

Telemarketing is Dead, the Future is Nurturing Your Prospects

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Years of people being bombarded with cold calls from telemarketing teams expecting them to immediately tune in to their technology and fall into an existing project based on a scripted call is highly unlikely under the best of circumstances. In a market where cash is king, projects are being delayed and the decision making process is being pushed to the top of the company.

Enterprises, however, will continue to invest in technology. Even if there is a 10% reduction in IT spending during 2009, small and medium sized businesses will still spend \$6.8 billion on servers in Europe alone!

If companies still have a requirement to invest in technology, deliver increased efficiencies and improve the productivity of their people, but won't respond to traditional low level marketing, how do you converse with prospects to deliver results and get your slice of their budget?

The Marketing team in most technology companies have a wealth of information on existing customers and relevant prospects. It is rare for the intelligence that has been so patiently and expensively gathered over a long period of time and through multiple sources, including website hits, conferences, seminars, trade shows and webinars, to be utilised in a timely fashion. Taking the right action quickly is the key to turning that intelligence into revenue!

With any direct marketing campaign there will be between a 1% and 30% response rate depending upon the nature of the activity, the numbers being targeted and the relevance of the proposition to the recipient. The sales team will take responsibility for the top 5-10% of opportunities created and want to work them directly. The 90-95% of respondents remaining tend to be entered into the CRM system or database for future marketing activities, or you may say, "Let's hope we get lucky next time".

In reality it is typical that 50% of respondents can be qualified out as not being a good fit for you to do business with in the following 12 months. However this leaves 40-45% of respondents that should be qualified in and need to be categorised into when and how they may be converted into customers. The categorisation is likely to be based on similar criteria to that which has been used to qualify companies

out, timescales: budget, need and access to a decision maker.

The qualification and categorisation of the second tier of prospects from any marketing campaign will allow you to determine the optimum way to manage each prospect company towards the ultimate goal of closing business with them and in many cases bring the timescales forward and increase the budget they have available to spend. The only way a sale can be achieved is by building a relationship with the prospect that they see as benefitting them. A relationship that can only be built over time through a prospect nurturing program.

Graham Curme, CEO of Optima (<http://www.optimaconsult.com>), experts in technology sales comments: 'What may have worked 10 years ago is no longer applicable now. People can spot a scripted cold call a mile off and their immediate reaction is to switch off and put the phone down at the earliest possible stage. Our experience demonstrates that effective nurturing of prospects will increase the return from marketing campaigns by a minimum of 10 times within a 6 month period.'

The past 10 years has seen marketing teams in technology companies "doing the right thing" in running telemarketing projects. By switching their focus away from traditional telemarketing techniques and turning their focus to effective prospect nurturing the marketing team will be "doing things right".

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