



Best Practices in Phone-Based Sales

Using a Web-Hosted Predictive Dialer to Enhance Telesales Effectiveness

Introduction

As travel costs continue to skyrocket, expenses associated with conducting face-to-face sales calls are also rising sharply. American Express Global Business Services predicts that the average cost of a domestic business trip will jump approximately 6 percent this year. Additionally, many companies are globalizing their operations, striving to sell their products and services to a broader, and more geographically-disperse customer base. This makes it even harder and more expensive to win new business using traditional, in-person sales techniques.

As a result, more and more businesses are relying on phone-based sales to increase market share, boost revenues, and maximize profitability. But selling over the phone is a challenging endeavor, requiring the perfect blend of staff, skills, methodologies, and tools in order to guarantee success.

In this paper, we will examine the keys to successful phone-based sales, and highlight how Web-hosted predictive dialing systems can help facilitate more efficient and more effective telephone sales operations. Predictive dialers have proven to be so valuable when it comes to telesales and other outbound phone campaigns that the North American market for call center component technologies such as predictive dialing systems has grown at an annual rate of 3.8 percent, reaching over \$3.2 billion last year according to Datamonitor.

We'll also introduce SafeSoft Solutions, a leading provider of today's most robust and feature-rich on-demand call center software solutions, and discuss why their Web-hosted predictive dialer is the best choice for improving phone-based sales operations.

More Calls Equals More Sales

Selling over the phone is, simply put, a game of numbers. The more calls a group of sales agents can make in any given period of time, the more products and services

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- TMCnet

they will sell. In most industries, the average order ratio for telesales hovers around three or four percent. So, it's safe to assume that a company that can make 100 calls a day will close three or four deals, while its competitor that is equipped to make 1,000 calls per day will land 30 or 40 new clients.

A predictive dialer system eliminates the need for agents to waste time on manual dialing activities. Calls are dynamically initiated and transferred to a sales agent only when a live person has answered. Therefore, a higher volume of calls can be made in a shorter period of time. Studies show that organizations that leverage predictive dialing technologies can experience outbound call volume increases of as much as 400 percent.

This, in turn, creates a significant increase in sales. A recent article published by TMCNet, the world's largest communications and technology community, supports this claim, stating that "when a robust predictive dialer is in place, the call center actually has the ability to increase sales by as much as double per hour for each agent."


Keep Sales Reps Focused

Agents who spend countless hours hand dialing number after number, only to receive busy signals, voice mail messages, or no answer are distracted from their primary objective – which is to close deals and generate revenue. According to renowned enterprise training firm Geoff Alexander & Company, the average telesales rep can realistically be expected to spend only 6 hours out of a full eight hour day actually talking on the phone. That's two full hours per agent wasted on administrative activities such as manual dialing. For larger telesales centers with many agents, that wasted time can translate to thousands of hours of lost talk time each year. And, lost talk time equals lost revenues.

With a predictive dialer in place, agents no longer need to perform manual dialing activities. They can devote the bulk of their time and effort to interacting with existing and potential customers, nurturing sales opportunities, promoting products and services, and closing deals.

Know Your Customer

Personalization is a growing trend in today's sales and marketing strategies, and with good reason. Customers who feel like a company knows them, and understands their needs, are more likely to do business with that particular firm. AMR Research confirms this, indicating that use of personalization methods in sales and marketing initiatives can increase conversion rates by an impressive 20 to 30%. Choosing a hosted predictive dialer with integrated customer relationship management (CRM) capabilities, such as a comprehensive lead database, cradle-to-grave lead tracking, and the ability to generate targeted prospect lists based on specific contact demographics, gives companies the tools they need to take a more personalized approach to telesales. The ability to track customer histories in real-time allows reps to see all past activities and review the status and outcome of previous interactions, complete with notes, beforehand. So they can structure their conversations and sales pitches in a more intelligent, personalized fashion based on complete and accurate information.

Telesales efforts require intensive monitoring and measurement in order to reach critical objectives, according to Capehorn Strategies. 

Fine-Tune Coaching and Training

The Bridge Group, a strategic sales consulting firm, cites lack of effective training, coaching, and ongoing mentoring as one of the top reasons that phone-based sales initiatives fail to deliver desired results. In order to ensure that all sales representatives have the skills and knowledge they need to sell effectively over the phone, managers need the ability to see – first hand – how agents conduct themselves in certain phone sales scenarios.

A predictive dialer with integrated call recording and monitoring capabilities can empower call center managers to do just that – evaluate agent performance, assess their effectiveness, and take corrective action to maximize success.

Tackling the Staffing Problem

Contact center managers overwhelmingly select staffing as their number one problem. A study by Purdue University's Center for Customer Driven Quality (CDQ) shows that contact center turnover rates can run as high as 480%, and average around 32% annually. What's more, the cost to recruit and train those same agents is between \$5,000 and \$18,000. And, those figures can rise even higher when you factor in the difference in productivity between an experienced telephone sales professional, and an inexperienced one.

With budget ravaging numbers like that, contact center managers must look for ways to preserve their valuable human resources. The virtual capabilities of today's Web-hosted predictive dialers allow your best agents to work from anywhere the Internet reaches. Now, when an agent needs to be at home, they can stay connected to your business, and their job, through a Web-based VoIP application. What's more, you are free to recruit in areas where your job is highly valued by better qualified applicants.

SafeSoft Solutions: Web-hosted Predictive Dialer for Sales Campaigns

SafeSoft Solutions empowers telesales teams with the robust tools they need to expand market share, generate significant revenues, and facilitate sustained, optimized profitability. Our predictive dialers are Web-hosted, on-demand solutions that offer rapid deployment and ease-of-use with little or no capital investment.

SafeSoft Promise - Low Monthly Fee

SafeSoft is committed to removing the investment barrier to technology adoption. When you implement a SafeSoft predictive dialing solution, you get a complete package - for one affordable monthly fee per seat. That includes domestic long distance and voice services like announcements and call recording. Customers can simply "pay as they go", using the service as long as they like, and stopping at any time, with no cancellation fees or penalties of any kind. We are changing the industry by delivering the promise and power of the Internet in ways that free companies to innovate and adapt.

Fully-integrated CRM

Robust lead handling and tracking functionality has been seamlessly incorporated into our predictive dialing software. Now, leads can be managed from end-to-end – from the time an opportunity is identified, until the deal is closed. With our fully-integrated CRM capabilities, companies can:

- Use call lists to enhance your CRM data base by auto-populating data collection screens
- Increase conversion and close rates through in-depth insight into customer needs and behaviors
- Ensure that all leads are properly nurtured throughout the entire sales cycle
- Churn your customer base looking for up-sell and cross-sell opportunities

Dynamic data import

In order to succeed, phone sales representatives need a constant flow of fresh, accurate contacts. Hosted predictive dialers from SafeSoft Solutions allow for fast import of any Excel-based data. Now sales groups will have easy access to lead sources like; list providers, CRM applications and sales force automation (SFA) systems.

Recording and monitoring capabilities

Integrated call recording allows team leaders and call center managers to capture and review sales rep interactions identifying

skill gaps and needed training. Successful sales calls can be saved and used as "best practices" training examples. Additionally, managers can "live monitor" calls in progress, and join the conversation to help assist struggling agents, or close the deal when needed.

Reporting and analysis

Sales managers can ensure optimum sales effectiveness by tracking vital patterns and trends in agent and campaign performance. SafeSoft Solutions enable real-time reporting of:

- Lead status
- Call results
- Average call lengths
- Calls made
- Talk time
- Agent log in/log out
- And much more!


Ease of use

The SafeSoft interface is a highly intuitive and comfortable environment to work in – so critical sales campaigns don't have to be put on hold while agents learn how to navigate complex software features. In fact, our application is so user-friendly, sales representatives can get up and running in minutes, with little or no training.

Remote access

Many telesales teams employ agents who work from branches, home offices, and other remote locations. Our Web-hosted predictive dialer can be conveniently accessed – anytime, anywhere – from any Internet-enabled PC.

Support for all industries

Technology from SafeSoft Solutions is currently in use in almost every major industry. Our systems enable the efficient and successful execution of all types of outbound customer contact; from telesales, fund raising and market surveys to collections, appointment setting, and political campaigning. Wherever a business reaches out to the customer, SafeSoft can provide a more efficient means to getting the job done. 

Measure, Measure, Measure

According to Capehorn Strategies, a business consulting organization that focuses on helping independent software companies expand market value, telesales efforts require intensive monitoring and measurement in order to reach critical objectives. In other words, the ability to track important key performance indicators (KPIs) may mean the difference between programs that generate substantial revenues, and those that don't.

Therefore, a hosted predictive dialer that does nothing more than automate call initiation will be limited in value. Companies should look for a Web-based, on-demand dialing system that will allow team leaders and sales managers to continuously track a variety of critical metrics.

By tracking these vital statistics, managers can identify potential problems and areas in need of improvement – as the campaign is in progress – and shift strategies and plans as needed to ensure that all phone-based sales goals are reached.

About SafeSoftSolutions

When companies want today's most innovative telemarketing and call center software, they turn to SafeSoft Solutions. We are committed to removing the investment barrier to technology adoption. When you implement a SafeSoft predictive dialing solution, you get a complete package - for one affordable monthly user fee. You simply "pay as you go," using the service as long as you like, and stopping at any time, with no cancellation fee or penalty of any kind. We are changing the industry by delivering the promise and power of the Internet in ways that free companies to innovate and adapt.

Find Out More

To learn more about hosted predictive dialer systems and other on-demand call center software from SafeSoft Solutions – and how they can help you boost customer satisfaction and retention – visit our Web site at www.safesoftsolutions.com.

20950 Warner Center Lane
Building A
Woodland Hills, CA 91367
Local: (818) 436-3600
Toll Free: (888) 456-5454
email: sales@safesoftsolutions.com

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