dedicating time to the new solutions.

To achieve critical mass in a host of new product introductions, a teleprospecting campaign can focus on the individual solutions and find new prospects for them. This makes it easy for sales to prioritize on new introductions by calling on the prospects who have indicated a willingness to meet to discuss the solution.

## Faster On-boarding

*“When will the new rep start selling something?”*

Sales organizations constantly grapple with sales rep ramp time. One report indicates it takes seven months to get a new sales person up to productive levels (Trailer & Dickie, “Understanding What Your Sales Manager is Up Against”, Harvard Business Review) due in large part to product-line breadth and complexity.

Outsourced teleprospecting may not make product complexity go away, but continuous teleprospecting campaigns can increase the number of sellable prospects in a new sales representative's territory.

## Better Data

Due to the model and nature of the business, outsourced teleprospecting firms record various kinds of important performance metrics and CRM data raising the overall quality of information available for analyzing the company's sales process. Typical stats may include total number of outbound phone calls, call-to-meeting ratios, total meetings booked versus completed, etc.

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## Performance Management

Once a teleprospecting campaign gains traction, front line sales managers can analyze individual performance on both qualitative and quantitative measures.

If your sales reps are getting more meetings and making more pitches, you should see an increase in near-term opportunities. When there's an equal number of selling opportunities across your organization but a few individuals are lagging behind, you have a better idea where gaps are and how to coach through them to success.

Analyzing meeting-to-close ratios across the entire sales organization will present a clearer picture on selling skills based on the critical ability to move a deal forward.

By removing cold-canvassing from the performance metric set, managers can provide the necessary coaching and support to help their reps achieve product, presentation and pitch competencies.

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