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# **Strengthening Inside Sales in Your Company**



– Slideshare Edition –

# Welcome



- Your Presenter:
  - Deb Brown
  - Practice focus:
    - Sales coaching
    - Sales training
  - Clients include:
    - Small businesses
    - Growing companies
    - Fortune 500



# Agenda

- What is the goal of inside sales?
- Common inside sales challenges
- How can you improve inside sales?
  - Rethink lead generation
  - Integrate marketing and inside sales
  - Provide more online content
  - Strengthen lead qualifying
  - Train your team on social selling
- Key takeaways and next steps



# What is the goal of inside sales?

- The goal of inside sales is to:
  - Create, build and qualify solid sales opportunities for the company
- Other goals in support of this include:
  - Building relationships via phone/email
  - Separating the 'wheat from the chaff'
  - Preparing relationships for sales success



# What is the goal of inside sales?

- The way we reach this goal is to:
  - Ensure that outside sales is as efficient and effective as possible across the company
- Activities your team may pursue include:
  - Contacting/qualifying all new leads
  - Generating new leads (where applicable)
  - Closing new or repeat business via phone
  - Maintaining regular customer contact



# Common inside sales challenges

- Common challenges include:
  - Inconsistent assignment of tasks/priorities
  - Poor call scripts
  - No email follow-up
  - Rapid contact cycling (quantity vs. quality)
  - Unclear sales qualifying process
  - Changing goals/objectives
  - No marketing support
  - Poor handoff to outside sales



# Typical inside sales 'process'

- Typical inside sales environment:
  - Marketing sends leads from various sources
  - Leads are not detailed or profiled in any way
  - Some are ready to buy, others are not
  - Inside sales calls the list, looking for buyers
  - Inside sales passes 'buyers' to outside sales
  - Outside sales finds many 'buyers' are false positives (not ready or not qualified)
  - Any lead not ready to buy now gets dropped
  - Process repeats indefinitely



# We can do much better...

- But how?





# 1. Rethink Your Lead Generation Process



# Rethink Your Lead Generation

- How do you generate new leads today?
  - Cold calls dialed out by inside sales
  - Referrals from existing customers
  - Outside sales pursuing target accounts
  - Trade shows and event contacts
  - Inbound phone calls and web inquiries
- This is fragmented and confused
  - No relationship between lead gen sources
  - No consistent qualifying process



# Rethink Your Lead Generation

- Leads go cold \*quickly\*
- Use the web to increase quality leads
  - Online content
  - Website calls-to-action
- Track leads across sources
  - A person who came to a trade show this week may already have attended a seminar
  - Multiple lead sources for the same contact suggests higher interest/lead value



## **2. Integrate Marketing and Inside Sales to Nurture Leads**



# Integrate Marketing & Sales

- Lead nurturing is a critical priority
- What is lead nurturing?
  - Activities and workflows that engage leads
  - Maintains or enhances education/interest
  - Provides multiple touch-points to the lead
  - Creates self-qualifying opportunities
- Better nurturing = better qualifying
- Better qualifying = better closing



# Integrate Marketing & Sales

- Purposes of lead qualifying:
  - Determine who is ready to buy now
  - Determine who is not ready to buy now but could be ready to buy in the future
- Lead nurturing helps you to:
  - Improve lead qualifying
  - Maintain contact with leads that are not ready to buy now but could be ready in the future (prevents dropped leads)



# Integrate Marketing & Sales

- How to integrate marketing and inside sales around lead qualifying/nurturing?
  - Email workflows
  - Questions and surveys
  - Forms (progressive profiling)
  - Marketing automation systems
- The more data you collect about each lead, the more effective your inside sales efforts can become



# Integrate Marketing & Sales

- Example:
  - Use marketing system to send customized invitations to a set of leads
  - Invite encourages leads to download a free guide or white paper
  - To download, lead answers qualifying questions
  - Marketing system scores leads based on answers





# Integrate Marketing & Sales

- Example (cont'd):
  - With this information, inside sales can now:
    - Call the most highly prioritized leads first
    - Call those who did not respond to the offer for a clear reason (to remind them of the offer)
    - Review leads that are 'in the middle' individually and use intelligence to determine how to proceed
  - This allows inside sales to:
    - Work smarter
    - Always have a good reason for the call
    - Give better lead intel to outside sales



# **3. Provide More Online Content and Engagement**



# Provide More Online Content

- Content creates opportunities for...
  - Lead generation
  - Lead nurturing
  - Lead education
  - Lead qualification
- It also enables your inside sales team to interact with better-educated and more effectively qualified prospects



# Provide More Online Content

- Some examples:
  - Launch a webinar series
    - Have inside sales follow up on invites via phone
    - Offer a free eBook to those who register
  - After the webinar
    - Send an email survey to all registrants
    - Have inside sales follow up with all
      - Attendees first
      - Non-attendees second
    - Inside sales can offer a link to the recording of the webinar, and the eBook



# 4. Strengthen the Lead Qualifying Process



# Strengthen Lead Qualifying

- It's time to re-evaluate your process:
  - Who qualifies your leads?
  - How do they do so?
  - What is your definition of a qualified lead?
  - Do inside sales and outside sales agree?
  - When do you allow a lead to become a forecasted sales opportunity?
  - What happens to leads that qualify out of the pipeline?



# Strengthen Lead Qualifying

- Change your lead qualifying workflow
  - From a one-way process to a circular one
  - Leads warm up, then cool down, then warm up again
  - Ensure that leads don't just move from inside sales to outside sales...
  - But that they also move back from outside sales to inside sales for nurturing/reconnect
  - Focus on tightening steps in order to maintain the prospect relationship





# **5. Train Your Team on Social Selling**





# Train on Social Selling

- What is social selling?
  - Using social media and social intelligence to identify and engage sales prospects
  - Examples:
    - Inviting selected LinkedIn connections to view a new white paper, then following up with those who register to download it.
    - Using Twitter and LinkedIn data to inform your team about the background and interests of a given prospect
    - Researching other persons besides the main lead contact within a company



# Train on Social Selling

- Initial strategies for social selling:
  - Add LinkedIn data to your CRM system
  - Promote current customers on social media to create community
  - Ask for online referrals from current accounts
  - Research other contacts at a prospect company using social media and data tools
  - Have inside sales interact with new leads on social media as well as email/phone



**Questions or  
Comments?**



# Key Takeaways & Next Steps



# Key Takeaways

- Inside sales is an extremely valuable resource
- How you train, deploy and support your inside sales team is essential to your success
- Effective inside sales today requires:
  - Relationship focus
  - Integration with marketing
  - Alignment with outside sales
  - Circular (rather than linear) workflow
  - Clear processes for generating, qualifying and nurturing leads at all steps



# Next Steps

- Benchmark your current inside sales efforts
- Talk to your team:
  - Inside sales
  - Outside sales
  - Marketing
- Focus on the process:
  - Lead generation
  - Lead nurturing
  - Lead qualifying
  - Lead conversion
- Constantly seek new improvements



# Webinar Worksheet



## Strengthening Inside Sales in Your Company

When properly planned and implemented, inside sales can serve as one of the most powerful resources for your sales and business development efforts. However, in order to get the most out of inside sales, you should ask yourself these questions:

### 1. What is the role of inside sales in my business today?

Are you primarily using inside sales as a team to place cold calls to new lists; to qualify leads before they are handed to outside sales; to up-sell existing customers who are primarily in the account management (rather than new sale) phase; or to follow up to specific inquiries, campaigns or offers?

### 2. Do you have inside sales doing too little...or too much? How can you focus?

If your answer to the question above is that you're not really sure that inside sales is doing any of those things, you may have a poorly organized and underutilized resource. On the other hand, if your answer is 'all of the above', then you need to re-focus. Use these questions to help accomplish that:

- Do your outside sales people primarily generate their own leads?
- Do your products or solutions always need to be sold in person, or can some sales or opportunities be pursued and closed via the phone?
- What is the nature of the collaborative relationship between inside sales and outside sales at your company? For example, do you pair one inside rep and one or two outside reps together in a single team?
- How do you recruit, hire, train, evaluate and retain your inside sales team members?
- What software applications such as CRM (customer relationship management) and contact management applications do you employ?
- How do you define a 'qualified' lead in your business?
- At what point do you convert a lead into a sales opportunity?
- What is your forecasting process for managing the sales funnel?

(continued on page two)

- Free to participants
- Available on our website under the **Resources** tab
- Includes key points and valuable ideas, questions



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**Thank you!**



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