



HOW TO MAKE THE IN-HOUSE v. OUTSOURCE MARKETING CHOICE

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DMNews International once carried this extraordinary quote: “Where you may want to use a service bureau is in the making of programs. They already have a pool of talent and are a way you can get good results. And you don’t have to *pollute* (italics added) your offices with a telemarketing department.” Pollute!! I can’t recall a stronger verb applied to a legitimate business practice.

The person who said this, a European publisher, has it all wrong of course. The adage about “a place for everything” holds true when considering whether to establish and conduct phone-based marketing in-house or to outsource the function. Here is how to make a wise, defensible, and operationally sound and profitable B to B choice:

These business factors call for an in-house strategy

- Full account management. Even if someone else could “manage” your accounts, you would not want them to. The wisdom would accrue to them not you.
- Combined marketing - sales contact teams. Team members have to wear the same uniform.
- Customers expect in-depth content knowledge and business process skills. The effort, energy, and investment you make in educating your marketers should return value to your customers and to you, not to rented callers.
- Reps must have the business prerogatives and authority to plan and execute the next step in marketing or selling.
- You need multi-call and/or inbound-outbound continuity with the same rep. It is harder to get dedicated reps when they do not work for you.
- Frequent conference calls among marketing, sales, prospects, and customers
- Complex and rapid changes in your marketplace and your product/service offerings

Consider outsourcing when these factors are at play

- General or universal messages and campaigns
- Consistent, easily learned communications over time and among accounts
- List validation
- Leads pre-qualification with limited criteria
- Sudden volume of inbound response or outbound notifications, as for product recalls
- Events promotion and registration
- Order acceptance



If you decide to outsource, make sure that

- The service bureau does not staff-to-forecast; rather, they forecast-to-staff. If the former, their “stable” of callers and the callers’ quality will fluctuate widely. Also, their management will spend more time recruiting and interviewing than attending to your project. Conversely, forecast-to-staff generally yields a more dependable group of permanent callers, meaning a greater likelihood of continuity and success for you and your campaigns and projects.
- They have not more than 30% temporary callers. You need to know who is calling on your behalf at all times and that they are trained and competent to do so.
- Their focus matches your need: stand-alone campaigns or sustained opportunity development.
- Their labor market, education, and turnover rates will support the right types and levels of calls to the kind of people you need to reach. For example, do not accept recent high school grads to contact your C-level prospects.
- They can prove and demonstrate their experience calling prospects and customers whose profiles match those in your market sector. They have audio recordings of real calls and will let you listen to them.
- They apply valid business to business practices and metrics, not business to consumer. There is a HUGE difference.
- Their technology is compatible with yours.
- You can monitor calls from anywhere on the planet.
- Their customers’ customers say good things about the calls they received.

And if you decide to do it in-house

- Establish and run the unit at parity with other elements of the marketing and sales mix, including field sales.
- Make sure the phone team is “woven-in” to your customer acquisition and retention strategy, not separate from it.
- Grant first-class citizenship and participation in all relevant marketing and sales events.
- Conduct phone marketing by account groups or opportunity segments rather than by geography.
- Run phone not as a cost center, but as a profit center!

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Michael A. Brown helps business marketers engage prospects and customers, via consulting and training. Clients include a "who's who" of successful business marketers, from startups to the Fortune 100. Contact Michael in Austin, Texas, **800 373-3966**. www.BtoBEngage.com E-mail is michael@BtoBEngage.com