
Topic: Telemarketing

Ask the Expert

In the last issue of *iCAD* we invited you to email us with any questions relating to one of the featured articles – the subject of **B2B Telemarketing**.

iCAD is produced by Business Advantage, a B2B research, business development and marketing consulting practice operating in the global IT, Digital and Telecommunications sectors.

Question “I concur with your article regarding the benefits of outsourcing the telemarketing function, but my concern is around quality. Our products are complex, and are more of a business solution than a drawing or visualisation tool and as such are sold at a high level within our clients on a global basis. Our salespeople undergo extensive training prior to being given direct customer/prospect contact, and are closely monitored especially in the early days. How can I ensure consistent levels of knowledge and quality of delivery – particularly as many of the contacts will not be native English? I am also well aware that telemarketing organisations frequently use temporary staff and thus run the very high risk of the knowledge not being correctly transferred.”

Answer This question goes right to the heart of the scepticism that often exists in the minds of sales and marketing directors as to whether using an external telemarketing company for their business prospecting is the right thing to do. The answer is it might not be. In your shoes I would be cautious too; I would want to have a high level of confidence in the telemarketing company. Confidence that they really can engage at a senior level with your prospects; that they know how to ask the right questions and more importantly, listen carefully to the answers; that they can clearly articulate your business proposition and that the brief but important telephone moment for your prospect will be a positive one and will nurture the relationship that may already exist with your brand.

You see, it's not just about plucking the low hanging fruit and filling your immediate lead generation pipeline. It's also, and more significantly, about fostering stronger links between your brand and those prospects who will become customers, then advocates and on to become lifelong business partners and associates. It's taking the long view of that relationship and ensuring that the telemarketing, whether in-house or external, only enhances that relationship and never, ever, harms it.



Can a telemarketing company do all that? Yes, some can, and they can do it in any language you require, but be prepared to work very closely with them so that they indeed become an extension of your own sales and marketing function. 'Role-play' with each telemarketer so that you know that they have got it and you are happy for them to talk to your valuable pre-customers.

On the subject of temps, I doubt that you will find a telemarketing company anywhere that does not have some temporary staff. It's simply the nature of the business that requirements dictate their use. However, there should also be a strong core of stable, experienced permanent staff that have a track record of high level B2B experience.



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A final comment on what has turned out to be a rather long answer. Don't 'over-expect' with your telemarketing company. They will never know or should never know as much as your own field sales people know about the complexities and technical details of your solutions. But that's not their job; they don't need to know as much. They must know enough to be able to converse with confidence, but there is actually a danger in them knowing too much as they will be tempted to go too far before turning the prospect over to you and your team. Their job is to profile the possibility; qualify the opportunity and facilitate further engagement.

Question “We are looking to outsource our telemarketing — I am unsure what to look for in a provider and how I should negotiate payment structure, can you help?”



Answer For the first part of your question I would refer you to the previous answer, which covered much of what you would look for in a B2B telemarketing company and which could be summarised thus:

- B2B specialists — the skill set required for B2B is quite different than for telemarketing in the consumer sector.
- Track record of delivering campaigns to satisfied clients in the same field that you are in.
- Experienced at interviewing senior management contacts.
- Telemarketers are confident in discussing high level business issues with your prospects — you can establish this by role-playing with each telemarketer.
- Core of long standing telemarketers — they are there because it's a good company to do business with.

In terms of payment structures, telemarketing is a marketing investment like any other — advertising, events, PR, website, sponsorship, direct mail, sales force etc. — although measuring your return on that investment can often be easier to do with telemarketing than it can with some other marketing activities. So you should expect a similar payment structure as with your other marketing activities. Most telemarketing companies are willing to work on a leads generated results based model but not usually until a pilot has proven the value of a potential lead generation project



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Question “Can you recommend a telemarketing company to promote a seminar series we are running in May 07? We are looking to move pretty quickly.”

Answer Thanks for your email and your question about recommending a telemarketing company to promote your seminars.

There are approximately 500 telemarketing companies in the UK; out of these it is thought about 25% work in the B2B field. However, working with a generalist B2B telemarketing company may not yield the best results; they simply may not be able to have the specialist knowledge and experience to cope with the business and technology issues that relate to your business; what you really need is an organisation that has some experience in your field — CAE and virtual prototyping. I know that this is going to sound very self-serving, however, it happens to be the case that I actually know of only one organisation that has that kind of experience: Ours! The Business Advantage Group.

For the past 15 years we have been providing telemarketing services to the technical computing sector — covering CAD/CAM/CAE/PDM/PLM etc., where Business Advantage has carried out more than 300,000 interviews; completed more than 250 projects and has more than 150 man-years of experience.



We have specific experience of doing telemarketing in the CFD and FEA sectors; this means that our telemarketers are quite familiar with the fairly high level issues involved in the use of these analysis tools. I don't want to overstate this; we are not technical experts ourselves but we understand the terminology, the business drivers that the technology helps to address and we are confident in speaking at a senior level about all of these issues.

Another thing; we have just come through a very busy period in our call centre and it is now a little quieter so we have capacity to roll this out pretty quickly for you.

Since 1992, Business Advantage has been helping many leading CAD/CAM/CAE/EDM/PLM/GIS developers and their channel partners to qualify and generate leads for ongoing pipelines. We have delivered literally hundreds of B2B telemarketing campaigns. We have spoken to thousands of senior decision makers across all business sectors. We thought you might benefit from the experience we have gained and we share our [10 Tips](#) with you in the hope that they will help avoid pitfalls and lead to better practice.

Please [Click HERE](#) to leave a comment or question.



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