THE INSIDE SALES MESSAGING TOOLKIT

Boost Your Email Prospecting, Voicemail Prospecting and Social Selling Strategies

How to Read This Toolkit

This toolkit is a departure from our normal guides and eBooks. We've decided to give you *everything* on inside sales messaging at once, including advice for social, email, and voicemail prospecting. Each section of this toolkit is its own eBook, which you can reference below. If you're more interested in social selling than email prospecting strategies, you can flip (or should we say "click") to that page in this table of contents. It's our sincere hope that this toolkit will provide you with the necessary ideas to customize your own sales messaging, attracting and delighting more customers.

Happy prospecting!

Introduction to Inside Sales Messaging

Inside sales is more than just picking up the phone and finding a quality opportunity. In fact, the sales process usually takes much longer, involving multiple touches, different messages, and various gatekeepers. The average salesperson only makes 2 attempts to reach a prospect (Sirius Decisions), but it takes approximately 7-13 touches to generate a B2B qualified sales lead (Direct Marketing Partners). Why is there such a gap? And how can we optimize the process to find a middle ground?

Successful inside sales messaging is the answer. Efficient inside sales reps will act as marketers, anticipating prospects' reactions to the content of their emails, voicemails, and social correspondences.

92% of buyers say they delete emails or voicemail messages from people they do not know (A Sales Guy Consulting). With that statistic in mind, it's important to be creative with your messaging to get prospects' attention. Become a trusted advisor to your prospects, someone who can provide insights and advice on how to make their company's processes seamless.

Especially in B2B, it's easy to write emails, voicemails, and social messages that sound scripted, impersonal and spam-worthy. But *easy* won't get you the qualified leads you need. And your *easy* will actually make the decision-making process for your prospects that much more *difficult.*

This success kit will guide you through the three main components of inside sales messaging - email, voicemail, and social - and break down the ideal elements of each, including examples, structures, and key tips to remember. We'll also compare and contrast the best tools for analytics. When designing your inside sales messages, keep this kit handy, as the tips and tricks we share could revolutionize your sales prospecting efforts.

EMAIL PROSPECTING FOR INSIDE SALES

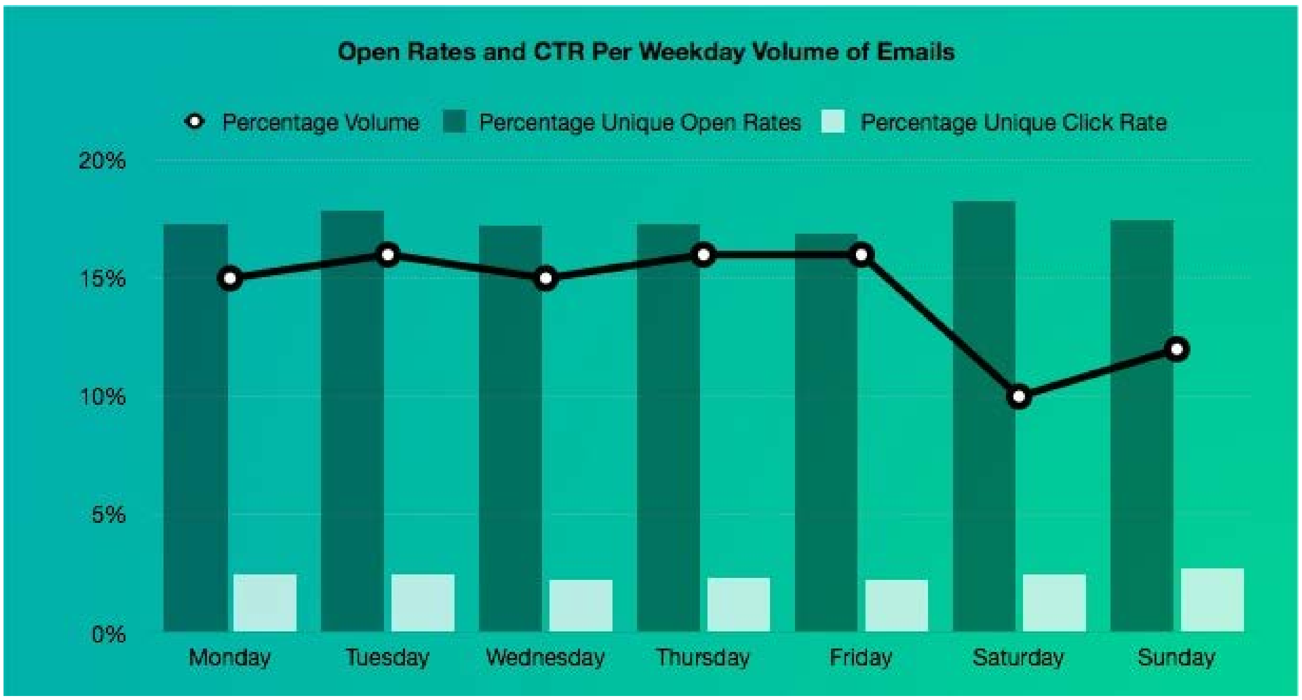
Email plays a vital role in the sales prospecting process, so it's important that your email messaging is on point. Your inside sales teams will receive far more email responses than returned calls. Most decision-makers prefer to reply at their own convenience via email instead of returning a call or engaging in a 5-minute phone conversation that wasn't originally on their schedule. In fact, email marketing has 2x higher ROI than cold calling, networking or tradeshows (MarketingSherpa). How can you optimize your email messaging to receive more responses and offer the best value?

Before we delve into different types of emails, here are a few email tips to remember:

Make it relevant and personalized. Don't send out a canned response. Your CRM should provide you with some key prospect information: the last piece of content downloaded, the last event attended, industry, location, etc. Relevant emails drive 18 times more revenue than broadcast emails (Jupiter Research). Sales is not about throwing a humongous net out into the water and hoping that fish will swim in; it's about targeted *small-net fishing*. By personalizing your email, you can speak in more detail to a targeted group; personalized emails improve click-through rates by 14% and conversion rates by 10%. (Source: Aberdeen Group).

Watch your tone. Maintain a professional tone in your emails. If you spoke with your prospect in the past and established a rapport with them, you can generally be more casual in your correspondence, but otherwise, it's best to err on the polite side. Make sure to review your emails for spelling and grammar. You can always ask your marketing team for help with common grammar errors, such as affect vs. effect and you're vs. your. Avoid asking too many questions in introductory emails as prospects will immediately recognize this sales tactic and will most likely pass over the email; instead, provide statements about your effectiveness and ask when a good time is to speak with them. Remember: You only have one chance to make a good first impression.

Look at your watch. Your prospects are not likely residing in the same timezone as you, unless of course your product is only available in certain locations or you're a regional sales rep or manager. Consider keeping a cheat sheet of the different time zones on your desk and looking at it every time you schedule an email. Remember: The best time to email prospects is when they are most likely to be reviewing their inboxes. MailChimp analyzed more than a billion emails and found that email opens increased after 12 p.m., with the most active period being between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. Tuesday emails have the highest open rate compared to other weekdays at 18% (Experian).



Types of Inside Sales Emails

There are several types of emails to incorporate into your email strategy. Remember, for an effective call plan, emails and voicemails should be combined, as well as a certain number of no-contact calls and 0#. Here's a high-level overview of each email to send when prospecting new contacts:

Referral Request Email - The purpose of this email is to ascertain who oversees the area of business your solution helps. In this email, first confirm the contact's role, then explain your goal and purpose. Then, ask the recipient to refer you to the right decision-maker for your solution. If you have the right contact, ask for the best time to connect or give them your availability and allow them to select the time.

Highlight Solutions Email - The second email you send should feature your solution first and foremost. Mention your previous attempts, and then explain why you think this solution would benefit your prospect's company specifically, underlining the challenges in their environment you have discerned from your research into their industry. Don't forget the call-to-action to call back, reply, or refer you. Because this is a follow-up email, provide some relevant content or an industry update that may interest your prospect. A little content in an email can go a long way.

Call to Connect Email - If your prospect still hasn't answered you, now is the time to ask them to connect with you via a calendar invite. Mention your previous attempts, reiterate your purpose, and dictate your desire to make it easier for them to connect at their convenience. Point them to the calendar invite, and ask them to adjust date or timing to fit their schedule.

Confirmation Email - Depending on if the contact accepted, didn't respond, or declined the invite, there are a few things you can do. If the contact accepted and missed your time to chat, email them asking for a better time to follow up or call back. Within the next three weeks, continue to email them following up on previous attempts to connect regarding your solution. If they didn't respond to your invite, email them asking for a better time to follow up and explaining that you've been trying to reach them. If they declined your invite, confirm why: was it bad timing, or are they not interested?

Structure of a Sales Email

SUBJECT LINE

Your subject line may be the most important piece of your email. 33% of email recipients open email based on subject line alone (Convinceandconvert.com). As aforementioned, many prospects won't even open an email from an unknown source; therefore, it's important to have a strong subject line to pique their interest and establish yourself as someone who wants to help.

Be creative with your subject lines - but also be crafty. Most spam filters will render your entire email obsolete if your subject line includes any of these words or characters:

Free	Offer	Advertising	!!!	Specials	Performance	Bonus
Deal	Finance	Clearance	Sell	Click	Marketing	Pricing

Also, remember these tips from email experts:

- If your subject line is over 3 words, the chances of your email getting opened drop by over 60% (ContactMonkey).

- Emails personalized with the recipient's first name in the subject line have higher open rates (Retention Science).

- For B2B companies, subject lines that contained the words "alert" and "breaking" performed well. On the other hand, B2B customers have become desensitized to words such as "reports," "forecasts," and "intelligence" (Adestra 2013).

Weak

I have been trying to call you to introduce myself over the phone but I have had no success, so I thought I would just send you an email.

Strong

Hi XYZ, I came across your company through www.website.com and noticed that your company may be facing similar challenges to those in XYZ industry; "My Company" and I have been helping companies like yours to overcome these same challenges.

The first example comes off as rude and impolite. It is also very passive, with phrases and words such as "I thought" and "just." Instead, be assertive. The second email states the purpose of the email clearly and efficiently, using a reference to another website to warm up the prospect through social selling and explaining the solution being offering first and foremost.

FORMAT & ORGANIZATION

Your email needs to be easy for your prospects to scan quickly. Since many of your prospects are checking email on smart phones and phablets, it's important to avoid large blocks of text. A couple brief sentences and a list of bullet points is enough, as the human eye is drawn towards lists naturally. Mix up your format; Email 1 may have a list after your signature whereas Email 2 may have bullet points in the body of the message.

Weak

Our Enterprise Content management offering differs from the competition in 3 key ways. First, we have the only complete solution covering all key functionality areas: document management, content management and Rich Media Management, site management and content delivery. A detailed analysis of our functionality vis-à-vis the competition will bear this out.

Strong

(Your Company) has helped many businesses in your industry, and I believe we could potentially provide the same quality services to ABC Company.

More than half our customers are businesses like yours, and after some research, I've come to the understanding that your company:

- *Has a big focus on marketing research and metrics (as evidenced by this blog post)*
- *May be experimenting with a new CMS system to impact leads*
- *Is struggling to supplement inbound leads with outbound sales, as most companies are finding it difficult to keep up with demand for your new technology.*

It would be great to further discuss what we're seeing in your industry and how we could potentially help service ABC Company. Would any time next Wednesday or Thursday between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. EST work with your schedule? If there is a more appropriate person for me to speak with, I'd appreciate you giving me direction.

Respectfully,
Your Name

The first example is an overview of the product or service, and it seems like the writer just threw keywords into the email. It also insults the competition, and then seems to ask the prospect to compare the two with an analysis instead of providing that analysis in the email. Overall, this was a rude email that the prospect would probably recognize as spam right away. The second example, however, speaks directly to the prospect about how their company will benefit from this offering with a tailored focus on that industry's pains and needs. It's also formatted with bullet points and short sentences, making for better reading on mobile.

WORD CHOICE

Use wording that inspires your prospect to want to know more and keeps him/her engaged. The intent of an email is not to educate prospects on every detail about your product or service, but to entice them to call you so you can have that conversation. Omitting weak words/phrases from your emails will generate a higher response rate.

Weak

"I just want to know if there are any questions you may have."

"I was wondering if you had any challenges within your environment."

"Please feel free to give me a call when you have a moment."

Strong

" My aim is to briefly discuss with you and better understand your organization."

"My goal is to discuss how to overcome some challenges you are facing within your environment."

"Please let me know if this day and time works for you as I'd like to schedule a call to further learn about your company's challenges."

CALL-TO-ACTION

End all your emails with a call-to-action. When emailing your prospects, set an expectation that will lead your prospect to act (event registration, webinars, meeting requests). Be direct and propose a few times to speak for 3-5 minutes on the prospect's calendar, or to be referred to the appropriate contact.

Weak

Please let me know when to follow up with you.

Strong

Are you free on Wednesday at either 3 p.m. EST or 4 p.m. EST for a conversation about how we can help your sales team overcome the challenge of finding and acting on qualified leads? If there is a more appropriate contact for me to speak with, please let me know so that I can contact them directly.

The first example puts the onus on the prospect to continue the conversation. That sales rep will probably never hear back from their prospect! The second one provides a specific time *and* a specific timeframe for the upcoming conversation, as well as another call-to-action to provide a different contact. The sales rep who wrote the second email also obviously did their research and knew the challenges that the prospect was facing beforehand.

THE P.S.

The post-script can be a powerful reminder for your prospects. Prospects may not read your full email, but they will read your P.S. if it's short. This can be a way for you to implement another call-to-action or to compliment your prospect on a recent achievement, again personalizing the email to them. Remember, the P.S. goes after your closing remarks.

Strong

P.S. You can call me now if you're free, at 555-253-7391.
P.S. If you're interested in what other people have to say, you can see our customers' reviews here.

Other Key Email Tips

CALENDAR INVITES

Calendar invites through Gmail or Outlook can be used strategically and effectively to get your prospects' attention. Invites are useful for booking time with unresponsive prospects and are particularly effective when a prospect suggests you "check back later." They can be an important part of an email strategy to engage a prospect in a live conversation.

Note: Just because you get an accepted invite does not mean you have a qualified lead. The prospect may not be the appropriate contact, have no challenges that you can solve, or just want to tell you "no" in person. Keep your expectations realistic when you receive an accepted invite and start the call as you would any exploratory conversation.

ATTACHMENTS AND LINKS

Only send attachments or include links when necessary or when specifically requested. Prospects are often hesitant to open an email from an unfamiliar sender if it contains an attachment/link, and your email is also more likely to be caught in a spam filter. Be cautious of sending your prospects too much information; you run the risk of them deciding they have enough to keep on file and don't need to speak with you. Also, they don't want homework, so if you *are* sending them something of value, be sure to point out specifically where to look within the attached file.

THE CAN-SPAM ACT & THE ANTI-SPAM LAW

The CAN-SPAM Act regulates "any electronic mail message the primary purpose of which is the commercial advertisement or promotion of a commercial product or service" in the U.S. The CASL Act regulates all forms of electronic messages such as email, SMS, IM, social media, etc. in Canada. In inside sales, it's important to pay attention when laws like these are established and put into action. Both acts regulate business email interactions and establish tough penalties for violations, including penalties of up to $1 million.

THE CAN-SPAM ACT

1. Use accurate header information. Your "from" address must be accurate and define the person or business who initiated the message.

2. Don't use deceptive subject lines. Luckily, we already covered this one. The subject line must accurately explain the content within.

3. Identify the message as an ad. You must disclose the message as an advertisement. The law gives leeway as to how exactly this is done.

4. Include your location. Your message must include a valid physical postal address, including either a post office box or a commercial mail receiving agency.

5. You must allow recipients a way out, and you must honor these requests. If they want to opt out of receiving emails from you, make it easy for them to communicate that choice to you. You must stop contacting prospects after they opt-out within 10 business days.

READ THE ENTIRE CAN-SPAM ACT AND CANADA'S ANTI-SPAM LAW.

CANADA'S ANTI-SPAM LAW

1. Make sure you have consent. Do you have a record of your recipient giving content for you to contact them? If you have an existing business or non-business relationship from the last two years, you're safe. Otherwise, no cold emailing to prospects in Canada. You have 36 months to continue to use your current email list if you have previously provided your products or services to them and they haven't told you to stop. After that, you'll need express or implied consent.

2. Ensure that no part of the message is false or misleading. If you're sending an email that is commercial or promotional, including sales, offers and solicitations, you must be absolutely clear about its purpose.

3. Identify yourself. You must include your name, business, and your current mailing address. You must also include either a phone number, email address, or web address.

4. Don't send spam. As a salesperson, your main job is to provide value, not spam inboxes. Canadian recipients can submit information to the Spam Reporting Centre if a commercial electronic message is sent without consent or with false or misleading content.

Email Analytics

Inside sales reps *must* have a viable email tracking software to monitor which prospects are opening their emails and clicking on their links, and when they're completing those actions. Two email tracking sites that we recommend are Yesware and Signals.

Yesware can sync with Salesforce, so tasks and contacts can be viewed in both Gmail and your CRM. Over the years, Yesware has also expanded to offer the possibility for email reminders, custom email templates, and analytics and reports on sales team inbox activity including email opens and response rates.

Signals is also an email tracking app, and is a recent competitor of Yesware. If you're a HubSpot user, Signals offers integration with HubSpot, which can be immensely helpful for email marketing and prospecting. It also allows for Apple Mail integration, which YesWare does not. However, if you send an email to more than one participant, HubSpot does not have the capability to identify exactly who is opening it. You'll get the most out of this tool if you send more 1:1 emails.

Both Yesware and Signals compete for sales professionals' time. We recommend trying a week trial of both to see what works for you before spending money on either product.

Yesware EMAIL FOR SALESPEOPLE vs. Signals by HubSpot

VOICEMAIL PROSPECTING FOR INSIDE SALES

As sales prospecting methods evolve, there is still plenty of value in picking up the phone to speak with your prospect or customer, as evidenced by the Outbound Index. According to this report, the number of conversations per passed account increased 15% year-over-year. In other words, SDRs were having more conversations per account (and across contacts) before passing the qualified opportunity.

When a prospect doesn't answer the phone, it's important to be able to leave an effective voicemail message to generate a response through an email or a returned call. The average voicemail response rate is 4.8% (InsideSales), which is unfortunately very small. However, a large amount of sales reps' time is used to leave voicemails. According to RingDNA, a team of 50 sales reps leave 1277 hours of voicemails per month. How can you pique interest from prospects through voicemails and boost that response rate up? Here are some things to remember:

Tone of voice is everything. In inside sales, your voice is your instrument. According to ContactPoint, on the phone, tone is 86% of our communication. The words we actually use are only 14%. Cadence is important; If you think you are talking too slowly, you're probably talking at the right speed. Use your tone to convey emotion - excitement? friendliness? - in your voicemail and concentrate on your inflections, or changes in pitch, to exude confidence. If in doubt, record yourself and listen back for any unwanted words like "um," fast sentences that are easily misunderstood, or any indicators of low energy in your tone.

Don't be redundant and don't be arrogant. Don't waste precious seconds on redundancy, as time is extremely valuable. Also, avoid sentences like, "We are experts in the field of...," or "We're the world leaders in..." You'll come off as conceited and nobody wants to hear that jargon.

Watch your wording. Avoid business phrases like "follow up," "touch base," and "circle back." These are not phrases that will produce results. Instead, be more human. "When we last spoke..." or "When we discussed this a few months ago...," will personalize your conversation, and your prospect will be more willing to re-engage. State something of relevance to them, whether it be a past conversation or engagement, or an industry-related statistic, as they'll appreciate the specificity and be more likely to relate.

Types of Inside Sales Voicemails

There are several types of voicemails to incorporate into your voicemail strategy to lead your prospects down the prospecting funnel. Here's a high-level overview of each.

Introduction Voicemail - Unless you have been specifically directed to your prospects, you will often have to ask them for information about the appropriate person to speak with regarding your product/service or within a particular area of their business. Your introduction voicemail message should make your purpose clear: you want to ascertain who oversees the target department for your solution. In this voicemail, introduce yourself and your company briefly, and make it clear you've been doing some research on the prospect's company and think your solution would benefit them.

Congratulations Voicemail - The second voicemail you send should feature your prospect and not your company. Prospects may hear your name and a number and automatically delete your voicemail because they think you're asking for a sales call. So instead of boring them with the specs of your product or service, feature *them*. Provide some relevant content or an industry update to interest your prospect and establish yourself as an adviser, not a salesperson. Congratulate them on a new round of funding, a new acquisition, or a new position within their company. As always, be conversational, and direct them to your follow-up email. Don't forget to ask them to call back, reply, or refer you.

Follow Up Voicemail - If they still haven't responded, you can now be more direct. Explain that you want to learn about their current process and share some ideas on improving their processes. Mention your previous attempts, and tell them you'll be following up with a calendar invite to connect. This voicemail can be brief, but candid.

Final Voicemail - After three touches, if your prospects haven't responded yet, it's likely they're not interested in talking to you. Either way, leave one more voicemail explaining that you've been trying to get in touch with them, and that you will stop calling in the meantime if they do not respond. A sense of urgency may lead them to act and call you back. Once again, reference your emails, personalize your query with backed research on the prospect's company, and be clear and concise.

Structure of a Sales Voicemail

What should your voicemails consist of? We've already learned that each voicemail should have a specific purpose, but what is the best way to go about constructing your voicemails? Below, we will break down the structure of what your voicemails should contain.

INTRODUCTION

The strongest voicemails begin with a clear introduction, including prospect name (for personalization), your name, company you are calling from, and what you are calling about. You are including your contact information right away so the prospect can write it down and isn't uncertain as to who is calling. If someone referred you to your prospect, it is crucial to mention that in your opening line. Remember, referrals are the best "in" to companies.

Weak

Hi, this is Bill with AG Salesworks.

Strong

Good morning Prospect, my name is Linda Wilson calling from ABC power regarding your telecommunications system.

Hello Prospect, this is Nick Turner with AG Salesworks and I was referred to you by ____.

The first example provides no context for the prospect, and may be enough for him or her to press the "Delete" button. However, the last two clearly state purpose and mention any possible referrals.

PURPOSE

It is important to make the best use of our prospects' time. Therefore, be very direct when delivering our message, keeping the voicemail as brief as possible (ideally 30 seconds). Remember, the purpose of your call is to learn about your prospect and determine if he or she is the right fit. Avoid words such as "trying, wanting, hoping, following up, circling back or touching base." Also, the phrase "I was wondering if you have any initiatives to look at X" is not as strong as stating the purpose of your call and pairing it with an industry trend. Jumping right to the initiatives/projects discussion gives them an easy out to say "No."

Weak

I have been trying to touch base recently to introduce you to our services and determine with you if we may be a fit for your organization.

Strong

The purpose of my call is to understand how you are currently managing your non-traditional programs at your university. After speaking with a number of people in your position, I understand they are continuing to evolve and require a bit more flexibility.

The first voicemail uses business jargon - "touch base" - right away, which alerts prospects that you are just another salesperson, and may make them think you're using a script. It also implies that the salesperson has not done *any* research about the prospects' industry. They will not want to waste time out of their day to explain their complicated solution to someone who could have read up on it in their own time. On the other hand, the second voicemail references other conversations about the company's specific challenges and has highly targeted wording specific to the prospects' industry.

OVERVIEW

This is your 15-second window to provide your prospects with whatever piece of information you feel is valid to their position. Determine what you want to mention here based on where you are in your voicemail call plan. Here are a couple options you can use:

Address an industry pain:

Your strongest voicemails are the ones that do not "product dump." Some offerings require you to share a bit more information, but ideally we shouldn't be saying too much about our own product or service. There are more effective ways to gain your contact's attention. Most prospects receive many sales and prospecting calls every day, so make sure to differentiate yourself by focusing on them, not on you.

Reference existing customers:

Your prospect might not be familiar with your company, so referencing other comparable organizations that use your offering will help build credibility. Also, referencing the benefits this other organization received through your offering will help trigger your prospect to start thinking about how their company could potentially benefit as well.

Focus on their achievements:

Prospects hear sales voicemails all day. Differentiate yours from the pack by focusing less on your product or service, and more on their company. Have they recently been awarded? Did they just receive a new round of funding, or was there recently an acquisition? Has the contact been promoted in the last month? With a few minutes of research, this information will be at your fingertips, and you can include it in your voicemail to personalize your message for your prospect.

CLOSE

When closing your voicemail, you should always end with a call-to-action. If you don't ask your prospect to call you back or respond to the email you will follow up with, chances of getting a response are widely diminished. Include your phone number during the close of your voicemail and follow up with an email which contains all contact information.

Strong

Again, this is Joe Smith with AG Salesworks and my direct line is 555-555-0000. I'll follow up this voicemail with an email. If I don't hear back from you, I will make a note to follow up with you in a few days.

Other Key Voicemail Tips

KEEP IT BRIEF

Again, the goal is to keep sales voicemails as clear and direct as possible in a short window of time. Be careful not to include too much information and/or questions that might confuse the prospect. The optimal voicemail message is between 8 and 14 seconds (The Sales Hunter), and we recommend keeping them under 30 seconds.

LEAVE PROSPECTS WANTING MORE

Most of us know the phrase, “Why buy the cow when you get the milk for free?” One of the many reasons for leaving a voicemail is to get your prospect interested or intrigued about your product or service. If you provide too much information in a voicemail, you eliminate that possibility. Plus, you have already given them enough information to say “No,” “Not interested,” or “We don’t need this.”

Make sure that you create a strong benefit statement and call-to-action to close your voicemails. Spend extra time developing these to increase your response rate.

TIMING

As with emails, voicemails are also time-sensitive. Remember that cheat sheet we mentioned earlier? You might as well tack it to the wall, because you’ll want to reference it when leaving voicemails, too. The best times to call are Wednesdays and Thursdays from 6:45 to 9 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. The worst times to call are Mondays from 6 a.m. to noon and Fridays in the afternoon (MIT Lead Management Study).

Voicemail Analytics

If 80% of calls go to voicemail, and 90% of first time voicemails are never returned (RingLead), how can you leave voicemails that find that 10% sweet spot? Besides making sure to send multiple voicemails in your call plan, you can also analyze your own messaging when sending voicemails to see what works best with prospects in your different industries.

There aren't many options for automated analysis of sales voicemails, mostly because they're difficult to track unless they're somehow connected to your CRM. What we recommend is that you create your own trial of voicemails to figure out what works for you through A/B testing. Create an Excel sheet that includes your chosen title for the Voicemail, your personalization token (a recent eBook download? an article they wrote on LinkedIn? a free trial they might be interested in?), and then calculate response rate. Send 10 voicemails with the same value proposition (but not the same exact script) and see how many of them generated a call back. Eventually, you should be able to see which messaging works best for you.

We also recommend recording yourself when leaving voicemails, if your managers don't already do this. You may notice that you put emphasis on certain words more than others, that you say "um" or "er" too much, or that you're using weak wording such as "I'd like to" and not providing real value. Measure how conversational you sound, how credible you sound, and how customized the message is for your prospects.

TIP: Always combine voicemails with email.
Voicemails work best when you can direct your prospects' attention to an email you sent them containing more information. They may also appreciate a cross-platform approach, if they're more comfortable replying to an email than returning a phone call.

SOCIAL SELLING FOR INSIDE SALES

There are many options for B2B social media use for social selling; in fact, we went into detail in the Social Selling eBook: How to Use Social Media for B2B Sales. If you want to know how to set up a profile for social selling on any social network, go there. Here, we're going to focus on using Twitter and LinkedIn, the two most professional social networks, and how to optimize your sales messaging for higher sales. 96% of sales professionals use LinkedIn at least once a week and spend an average of six hours per week on the professional networking site (The Sales Management Association). Most businesspeople on LinkedIn are looking for ways to do their job better, whereas businesspeople on Twitter are looking for business news. Twitter is more of a consumption platform while Linkedin is an advice generator.

Unfortunately, only 5% of B2B sales teams consider social media a successful lead generation method (Ken Krogue). However, reps who use social selling are 50% more likely to meet or exceed their sales quota. (Liz Gelb-O'Connor). In fact, 72.6% of salespeople using social selling as part of their sales process outperformed their sales peers and exceeded quota 23% more often (Aberdeen). Social selling is an art, and there's a reason many sales performers aren't active on these social sites: they're afraid of sending the wrong message and unsure of how to best use these platforms. Here, we'll provide you with some examples of good social selling messages to get you started on the right foot.

Types of Inside Sales Voicemails

Social media messaging is more about engagement than getting the word out about your product or service right away. For Twitter and LinkedIn, focus on starting conversations and do not try to share your sales pitch right away. Don't forget that your Twitter conversations need to be 140 characters or less, so it may involve some copywriting creativity to deliver your full message in a condensed matter.

Here are some types of social messages when you're engaging with someone one-on-one:

INTRODUCTION MESSAGE

The first message that you send out to a potential prospect should be informative and not openly salesy. When you're getting to know someone on social media, it's good to incorporate social listening as well. Find out if they publish on LinkedIn, or what kinds of tweets they post, to connect with them that way.

LinkedIn

On LinkedIn, just edit your request to connect to include a relevant message, whether it be connecting to other industry professionals or stating encouraging words regarding a piece of content that they or their company recently produced. Do not send someone a Direct Message with a canned inquiry; that typically comes off as spammy and unwelcomed.

Hi Dan,
I saw your most recent LinkedIn post on how to prevent security breaches for businesses. I'm an inside sales rep at XYZ Company, and I shared that post with my colleagues. They were floored; there's so much we could be doing to protect our company! I'd love to connect with you so I can follow more of your insights.

Hoping to hear from you,
Alex

Twitter

A first interaction with a prospect one-on-one does not have to involve messaging them like on LinkedIn. Instead, favorite or RT their recent tweets; you will show up in their notification center as someone who's paying attention to them. However, be sure not to RT all of their tweets as it will look like you're not reading their actual posts and rather mindlessly hitting the RT button.

CALL-TO-ACTION MESSAGE

The next message you send out could be more probing, but not exactly selling your product or service yet. You do want more information from them, so lead them to a form on your website that might interest them. With a good content marketing process, you should have guides, eBooks, or toolkits that are made for your specific buyer personas that you can reference them to.

LINKEDIN	TWITTER
Hi Dan, I was reading through your most recent posts about security breaches, and I realized that we have a report regarding security analytics that might interest you and provide some interesting statistics for your next post. Here is the link. Hope you find that helpful! Alex	Hi Dan! I see that you're a #security expert at @ABCCompany. This security report from my company might help give you a boost! → bit.ly link

THANK YOU MESSAGE

If your prospect does respond to you or interacts with you via a comment on LinkedIn or an RT and mention on Twitter, it's pertinent to be polite and thank him or her. If the conversation is leaning more towards the utilization of your service and product, after three or four times interacting, you can now ask to move the conversation over to the phone if they're ready.

LINKEDIN	TWITTER
Dan, Thanks for sharing our article on the 10 Most Important Things to Remember When Selecting a Security Provider! I really appreciate it. It'd be great if we could schedule a phone conversation. As I mentioned before, I'm an inside sales rep at ABCCompany, and I actually think you'd be a great fit for our service. I'm available tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. if that works for you; I'll send you over a calendar invite and you can change the timing if necessary. Thanks, Alex	This can be sent in a DM: Thanks for sharing our article, Dan! I'd love to speak to you about how our businesses can help each other. You can find me at alex@ABCCompany.com.

A big part of social selling is content curation, or social listening. In order to be a thought leader in a certain subject, you need to show your opinions on hot topics your prospects care about. Here are some types of messages for when you're broadcasting information:

SHARING INTERESTING ARTICLES AND ADDING YOUR OWN OPINIONS OR EXPERIENCES

The goal here is to incite conversation and capture people's attention. Think like a marketer; what would make you click that reply button? Sharing your opinions on industry benchmarks will help establish yourself as a thought leader.

LINKEDIN	TWITTER
Check out this article on sales enablement. It's very well written, but I'm not sure I agree that sales enablement is not measurable. It's still evolving, but it's possible to measure sales enablement by measuring your reps and giving them the autonomy to rate the sales enablement they feel they've received. What do you think?	I disagree with some of the points in this article → "Sales Enablement Myths" via @ABCcompany. #SalesEnablement can be measured if you think creatively.

SHARING COMPANY COLLATERAL

If it's a slow day, and you don't have time to check your favorite websites for content to curate, you should always add some of your company's own content to the social sharing mix. In these types of messages, it's important to always emphasize how you're providing value. Keep these brief.

LINKEDIN	TWITTER
Are you finding that your sales team has difficulty leaving voicemails that receive an effective response rate? ABC Company released this infographic to boost your sales: bit.ly	Does your #sales team spend too much time leaving ineffective voicemails? Check out → [Infographic] Voicemail Sales Prospecting Statistics bit.ly

SHOWING HOW YOU CAN HELP

Be careful with these messages; they should be used sparingly, as they automatically seem salesy. If you want to reach specific people in a target market, you can use lists and hashtags on Twitter to find them. Be sure to hashtag the relevant topic within these tweets, and if it's not mentioned in the tweet feel free to add it to end, noted in below's example.

LINKEDIN	TWITTER
My company and I just published a new benchmark report, if you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me!	Just published: XYZ report; if you have any questions on how your company stacks up or would like more detail feel free to contact me! #sales

As aforementioned, one-to-one messaging on social media is more effective than broadcasting, because people don't really read through or have the opportunity to see everything that shows up in their feed. However, if they feel a message is personalized to them they will be more apt to respond and genuinely interested. When used with broader messaging, this combination of social messaging can make for an effective social selling mix.

Other Key Social Tips

Invest some time in learning about the psychology of your buyers while they're on the social network site of their choosing. Obviously, if you're a B2C company, Facebook might be where you want to concentrate your efforts. However, if you have B2B prospects, they may feel violated if you reach out to them via their personal profile. They would probably be more open to hearing from you on LinkedIn and Twitter.

Know the best time to put out your message. According to Buffer, the best time to tweet is during commute times and lunch breaks; so 1 to 3 p.m. and early morning, 8 to 10 a.m. The best time to post on LinkedIn is during business hours, Monday through Friday from morning to midday. Test what performs best for you.

Also, as always, watch your word choice. To position yourself as a thought leader, not as a salesperson, use creative words that capture your prospects' attention, not words that sound like every other sales message they've ever received.

Social Analytics

Unlike for voicemail messages, there are many analytics tools for social media to measure the effectiveness of your messaging. We've chosen our favorite for the two social networks and analyzed their effectiveness.

Twitter

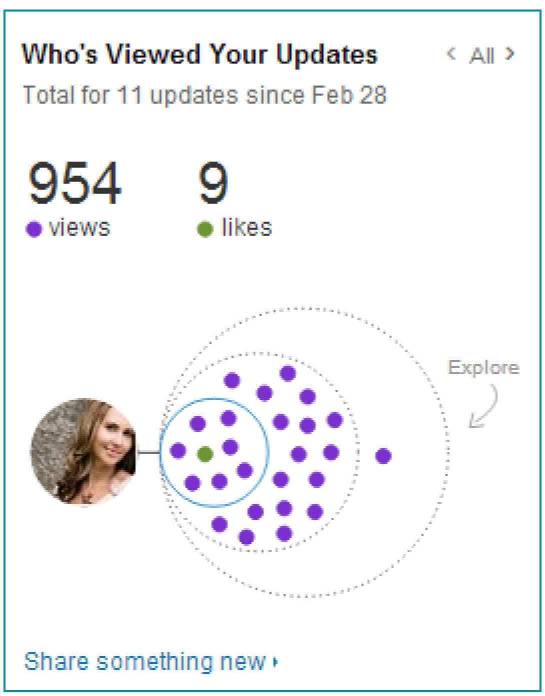
Two tools that we recommend you use for Twitter are Followerwonk and the newly released Twitter Analytics.

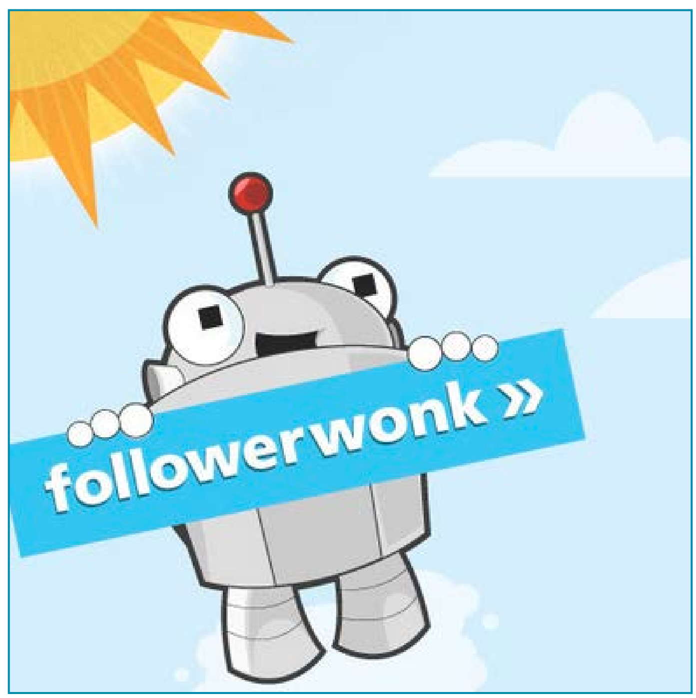
Followerwonk is an advanced Twitter analytics app by Moz that allows you to search, compare, analyze, and track followers and users. Find prospects by using the bio search tool, selecting a combination of keywords that would appear in their profile bio. Followerwonk will then compare and sort users based on influence, follower count, and ratios. This tool is not only great for building your own follower base; you can also track others, including your competitors. If a potential prospect follows two of your competitors, they are most likely already interested in your product or service; use Moz to find them and follow them. Analyze any account to see tweet and retweet data, distribution of influence, etc., and check out the charts that show you what percentage of your followers are online at any given time or day. Lastly, tracking followers shows you a timeline of new followers and lost followers. You can examine what messaging helped you gain followers one day, and base your strategy around that metric.

Twitter also just recently opened their analytics dashboard to the public, allowing users to see how many people viewed their tweets or engaged with them. See how many impressions your tweets received (how many users saw your tweet), engagements (how many users interacted with your tweet) and engagement rates (number of engagements divided by number of impressions). The tool breaks the metrics down for you even more by offering analysis of link clicks, retweets, favorites, replies, etc. through a 28-day period. It also tracks your followers, including their top interests, locations, gender and more. With these tools, you'll be able to analyze your messaging and see from a data standpoint what works and what doesn't.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn does not offer a free option for profile statistics; their free analytics tool is just for company pages. However, LinkedIn does have an application for those who want to analyze their connections on LinkedIn: LinkedIn Profile Stats Pro, available to those enrolled in the cheapest $9.95 a month LinkedIn Personal Plus service. With this tool, you can see exactly who has viewed your profile and the top search keywords they used to find you. You can also view by geography and industry. However, the best way to measure your efforts on LinkedIn is by responses to your messages, not profile views. You would do well to stick to the basic version of LinkedIn. In the sidebar on the homepage, you can view data on how many people have viewed your profile in the past 15 days, your rank for profile views, and who's viewed and liked your last few updates, as well as how many connections and professionals in your network you have. Measure your views and more importantly, calculate your engagement. What's your percentage of views to engagement in your recent posts? What could you change in future posts to boost that number?





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