

10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW TO SUCCEED WITH INSIDE SALES

Terrifying gatekeepers, prospects that ignore your calls and a pitch that's getting you nowhere? Here are 10 things you should be doing to make inside sales a breeze.

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Inside sales can be the making of you in the sales profession...If you're good at it that is. Succeeding with inside sales is no mean feat. When you think about how many inbound sales calls your prospects must be getting each day, the chance of yours making it through to the decision maker can be slim. Couple that with a ferocious gatekeeper and a busy prospect, your chance of success becomes even slimmer.

What do we mean by inside sales? Pretty much anyone selling products or services over the phone or online, as opposed to travelling to meet with prospects and customers face-to-face.

Here are 10 things you should know to succeed with inside sales.

Chapter 1

Before your call

MARK ROBERGE

"It's no longer about interrupting, pitching and closing. It is about listening, diagnosing and prescribing."

1. Prospect strategically

Meaningful time spent talking to your prospects will win out every time over volume of calls made. If you're making 100 dials a day, chances are you're falling at the first hurdle and not discussing anything valuable with your prospect in this brief time.

As an inside sales professional, be prepared to put in some legwork and become more strategic in your approach. Cold calls used to work, but they don't in today's business world. A warmer call, whether this is a recommendation from an existing customer, a nurtured marketing lead or even a friendly bit of banter on social media, will always be king.

Spend some time to find out a bit more about your prospect rather than their name and position. Not only will your prospect be more likely to spend a bit more time on the phone with you, but they'll likely remember the call, particularly if you've made them smile.

Give this a try:

LinkedIn is your best friend as an inside sales rep and a time when stalking someone's social media profiles is perfectly acceptable. Many users of LinkedIn often include their interests, schools and universities they've attended and even the causes they care about.

The advanced search feature in LinkedIn can be a veritable goldmine in turning up contacts that might make for a bit of a warmer call. If you share an interest, open your next call or email with this. It'll pique their attention and make them more likely to engage in conversation with you.

2. Perfect your pitch

Great, you've made it past the gatekeeper and been put through to your contact. You now have approximately 30 seconds to capture their attention. Today's buyers are busy; they don't have time for your call.

So for your contact to actually listen to you, what you have to offer in your introductory spiel has to supersede everything else they're doing at that precise moment in time.

Don't try and cram everything into those 30 seconds, instead pique their interest and ask for a secondary meeting to discuss in more detail, as you can appreciate they are busy.

After the banal introductions, use the rest of your time to talk about THEM and how your product or service can help THEM. Leading questions like "How do you guys do X?" are a great opener for conversation. If you've hit the nail on the head, you'll get your prospect talking a bit more.

The best kind of pitch is to not have one at all. By all means, have a general idea of what you want to say and know your product like the back of your hand, but each and every sales call should be hand crafted with love and care, tailored to your prospect and shouldn't sound like a sales pitch at all.

We can all hear a sales pitch coming a mile off. As soon as I hear the starts of a scripted pitch, I switch off, usually hit mute and let them rabbit on for 20 minutes. Have I ever really listened enough to engage with people like this? Big fat no! It's just downright annoying and uninteresting.

Top tips:

- Ask a question then shut up: the worst thing you can do is ask your prospect a question then answer it for them.
- End with an ask: don't hang up the phone without asking for a secondary meeting or if you can give them a ring back next week when they're less busy to continue your conversation.
- Short and sweet: your first call should be kept succinct, from your perspective anyway. If your prospect is a talker, great! Sharing a common subject is always a great way to start building rapport and you can pick up on this next time you talk.

3. Perseverance is key

You'll be hard pressed to find a prospect that is in the market for whatever it is you're offering at the precise time you call. If you do strike gold, it makes your job a whole lot easier and you'll be digitally shaking hands in no time.

However, inside sales often doesn't come that easy and your job will come down to a lot of perseverance. The lack of physical face-to-face meetings can make getting a deal across the line a job in itself.

“Call me back next month”, “We’ll be reviewing XYZ next quarter” or even “We don’t have the budget this month” are all common hurdles that you’ll come across. In inside sales, you need to be able to overcome these hurdles and stick with your customers.

But if you’re really getting nowhere, don’t be afraid to ask your prospect if they’re still really interested or if you can close their file to focus your time elsewhere. Having the confidence to ask this question could spur your customer on take action, rather than continually putting your offering on the backburner.

What can you do?

- Stay front of mind: share information that they might find useful, give them in inside track on new products coming soon and be the first person they think of when they’re coming to place their order.
- Don’t pester them: incessantly calling your prospect will only put them off so why not consider an email or even some old school post? Sending a brochure or something else useful is a gentler nudge rather than a phone call.

Chapter 2

During your call

GUY KAWASAKI

“Enchantment is the purest form of sales. Enchantment is all about changing people’s hearts, minds and actions because you provide them a vision or a way to do things better.”

4. Ask questions

During any inside sales call, asking questions is your best friend. Getting your prospect talking will lead to ultimately a more productive sales call. If they're willing, let them share their challenges, the opportunities they're facing or even what their biggest competitors are up to.

But if they're more of a closed book, asking open questions can help tease out some valuable information from your prospect.

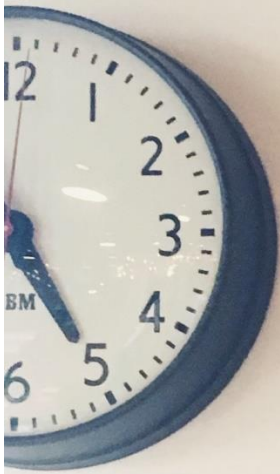
Questions that allow your prospect to say exactly what they want are the best kind, where closed questions that elicit a 'Yes' or 'No' answer won't get your customer talking or improve your rapport. Giving them the opportunity to talk about their business, something they're passionate about, will do wonders for your professional relationship.

"Do you use XYZ?" or "Have you heard about ABC?" vs "Could you tell me a bit more about your business?" or "How do you do XYZ at Davies Inc?" lend themselves to two very different types of answer from your prospect. You'll either get a straightforward and useless 'Yes' or 'No' answer or a more favorable start to your conversation.

If appropriate, use their industry jargon and buzzwords to help demonstrate your knowledge and that you really know what you're talking about. Just be wary that your prospect might not know all the industry keywords as well as you, so to save confusion only do so once you're sure that your prospect knows what's what.

**ASK MORE
QUESTIONS**

GET MORE ANSWERS
Anthony Quinn



5. Make your sales presentation flawless

Conducting sales presentations of any kind can be a daunting task. Even more so when you're conducting these presentations remotely, sat in a room on your own talking at a laptop screen.

Not only does your presentation have to be top notch if you're screen sharing, but also the way to come across on the phone has to be spot on. With no body language or facial expressions to go on, it can be very hard to interact and engage with your prospect at the end of the phone.

Keeping your prospect excited and engaged with you throughout a remote demo or sales presentation demands a flawless presentation and consistent two-way communication. Keep your voice cheery, ask questions and don't fall into the habit of just talking at your prospect. "Anything you need me to repeat there?", "Was that all okay for you?" or something as simple as "Do you have any questions?" can be enough to get your prospect thinking and keep them with you throughout your presentation.

If you're really stuck with designing a show-stopping presentation, we've created 8 slide templates to help improve yours. And they're free. We're nice like that!

6. Handle objections with ease

In inside sales, you're more than likely to hit some kind of pit stop in the form of an objection. They'll likely grumble and grizzle about something as simple as the price or perhaps something more in-depth. Whatever the case, you need to be fully primed and able to handle these objections like a true pro.

Objections are often as tough to make as they are to hear, so don't patronize your customer before you've even start trying to overcome them. Instead, sympathize with them, soften the objection and ask questions that can help you get to the root of them.

Whether it is budget, authority or their need for your product, you need to be well poised to handle their objections with ease. Take the time to understand their issues, involve third parties if necessary and reassure your customer of the value your product can bring to the table.

Top tips:

- Hear them out: don't quash or scoff at your prospect's objections, but let them say their piece. It's your job to overcome their objections and bring them around to your way of thinking, so let them explain exactly why they aren't shaking your hand today. Armed with this information, you can craft a plan of attack to overcome their concerns.
- Use examples: demonstrate exactly how your existing customers are using your product to their advantage. If feasible, introduce your prospect to a customer and let them talk. Speaking to a current customer that previously had similar objections can really help to set your prospect's mind at ease.

Chapter 3

The day to day

ALEC BALDWIN, GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS

“A-B-C. A-Always, B-Be, C-Closing. Always be closing, always be closing.”

7. Capitalize on inbound leads

Your marketing team (if you have one!) are doing a stellar job driving people to your website, educating them on what you have to offer and piquing their interest just enough to submit a form, pick up the phone or download a piece of content.

An inbound lead is a buying signal in itself. Your prospect, if qualified, has taken the time out of their day to take an interest in something your company is doing. Lending itself to a warmer initial call or email, inbound leads are a dream come true for the inside sales rep so follow up on them in a timely manner! It makes us marketers sad when all our hard work goes to waste.

Even if they turn out not to be quite right for what it is you offer, you never know, they might point you in the right direction of a buddy of theirs that is.

For handful of shocking sales stats check out this SlideShare: [21 captivating sales stats](#).

"Statistics show that if you follow up on web leads within 5 minutes, you're a staggering 9 times more likely to convert them."

8. Ask for references

Asking for references can be a tricky business. After all you're asking your already paying customers for a favor. But you're doing yourself an injustice if you're not asking the advocates and current users of your product or service for a reference.

It can be as succinct as a one liner or as much as a full blown video case study, but customer references are worth their weight in gold. Impartial feedback from your current customers can be all the encouragement your prospects might need to get the green light from them, particularly if they are able to empathize with the challenges or struggles that faced your customer.

A whopping 91% of customers say they'd happily give referrals, yet only 11% of salespeople have the balls to ask for one (Dale Carnegie). What's the worst that could happen? As long as your customer is suitably happy with your product, they can only say 'no' or 'not right now', which is fair enough.

NANCY NARDIN

"If your prospects are active users of LinkedIn, then you'd better make sure that you use LinkedIn to some degree."

9. Become a social media mogul

Nancy's are words to live by as an inside sales rep. As you don't get the facetime with your customers or prospects like your field sales counterparts, social media and selling tools should be an integral part of your sales weaponry.

The likes of LinkedIn and Twitter can help you identify the right prospect, understand more about their challenges and what their role entails, all without making a single phone call.

With over 450 million users on LinkedIn as of August 2016 and two new accounts being created every second (WHOA!), this should be one of your first ports of call as an inside sales rep.

Search for relevant companies that fit your target audience using the advanced search filter, send personalized InMails and stay up to date on the movers and shakers in your industry by joining some groups. But make sure your profile is always kept in ship shape condition because the more effort you put in, the greater results you'll see.

Your prospects can see when you've been lurking on their profile on LinkedIn so if they return you the courtesy of stalking yours, make sure they're learning a little about what you're offering.



10. After sales service

Your job as an inside sales rep doesn't end once a contract has been signed, yet continues throughout your customer's journey with your company. While other teams may get involved, your customers deserve the courtesy of your involvement and perhaps even the odd call to check in every now and then.

This doesn't mean hounding them to make sure they're happy, but could simply be a polite email to see how they're getting on. Even sharing company news, product updates or offering a free sample of your latest line will ensure

your company is front of mind and you'll be the ones they come to when they're looking to re-order. Even better, they might even recommend you to their friends.

- Start a company blog: a blog is not only a fantastic tool to drive visitors to your website, but is a method of adding value to your existing customers in itself. Sharing news about your latest product update, proffering your opinions on a burning industry topic or even posting the snaps from your latest team outing will inject some personality into your brand and make your company more personable.
- Be helpful: if you find an article, news story or even want to share some top tips and best practice from some of your other customers, don't be afraid to get in touch and have a chat. Not every call has to be a sales call and sometimes the ones they'll remember are the ones that aren't demanding a call back or order form. Again, you'll remain front of mind and their first stop when recommending to their friends.