

A photograph of a business meeting around a wooden table. Several people's hands are visible, pointing at and holding documents filled with financial charts, including bar graphs, line graphs, and pie charts. One document is titled 'Finance Report'. A laptop, a white mouse, a white coffee cup, and a small potted cactus are also on the table. The image has a blue and orange color overlay and a green diagonal graphic on the left.

WHITEPAPER THE POWER OF THE PIPELINE

brittain

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1.0 Introduction

When you run a business it can throw up all sorts of surprises. A reliable gauge of how much business is coming in can make a huge difference when it comes to forecasting your revenue, planning growth and being ready to cushion any knocks or blows that might occur.

A business that doesn't have an insight into these things may end up floundering or worse, ceasing to trade because of not having adequate plans in place should things go wrong. With [four in ten small businesses](#) folding within 5 years of starting to trade, proper planning is essential.

This is where the sales pipeline comes in.

1.1 What is the sales pipeline?

The sales pipeline is a visual representation of where prospects are in your sales process and if put together properly can give strong estimates how much business your sales team expects to close in any given week, month or even a year. The pipeline can be used to estimate how much revenue will be coming into your business and when it is likely to arrive.

A variety of different sales and marketing activities can impact on the size of your company's pipeline and having strong telemarketing campaigns can make all the difference to the strength and success of your sales pipeline.

There are a myriad of different sales pipeline management tools that not only give you a real-time view of your sales pipeline, but they also allow you to filter the pipeline by sales rep, team or territory for fully customised insights into the state of your business. They can also help you to spot and troubleshoot problems in your sales process and nip them in the bud quickly and easily.



1.2 The stages of the sales pipeline



New opportunity - What is this?

A new lead is identified & contact information recorded. This contact information is used to move the lead from one stage to the next.



Contacting

Often the most difficult part of the sales process. Once contact is made the outcome of the call is recorded.



Engaging

An important milestone where you determine whether the prospect is qualified enough to make a purchase & the likely value of this. Something might be offered, such as a free consultation, to keep them engaged to the point of – the lead is qualified, the lead is qualified but isn't ready to buy, or the lead is not qualified and is not interested.



Qualified

The lead is fully qualified, the contact has the need, budget, and authority to make a purchase and is provided with paperwork to close the sale.



Custom stages

Up until this point, the sales processes for most businesses involves the same general goals: contact, engagement, and qualification. Here's where things start to change. Some businesses may have unique sales stages, like scheduling an in-person meeting, arranging a free trial, or sending samples.



Closing

As the sales process ends the deal is finalised for a win or lose outcome.



Won / Lost

The sales process ends in either a win or loss. Each scenario might prompt its own set of automated follow-up actions—like a series of welcome emails, or a six-month follow-up.

2.0 The importance of the sales pipeline

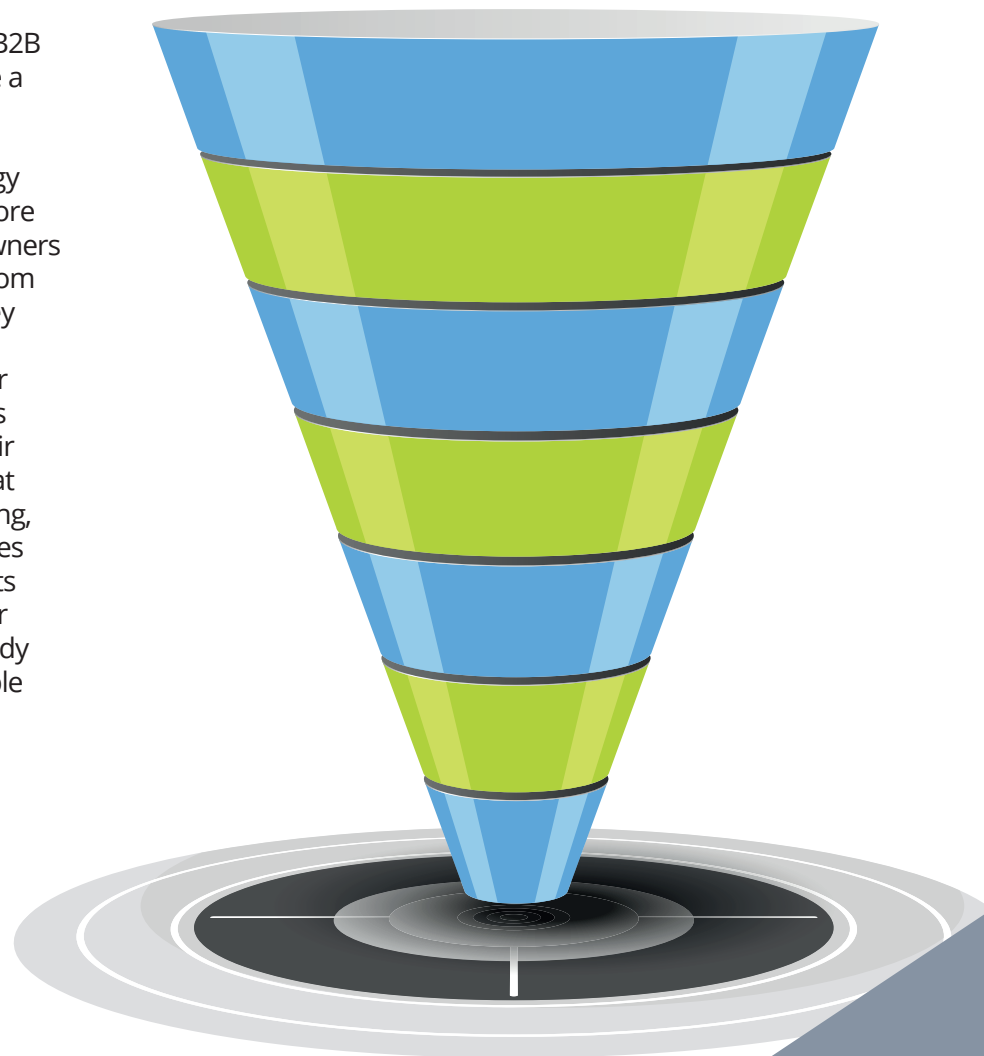
While it is widely agreed that a solid sales pipeline is of the utmost importance for a business to grow, few people understand or see the need to spend time working out the maths on how much activity is needed to acquire the new clients their business needs.

Referrals are often relied upon almost exclusively to grow businesses. While these are indeed important, they can often become more of a prop and are safe ways to generate business. With many industries becoming increasingly competitive it is vital that your sales pipeline is as strong as it can possibly be.

Digital transformation is everywhere, and businesses need to fully embrace this in order to survive. With multiple businesses vying for the same opportunities, the sales process can be extremely challenging without a strong sales pipeline in place.

With consensus from different decision makers often critical within businesses just to close a single sale, the time from initial engagement to a final sale can be a long process. Many B2B opportunities can sometimes take a year or more to mature.

If your business is in the technology space the sales process is even more intense as quite often business owners can be hesitant in moving away from what software and technology they have in case it creates additional problems for their teams and their business. In cases where business owners don't fully understand their requirements and needs, and what opportunities they might be missing, this can be especially true. The sales process and the quality of products and services are important, but for these to truly fly a baseline of steady activity is required to drive a reliable uptake in new business and sales.



75%

of prospects require ongoing relationship nurturing prior to a commitment

80%

Sales leads aren't followed up by in-house telemarketing teams

800%

increase in response using telemarketing that builds decision maker engagement using highly relevant conversations

90%

of Marketing Managers state telemarketing is effective for lead nurture

2.1 A real world sales pipeline example

Let's take the example of saying that your business goal is one new sale per quarter. To close one sale, you may need to meet with 10 possible prospects. In order to meet with those 10 prospects, you may need to set at least 20 appointments. To set those 20 appointments, you may need a minimum of 250 leads. To generate those 250 leads, you may need to get in front of 500 businesses or more that meet your key criteria as a perfect customer.

Being aggressive about your approach is the only way you will tap into your business growth potential. Telemarketing is one way you can get ahead of your competitors and grow your sales pipeline more efficiently, but if you couple them with some of these other activities your sales pipeline will be even stronger:

- Educational seminars or client events
- Networking with industry and business organisations
- An appointment setting firm engaging businesses on your behalf
- Referral relationships with other industry experts
- Online advertising and lead generation

Once you have prospects in your pipeline, you will need to:

- Nurture long-term engagement with them
- Regular phone follow-up with prospects who were not ready to buy through strong telemarketing campaigns
- Execute a sales conversation that sets you apart from your competitors

And then when you close the sale, you should:

- Survey your clients on a regular basis to identify new service opportunities
- Request referrals from your most engaged clients
- Market additional services and offerings to retain and increase revenue from current clients



2.2 Insights and competitors

In order for your business to be successful and for your sales pipeline to work, you need to understand key market insights and your competition.

Competitor analysis is often overlooked by organisations, and yet it can often be the key to a business's success or failure. Your sales pipeline will only be as strong as the information that is fed into it, so taking the time to fully understand your customers and their buying behaviour is paramount to your sales pipeline.

You need to understand your customers, their behaviour, profile them, anticipate their needs, desires and motivations. Although this is a sensitive area for many organisations and often governed by a strict code of practice, it can also be one of the most rewarding.

3.0 Where does telemarketing fit into the sales pipeline?

Telemarketing can play a critical role throughout your sales pipeline and should be strategically integrated into a comprehensive program, helping you to:

- Generate leads
- Qualify leads
- Improve follow-up
- Nurture your leads
- Supplement your sales team

To get the most out of any telemarketing program, the foundation must be solid. Quality data to build your list is key, especially in the post-GDPR era. If done correctly telemarketing can be an excellent method of lead generation, and a chance for you to directly ask your prospects what products or services they are currently using and whether they are interested in those that you offer.

However, there is no one size fits all approach. You'll need to create a custom program that fits your objectives and your market. Measuring your results at all stages of the sales pipeline is the key to success and gives you the information you need to continually assess the ROI of your campaigns and optimise them accordingly.



Here are 10 ways that professional telemarketing can help optimise your sales funnel:

1. Data and Insight

The starting point for every effective campaign is a good quality data. Telemarketing can cleanse and enhance existing data, append job titles, add the names of decision makers and capture email addresses. Clean and accurate data with the right target profile not only ensures you reach the right people more quickly without wasted time and effort, it also enables you to profile and segment the data to help track and progress opportunities, as well as improve sales strategy.

With additional understanding of the customer's situation and requirements, sales are better placed to progress leads received.

2. Versatility

Telemarketing can be applied at every stage of the pipeline to actively fulfil and manage multiple objectives. From cold calls to complex compliance calls, it can add value at every stage for a wide range of objectives, such as:

- Data contact list building, cleansing & profiling
- Market research, satisfaction surveys & insights
- Capturing email opt-ins
- Lead and opportunity creation/conversion
- Appointment setting
- Event Promotion

3. Flexibility and agility

Telemarketing activity can be turned up/down, depending on your requirements, to ensure a continuous, steady flow of leads.

4. Persuasiveness

Telemarketing is a very persuasive. The level of engagement and quality of interaction can take cold data right through to a well-qualified, sales-ready lead in a single call. As conversations happen in real-time, it is possible to quickly build an understanding of the prospects/client's needs to exploit new opportunities immediately.

Through unscripted, intelligent conversations using professional telemarketers you can build knowledge and an understanding of the pain points to tailor appropriate responses and solutions. Open questions, solution selling techniques and two-way communication ensure leads are better qualified when they reach sales and have a greater propensity to convert.

5. Human interaction

It can be argued that high quality human interaction is the best way to gain trust and build the level of rapport and mutual understanding typical of high value, complex

B2B sales. Multiple individuals with differing characteristics, varying requirements and perspectives need to be engaged at each stage of the buying cycle.

The human aspect and real-time nature of conversation allows for tailored messages. Two-way, verbal communication enables you to better convey messages and gain a good understanding from the client's perspective, not only through their words, but also tone of voice and inflection. With multiple conversations with different individuals over a period it is possible to build a picture of the interrelationships within the decision-making unit and the organisation itself.



6. Secondary and long-term benefits

Whilst lead generation or appointment setting might be the primary objective of a call, telemarketing provides the opportunity to secure additional value from secondary outcomes such as:

- Database & contact detail updates
- Contract review dates
- Product/Competitor feedback
- Organisation & market mapping

Using professional, industry-specific B2B telemarketing the focus is always on gaining maximum value from every call, not only for immediate opportunities, but for the nurture of longer-term opportunities that feed the future pipeline for a continuous flow of leads.

7. The sum of the parts...

The gap that so often exists between sales and marketing teams and activities restricts the effectiveness of the sales/marketing process. Telemarketing can convert marketing qualified leads to sales qualified leads whilst integrating with other activities to bridge the gap and help align sales and marketing to make the process more efficient.

The versatility of telemarketing and its ability to add value at all stages of the sales cycle allows in-house teams to focus on closing sales.

Proactive campaign management through an

outsourced solution can also alleviate pressure on the in-house management team.

8. Measurability

Telemarketing is direct, transparent and highly measurable, campaign performance can therefore be understood, refined and optimised to achieve the right goals and a good return on investment (ROI). KPI metrics including, decision maker contact rate, lead stage, and conversion rates, enable you to easily see what is working to make the sales process as efficient as possible.

The level of engagement provided through verbal communication allows for immediate feedback. This level of clarity ensures that time is not wasted on poor quality prospects, and stronger prospects can be prioritised and moved more quickly through the sales funnel.

9. Specialist skills and systems

The skills of experienced and professional telemarketers means they can progress a lead efficiently, whilst capturing valuable insights and information to provide specialist reporting which helps identify and prioritise real opportunities.

Successful campaigns need a consolidated effort with prospects being spoken to multiple times over several weeks to secure high value B2B outcomes. Bespoke systems enable calls to be managed efficiently for the best outcomes without data burnout.

10. Brand Awareness

Whilst this may not be the primary objective, a well-briefed telemarketing campaign can help increase brand awareness. Telemarketing agents briefed on your company and brand values can adapt their style and language accordingly to essentially become an extension of your team. They can communicate your values and convey brand personality during calls.

Also, the level of feedback gained through verbal communication can help identify issues and address customer dissatisfaction to actively avoid the negative impact on customer retention and brand loyalty.

Market insight, competitor and brand intelligence gathered through a sizeable volume of calls can provide valuable input into your overall brand strategy.

Telemarketing is easily integrated with other activities and when your communications are aligned with a consistent message and brand experience for the customer, the overall impact is enhanced.



4.0 Final thoughts

Telemarketing campaigns are crucial to building a strong and robust sales pipeline. Whatever other activities you undertake to bring in as many leads as possible speaking to your potential customers is key to driving your business success. Having a strong sales pipeline will give you a strong advantage over your competitors and enable you to see how well your business is doing first-hand, plan for growth and deliver tangible results.

At Brittain we believe strongly in telemarketing to boost your sales pipeline and advise all our clients to ensure that this is part of their demand generation campaigns. This effective strategy should underpin your sales pipeline as a strong method of building and growing your business, and should not be underestimated.



About Brittain Marketing – B2B Telemarketing Professionals

Brittain support partners with telemarketing through personally tailored engagement that is aimed at prospects and clients which you want to work with – we build and nurture relationships on your behalf using high standards, industry insights and a proven approach, established over 18 years.

We treat clients as individuals to gain a full understanding of their strategic objectives which allows us to develop tactical campaign activities. Plus, we only employ the best business professionals with industry experience.

The Brittain team is made-up of permanently employed, salaried employees (no commission) with the majority being long-serving. We also ensure personal development through annual training programmes and accredited

courses to keep up-to-date with industry trends and the latest techniques for professional engagement.

Our team are an extension of your team that are committed to meeting and exceeding expectations. Our proven approach is achieved using dedicated campaign specialists that understand the sales cycle and business environment. We always aim for high-quality engagement with key decision makers through free-flowing conversations.

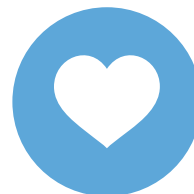
How we work. By using tried and tested processes our marketing activities guarantee valuable outcomes. We start by understanding your specific objectives to then implement tactical campaigns that focus on achieving growth.



MARKETING INSIGHTS



CLIENT ACQUISITION



CLIENT RETENTION



brittain

To find out more about how we can deliver profitable sales growth contact
Brittain Marketing on: 0844 880 4584 or email: info@brittain.co.uk

www.brittain.co.uk