



The Sales Manager's guide to more successful outbound calling

The tools that let you and your team focus on productivity and accountability to boost sales performance



It can be a tough job!

Telesales manager, telemarketing manager, or contact centre operations manager...

Whatever your job title, a complex range of tasks, processes and duties goes with the territory. As a successful telephone sales leader, it's a dead cert you have already developed a tried and tested methodology for organising the workflow, structuring activity and managing your team of agents.

Usually, you only need to make tweaks here and there to optimise your personal approach to the management process. One of the things you might do regularly is review the technologies that your organisation chooses to use. Technology seems to move at an almost alarming rate; in a very short space of time, what was perfect one day, can be old hat the next.

Improvements in technology often mean you need to adjust how you do things a little. Sometimes, however, major shifts create the need for a major overhaul of your organisation's approach.

The best contact centre platforms assemble a range of technologies to support the telesales line of business. These help to solve many of the problems that suck up time, or that impact productivity or call success and conversion rates.

Here we identify some of the key duties and managerial issues faced by the contact centre outbound calling function and map them to the features provided by a good VoIP-based contact centre solution. This allows telesales managers and their agents to do a better job by simplifying and accelerating their tasks and processes.

1. Agent productivity and call success

PROBLEM: Telesales and cold calling is essentially a numbers game – the more calls you make, the more you'll sell. However, the actual process of manually making calls is time consuming. Many have systems in place that automatically dial numbers for agents, eliminating manual dialling processes. However, there are some enhancements beyond call automation that provide agents with the ability to boost the success rate of calls.

SOLUTION: There are a number of technologies that uplift contact success and conversion rates. These promote efficiency and optimise the outbound call workflow.

CRM integration

A good contact centre platform is likely to have the capability to integrate with your existing CRM by using a preview dialler to link customer and prospect data to the outbound calling process. CRM integration provides agents with access to the contact history, to see previous call outcomes and notes so that they can interact with customers and prospects more effectively during calls.

Geo dialling

With geo dialling enabled, an automatic dialler looks at the postcode related to every number being called in the database and presents a caller ID for the local area code. This is known as CLI localisation. Presenting a number that is familiar to your targets considerably increases the likelihood of your calls being answered, rather than being ignored or rejected as they might be when originating from an unknown, withheld or 08 number.

Intelligent scheduling

Organise callbacks efficiently through scheduling to the most appropriate agents at the most appropriate times. This helps to ensure campaigns remain joined up, preserving the objectives and integrity of your sales initiatives. It also allows you to build customer-agent relationships by assigning callbacks to specific agents.



2. Targets, motivation and performance

PROBLEM: Setting agent targets, motivation and performance are critical to the success of the telesales function. Targets need to be realistic, and agents must believe they are achievable; motivation is often a regular requirement and performance needs to be accurately and consistently measured.

SOLUTION: In a word: Data! Data is the key here. It is essential to have access to all the necessary data and it needs to be reliable and accurate. On its own though, data is not enough; you need to understand what it is telling you. This is linked to the general reporting function that we discuss more below.



Setting targets

To set realistic, achievable targets, understanding past sales performance for the team and individuals is critical. This includes the data that was used to set past targets and the success in achieving those targets. A good solution should present you with all the data you need to set targets that work for agents as well as the business.

Measuring achievement against targets

Once targets are established, there is a need to measure performance against targets, for individuals and for your teams as a whole. Performance against targets should be a real time statistic that can be presented as a KPI.

Motivation and encouragement

Motivating telemarketers as they work toward reaching their personal and collective goals are best achieved by continually displaying how well individuals and teams are performing. As a real time KPI stat this can be displayed permanently for all to see. Individuals could also be sent daily email alerts to update them with their performance stats. Continual monitoring and a reminder of achievement against targets fits right in with the concept of 'gamification' and incentivisation.

3. Supervision, training and coaching

PROBLEM: Supervising and monitoring agents and identifying training and coaching needs are closely related. Keeping a handle on everything in a busy environment when outbound campaigns with hundreds or thousands of calls are in progress can be tricky. Productivity is of course critical and monitoring activity helps to identify anyone suffering from substandard performance issues, known informally by some as LAS - 'Lazy Agent Syndrome'.

SOLUTION: Supervisory and monitoring in the contact centre are made much easier when using an up-to-date VoIP solution that supports live call monitoring, agent tracking and call recording. It can also contribute to the process of developing telesales scripts.

Workforce monitoring

Monitoring and reviewing agent calls helps to ensure consistent standards of service quality are maintained. A good approach to monitoring should allow a supervisor to listen in silently to agents when on calls. This feature should also support in-call coaching, unheard by the customer or prospect. Call monitoring can also allow for more detailed training and CPD needs to be assessed.

Agent tracking

Understanding behaviour by looking at the activity data of individual agents is a very useful capability. From system log on times, call activity logs and lunch break summaries, agent tracking lets you compare individual agents to identify trends and behaviours - both welcome and unwelcome.

Call recording

Enables more detailed reviews of calls, so that a deeper analysis can be carried out to support quality control, making positive customer experiences consistent and repeatable.

Telesales scripts

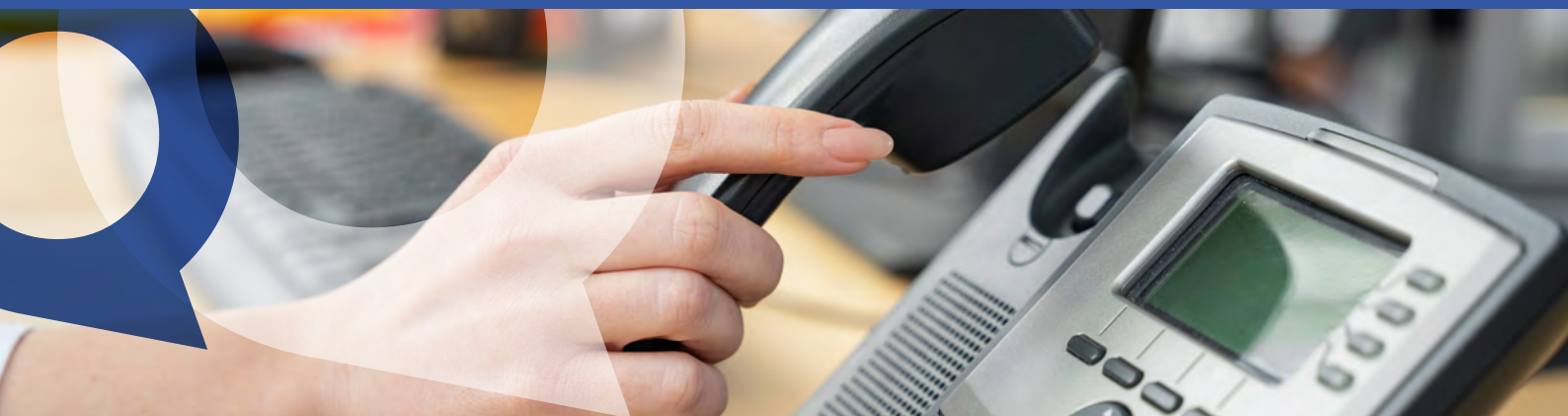
Live monitoring and call recording are also invaluable tools for helping telesales scripts to be developed and fine-tuned.



4. Reporting, compliance and complaints

PROBLEM: Any effort to obtain competitive advantage and drive increased success of outbound call campaigns needs to preserve the integrity of cold calling as a business process by making sure it conforms to regulatory standards and provides good governance.

SOLUTION: A good contact centre outbound call solution should provide comprehensive reporting, with the ability to deliver intelligence on every aspect of the solution. There should be full support for regulatory auditing and it should allow for rigorous quality management processes, including complaint handling.



Reporting

Preparing and presenting sales reports is a critical activity for those heading up outbound sales call operations. Data and report building should enable managers to communicate at different levels - with sales teams as well as management teams. Compiling reports can be a lengthy and laborious process and a good solution should provide wizards and automation to accelerate the reporting process.

Regulatory standards

There are robust regulatory standards and heavy financial penalties in place for breaches, so it is imperative for all outbound sales call activity to comply with applicable policies and codes of practice. TPS and Ofcom are the key regulatory players and a good contact centre outbound calling solution needs to be designed with their rules and guidelines in mind. The best solution may have the capability to clean your data against TPS registered numbers, preventing you from calling opted out numbers in error.

Dispute resolution

Sometimes companies get it wrong. And at other times, they get it right. Understanding which is which, is essential when settling disputes, such as resolving customer complaints and grievances. Call monitoring and recording features are invaluable assets for helping to understand where you have a case to answer and where you do not.

5. Remote working and management

PROBLEM: Regardless of the core business, many of today's companies now have policies to support remote working of staff and management for at least part of the week. However, this would seem to be counter-intuitive to the idea of centralisation that is inherent in the term 'contact centre'.

SOLUTION: A good VoIP-based cloud software solution virtualises your contact centre. This means Telesales Managers and agents can work from literally anywhere in the world, while preserving the customer perspective that they are all in one place.

Seamless connectivity

A good solution uses mobile computing devices with internet connection and appropriate headsets, enabling agents to be located anywhere. This simply extends the idea of a traditional switchboard, or PBX, but instead of being in the office or a branch office connected to the company's telephone system, agents and managers work from any location they wish - home, onsite and even on the move - connected seamlessly over the internet by the virtual contact centre.

Management tools

A good contact centre solution enables access to all its features and capabilities through a web browser. This allows remote access by managers and supervisors, wherever they are. Working remotely connected by the virtual contact centre, the tools for agent monitoring provide exactly the same visibility as they do in a physical contact centre environment. Managers are able to see productivity and performance stats as well as the current status of every agent at a glance, allowing them to manage just as effectively as being in the same place.





Summary

The wide range of managerial and supervisory duties of the leaders of telephone sales operations are complex and successful managers have developed their own approach to organising their teams of agents and structuring their activities.

To complement your own approach and boost outbound call contact and conversion rates make sure that:

- Your agents have all the right tools to enable them to work faster and convert more opportunities
- You have the right tools that enable you to have visibility of campaign performance and agent productivity

About Quvu

Quvu is the VoIP contact centre solution. The Quvu platform extends the capability of standard VoIP telephony services, enabling companies of all sizes to deliver outstanding customer experience, excellent performance and cost reducing efficiencies.

Entirely cloud-based, Quvu enables you to easily expand your team by making simple changes to the online account, saving you time and money. Access from anywhere with an internet connection, so you can monitor agents and oversee your whole operation, across the world if need be.

Quvu's powerful features and contact centre management capabilities allows users to analyse live statistics, queues and agent activity using the hardware they already own. Featuring a Predictive Dialler, Call Recording and IVR, whilst harnessing the power of VoIP technology. Quvu empowers contact centre managers to radically improve the way companies do business.

Stop wondering what switching to a better VoIP contact centre could do for your business and get started with us today!

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