

Warne's Marketing

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Successful Telemarketing

There's nothing simple or automatic to telemarketing success, but managed properly telemarketing can be the essence of scientific marketing.

WE'VE ALL EXPERIENCED IT. You're sitting down to dinner when the phone rings. It's someone or other, from some company you never heard of before, trying to sell you a new roof, or eavestroughing, or new kitchen cupboards.

At the office it's a call from an insurance or commercial real estate agent, tax consultant or stock promoter.

You find it disruptive, annoying and an invasion of your privacy, as do most Canadians – 63% actually, and 69% in Ontario. In fact, 52% are so upset, they want the government to regulate such telemarketing activities.⁽¹⁾

Cold telemarketing calls are as unwanted and unsuccessful as cold "smokestack" sales calls.

Yet many firms get into telemarketing on a "let's try it basis" without support from, or integration with, other marketing activities... or linkage to a customer database. Then, frequently, they give untrained and indifferently supervised telemarketers the marginal sales development or field research chores that the sales department doesn't want to handle... or to make prospecting calls on companies or individuals of whom they know nothing. All because many people deceive themselves that with a little instruction and a bit of practice anyone

can succeed on the phone. There is, however, nothing simple or automatic to telemarketing success. More frequently failures – with mediocre or marginal returns – are the result.

Not For Amateurs

Managed properly, telemarketing can be the essence of scientific marketing. To reach that plateau requires a manager – or an outside service – with experience in database development, script design, telephone facilities management, test call analyses and program enhancements, plus human resource planning. Implied is the commitment of corporate marketing management to fund the facilities, equipment and people needed for success⁽²⁾.

essential. Only by proceeding in a "scientific manner" can you determine the list, script or offer that provides the greatest response. Plus the types of people, or sizes and types of businesses, that provide the best qualification rates, sales ratios and the largest orders.

Outbound Telemarketing

The essence of telesales is the outbound call. A professionally organized and managed program can qualify prospects, open doors for sales reps, or solicit orders – at a fraction of the cost of face-to-face sales calls.

Prior promotional, or personal contact is a key factor in outbound call success. Such as a clothing store calling their male customers to announce

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Your telemarketing manager must understand list segmentation, customer/prospect analysis and back-end list evaluation. Your telemarketers must be trained to obtain vital information on prospects and input that to the database.

Proper scripts or call guides are

a tailored-to-measure suit sale.

Cold calls to purchased lists can be risky business, unless you have access to suitable lists of qualified buyers. When in doubt, send out a mailer before phoning.

Your company's position in the

marketplace also affects results. If you're lining up sales calls for an energy saving lighting audit, you'll get many more "yes" responses representing General Electric than you will if you're calling for "Brite-Rite Importers."

Outbound calls can effectively introduce a new product or service. A frequent technique is to ask the prospect to listen to a short taped message, after which the telemarketer qualifies the potential interest.

One company we worked with sold through non-exclusive distributors. Our client telemarketed those distributors' customer lists to obtain orders for its consumable products, rather than chance losing them to competitors. The distributors were enthralled – repeat sales with no effort on their part.

Research Isn't Telesales

There's nothing new about using the telephone to conduct market research. But don't confuse fact finding with telesales. Take care before you assign a serious study to inside or outside telemarketing people. A professional research approach is a prerequisite to a valid study.

"Cut to the Chase"

Advance planning and question outlines are basic to the telequalification of inquiries. Your goal is to determine where the prospect is in the buying process, and what's your next step to making a sale.

Most sales qualification calls start with the needless question: "Did you receive the literature we sent you?" Forget that. "Cut right to the chase." Ask whether the respondent wishes a quote... or to place an order. This forces the potential prospect to declare his/here degree of interest. If it's too early to quote, then strive to identify the next step in the buying process – a discussion of the problem or need... or if the prospect wants to know of applications similar to his situation. And do ask who else at the company is involved and whether they should also be sent information.

Inbound

Inbound telemarketing is about inquiries – prospects who are coming to you in response to specific advertising or mailings, or because they have a problem with one of your products. These must be handled courteously, expeditiously and to the callers' complete satisfaction – whether it be for more information, technical support, or directions on where-to-buy your product.

Answered by a telemarketer, you can computer capture the callers addresses and qualify their interests for database input.

Experts Are Few

"There are a few good telemarketing management candidates, and services, available. But, it does take some initiative, maturity, time and expertise to find them."⁽²⁾

We Can Help

Our direct telephone experience relates to market research, prospect qualification, telescript development and testing. We've worked closely with client telemarketing personnel plus several of the telemarketing service organizations. We can help set up tests... help recruit the best available manager... recommend the most suitable outside service... or advise whether you should insource or outsource.

If you'd like to talk about your specific interests or needs call Scott Warne.

Sources:

(1) Marketing Magazine/Gallup telephone survey

(2) Richard L. Bencin, Cresheim Management Consultants, Cleveland, OH



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