A Multi-Pronged Approach to Outbound Sales
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Sales strategies have remained relatively consistent over the years. Outbound strategies traditionally include sending salespeople out into the field, finding companies in their territory, researching those prospects, building prospect lists, then cold calling, qualifying those leads and moving that opportunity down through the sales funnel.

The Problem

These first three stages take up 75% of the time spent on the sales process as a whole.

But there’s one major problem – it’s extremely time consuming.

That leaves them little time to actually build relationships, a vital part of the sales process. Recently, various companies have developed technology to improve and streamline the sales process to cut down on the time spent prospecting. This has completely changed the sales game.
By leveraging technology, salespeople can focus less on prospecting and more on their outbound sales strategy. Given that technology relieves much of their time, salespeople can now implement a three-pronged approach to smarter and faster selling.

1. Email
2. Social media
3. Warm calling

All three of these prongs can also be supported by relevant software suites and technology, meaning salespeople have an even greater opportunity to excel at their jobs. With this approach, salespeople have various touchpoints with prospects on multiple channels at multiple times. That means more customers for your business and higher revenue.

In this eBook, we will outline best practices for using each component within the three-pronged outbound sales approach to increase productivity, efficiency and drive high-performance sales teams that accelerate sales and grow revenue.
In today’s always-on workplace environment, email is without a doubt the most important sales tool, because it is used universally every single day by nearly every employee. 50 percent of salespeople say that they predominately use email to communicate with a prospect throughout the entire outbound sales process. However, email inherently can be a black hole – it opens itself up to many unknowns.

With the ultimate goal to not only capture interest, but also start a conversation via email, salespeople obviously need to know every little detail about how their email was received by a prospect. But generally, salespeople don’t know if their email was even opened, let alone when or where. There’s hardly any way of telling what type of traction salespeople’s emails are getting – are they being opened multiple times? Is a proposal being forwarded and making its way around an organization? These are insights that can be extremely helpful when following up and can also help determine whether or not you have a hot lead depending on the action your email is getting.

This is where technology comes in. Email trackers can provide unparalleled insights after salespeople hit send — supplying them with the ‘inside scoop’ on the best time to contact prospects.

Know When Your Emails are HOT –or– NOT

77% of salespeople don’t use an email tracker as part of their outbound sales strategy.
With an email tracker, salespeople can see when, where, on what device and how many times their email was opened. This makes the follow-up process much more targeted and efficient, because salespeople have a foundation of background information they can use to figure out the best way to go back to a prospect for a second touch.

If your email was unopened, you can tweak your strategy when following up or reaching out to a similar contact.

A strong opening line will determine whether or not a prospect continues reading the rest of your email. A strong data point often immediately grabs a reader’s attention and encourages him or her to read on. Follow up the data point by explaining why you’re reaching out and why what you’re selling is of value to them. Also, asking personalized questions that tie in to your prospect’s pain points can be a great way to kick off a discussion. Here’s an example:

How would you want to improve your [sales figures, time spent prospecting], if at all? Are [new leads, opportunities, closed deals and revenue] vital to you at this time or more of a nice-to-have? If this is a priority….

At the end, always include a call to action that’s tied to your desired outcome. Hoping to schedule a phone call? Suggest a few times and ask if they’re available. Email isn’t going to be the only channel you use for selling; therefore, it’s unnecessary to include a plethora of information about your product or service in an initial email to a prospect. Also, keep in mind that 65 percent of emails are now opened on mobile devices first.

Since the screen on a mobile device is much smaller than one on a tablet or laptop, keeping your email as concise as possible is more important than ever before. A long introductory email feels too overwhelming, less conversational and will likely end up in the trash. Look at the two examples below. Without even looking at the content, which email would you rather read?
If you're still failing to connect with the appropriate person, find alternative individuals to reach out to that may be able to point you in the right direction. Send an email that better explains who you're trying to reach and the information you need from them. Then, include who else at the company you have reached out to. Ideally, that should be their boss and maybe even their boss's boss. Executives traditionally delegate tasks down to the appropriate person so telling a prospect that you're in contact with their boss may spur a higher response rate during follow ups.

65% of emails are now opened on mobile devices.
Social media is relatively new to the sales scene, and many people are still figuring out the best way to use various platforms, like Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook. Before social media, salespeople had little to no insight about their prospects beyond whatever was listed on their lead spreadsheet – likely just their name, phone number and employer. But it's catching on:

Social media has added an entirely new layer to the sales strategy, allowing salespeople to build a more personal connection without ever speaking on the phone or meeting in person. For salespeople, LinkedIn has proven to be the most widely used channel. Of the salespeople that use social media to research prospects or leads, 63 percent use LinkedIn specifically. With LinkedIn, prospects can put a face to a salesperson’s name to humanize the sales process a bit more. Salespeople can also better understand commonalities with a prospect. For example, do they have multiple connections in common? Do they have the same Alma Matter? Armed with this background information, salespeople can then approach leads and prospects with a personalized introduction.

45% of salespeople are now using social media to research a prospect or lead before making a call.
Here are a few examples of how to use information from LinkedIn in an introductory email,

Example #1:
Subject line: Connected through Dave Johnson, XYZ Company

Hi [First Name],

I see on LinkedIn that we’re both connected to Dave at XYZ company. [Write a sentence about the relevance of your common connection]

Example #2:
Subject line: Go Huskies!

Hi [First Name],

I see on LinkedIn that we both went to the University of Connecticut. Glad to see the Huskies doing so well this football season! [Then, offer interesting link or stat.]

Example #3:
Subject line: Note from a fellow Bostonian

Hi [First Name],

I see on LinkedIn that you’re living in Boston. I used to live in Boston and loved XYZ restaurant. Have you ever been?
This type of introduction opens the door for salespeople to establish not only a professional relationship, but also a personal one. Why is this important? Prospects are more likely to open up about the pain point or problem they’re looking to solve with someone they know on a personal level. Salespeople can then start a conversation with a prospect to better understand what they are looking for in a solution. These conversations can help take an unqualified lead from the top of the sales funnel to a qualified prospect and, eventually, a customer. And the numbers prove this:

64 percent of teams that use social selling hit their quotas

compared to

49 percent that do not use social media in any capacity.

However, salespeople need to be cautious when connecting on LinkedIn. Some people are particular about who they connect with and may be unwilling to accept your request if they think you will spam them. Sometimes, it’s best to start off by saying, “Thanks for connecting with me on LinkedIn. If it’s alright, I would love to reach out to you next week to discuss XYZ.” Then a week later, send them an email or give them a call.
Even if there are no immediate results after connecting on LinkedIn, salespeople can still grab the attention of a prospect or lead by posting regular updates on their page. These updates can range from an article relevant to your industry to company-specific announcements or even product updates. These types of updates ensure that you’re regularly popping up on others’ LinkedIn homepages. This may trigger someone to check out your profile and then when you reach out again, they will be more familiar with you. These updates can include promotions or events that your company is executing or product related upgrades, new releases, or even customer success stories or case studies. Here’s an example:

Another Sales Acceleration Success Story: In the first 3 months – INCREASE of 55% in conversations, 19.8% in appointments to opportunity conversions & 590% in pipeline

The post doesn’t go into a ton of detail but paints a picture of a recent customer success story that may be alluring to any prospects that you’re connected with on LinkedIn. Keep in mind that social media is more casual than the other channels, and while LinkedIn is for professional purposes, it’s still a social environment and salespeople need to treat it as such.
WARM CALLING
Whereas email is useful to generate interest, coordinate meetings and send proposals, phone is still the preferred communication channel for selling, proving it still has value within the sales process. But the way salespeople use the phone is shifting. While cold calling is certainly not dead, it is changing. Thanks to social media, email and marketing automation, salespeople have access to more information about the individuals and organizations they’re targeting. Once a salesperson picks up the phone, they should know whether or not the prospect is a qualified one, and should also have background information on the prospect and their organization. Therefore, salespeople should no longer be making cold calls. Instead, they should be making warm calls. And this is catching on: 78 percent of salespeople say they make warm calls on a daily basis, while only 22 percent of salespeople are still making cold calls.

Prior to connecting with a prospect over the phone, salespeople should have already had one to two touchpoints with a prospect. This includes sending an introductory email and/or connecting with a potential prospect on LinkedIn. Once a salesperson picks up the phone, they have a previous touchpoint to reference.

Here are a few examples:

80% of salespeople still believe that phone is the best channel for closing a deal with a prospect or lead
Warm Calling

Example #1:

Salesperson: “Hi Tim, this is John from ABC Company”
Prospect: “Hi, do I know you?”
Salesperson: “We haven’t had a chance to speak yet but I sent you some information via email on Tuesday and I wanted to make sure you got it.”
Prospect: “Let me look. Oh yes, I see it. Okay, I’ll take a look at it.”
Salesperson: “Great, I’ll give you a call tomorrow to see what you think.”

Example #2:

Salesperson: “Hi Tim, this is John from ABC Company. We connected on LinkedIn the other day and I just emailed you some information today about XYZ. Just wanted to check in and make sure you received it.”
Prospect: “Oh yes, I remember seeing your LinkedIn request. I haven’t had time to look at your email but will do so sometime this morning.”
Salesperson: “Great, I’ll give you a call this afternoon to see what you think.”

With both of these interactions, you’re taking up less of a prospect’s time by not reiterating information you had previously sent in an email. Referencing the touch points you have had prior to connecting via phone will likely make a prospect more open to a conversation, too. Giving them a specific timeline on when you will reach out again also puts a bit of pressure on the prospect to actually look at the information by a given date or time.
But prospects don’t always answer their phones, especially when it’s an unknown number. To increase the answer rate, Intelliverse’s customers’ have found that solutions that use dynamic local presence numbers increase the answer rate by 58%. These numbers establish familiarity to far-reaching communications by automatically displaying a local caller ID number to prospects versus a toll-free number or unrecognized area code.

Intelliverse’s customers’ have found a 58% increase in answer rates by using a dynamic local presence number.

Local presence numbers can lead to higher connect rates, which means more conversations, opportunities and outcomes for salespeople. Prospects are also more likely to call back a local number. Best of all, when a prospect calls the number back, it will go straight to the salesperson that made the outbound call and calls are routed to the phone of their choice.
Voicemail

Unfortunately, even when salespeople have the right information and tools by their side, they’re more than likely going to talk to a prospect’s voicemail the first few times they call.

In 2007 it took an average of 3.68 cold call attempts to reach prospect.
Today it takes 8 attempts.

But even if salespeople don’t connect via phone, voicemail can still be a powerful tool to educate prospects. Pre-recorded voicemail features let salespeople personalize the introduction of a voicemail and then insert a standardized message, often with proven effectiveness, which includes relevant information about their product or service.

These pre-recorded voicemails allow salespeople to quickly leave a message and move on to the next conversation while still ensuring that the voicemail a salesperson leaves at 9 a.m. sounds just as energetic and informative as one they leave at the end of the day. Sales leaders can also be sure that each voicemail is consistent with standardized messaging set forth by their organization to increase the callback rate.
Conclusion

Using each component of this multi-pronged approach to outbound sales, sales teams can improve results and connect with more prospects to close more deals. However, each component is only successful when used in tandem with the others. For example, using email alone will not move the needle for sales teams, but in combination with social media and warm calling, sales leaders will see a dramatic uplift in their teams’ results.

Sales Technology enables you to:

- Sell Smarter & Faster
- Reach the Qualified Prospect More Effectively
- Accelerate Sales and Drive Results
ABOUT INTELLIVERSE®
Intelliverse is a global leader in sales accelerated enterprise software and managed services. The Company's patent-pending Sales Acceleration software integrates with the world's leading CRM platforms, such as Salesforce and Microsoft Dynamics, to empower outside and inside sales teams to sell smarter & faster – ultimately driving breakthrough sales results and revenue growth.

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