

# INSIDE SALES: What's Going On and How It's Professionalizing

## WHAT'S GOING ON?

The following excerpts are attributed to Trish Bertuzzi, CEO of The Bridge Group, Inc. We appreciate the opportunity to share her insights into the professionalization of the Inside Sales role. Thanks to Trish for her willingness to share this information with our ANNUAL readers.

*\*Reprinted with permission from Forbes.com article The Biggest Trend In Sales Today: This Thing Called Sales Development*

## THE BIG SHIFT

What's new is something called "sales development." In the past 10 years, technology companies in particular have led a transformation of the traditional sales process, creating a new function and a new paradigm for generating and qualifying leads.

Trish Bertuzzi, CEO of The Bridge Group, a sales development consulting firm for tech companies, agrees sales development is a new and powerful phenomenon. "People have been using the term 'sales development' since the 1980s," she says. "But only in the past four years or so has it become reality." For many of us who have been in this field since the early 90's this is so exciting. Quota carrying reps always got the glory and now the business world is recognizing the contribution of those who start the sales process.

... traditional "Cold calling is dead," says Bertuzzi. "The term implies that you're not using available technology to find out whether somebody is in your 'sweet spot' before you call them." Enter the new discipline of "sales development," which combines data analysis tools, email nurturing and phone prospecting teams, what Bertuzzi calls the marriage of "technology, process and people." Sales development, in its purest form, isn't about selling. It's a specialized process that is only about qualifying leads and setting appointments.

Sales development addresses the most important question for sales organizations today—How do I get the right people in front of my "closers" at the lowest possible cost? ▲

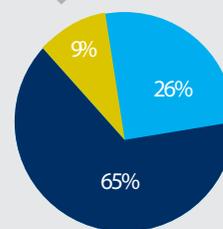
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# SDR GROUPS COME IN

"INSIDE SALES IS ALL ABOUT—BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND

LET ME SET THE STAGE WITH A FEW THOUGHTS:

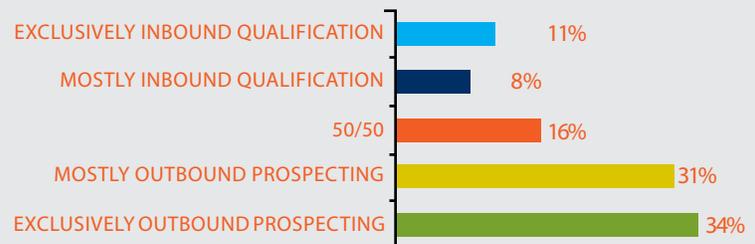
1. The Sales Development function is all grown up and owns the front end of the sales process. Companies of all sizes and stripes are embracing this role.
2. Two-thirds of internal SDR groups are 'Generating Qualified Opportunities' as opposed to 'Appointment Setting' for their sales counterparts.



- APPOINTMENT SETTING
- GENERATING QUALIFIED OPPS
- BOTH/OTHER

3. A large majority of SDR groups are outbound-focused. While Inbound Marketing is certainly a critical component of success, outbound SDR teams remain prevalent.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE GROUP'S FOCUS?



David Case | President | Advastar Inc.

## WHAT IS THE BENEFIT YOU SEE IN HIRING SALES PROGRAM GRADUATES?

These employees have gained valuable sales specific exposure and perspective. New hires understand that Sales is often relationship driven and that communication and persistence are key aspects of being successful. Having new graduates with this experience helps to increase the internal learning curve and we're thus able to reach our goals much more quickly.

# MANY FLAVORS

FINDING SOLUTIONS, ONE CALL AT A TIME."

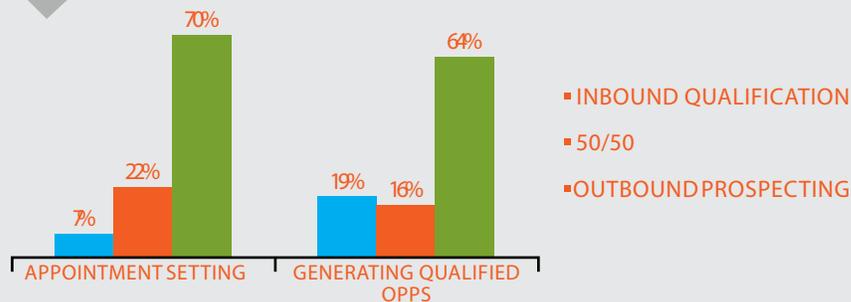
-Nathan Beucler

Louie DeLeon | Division Manager | Consolidated Electrical Distributors

## HOW IS INSIDE SALES CHANGING YOUR BUSINESS?

Inside sales is not necessarily changing our particular business. However, the ever increasing speed of technology is changing what our inside sales team is expected to get done. The speed at which inside sales people can research and access information is leveraging the amount of sales support a single inside sales person can offer. In our business inside sales people are primarily support for the outside sales people. The products we sell, even different brands, are often indistinguishable from what our competitors sell. Therefore the only differentiation is the quality and reliability of our inside sales team relative to theirs. I often tell our outside sales people the actual product they are selling day to day is the ability of our inside staff to service the customer's needs.

4. One thing is clear, the SDR function mean different things to different people. Though we found very few 'Inbound | Appointment Setting' groups, they do exist. The vast majority of 'Appointment Setting' teams are focused on outbound prospecting.



Nathan Beucler | Sales Manager | Burkett Restaurant Equipment

## WHAT IS THE BENEFIT YOU SEE IN HIRING SALES PROGRAM GRADUATES?

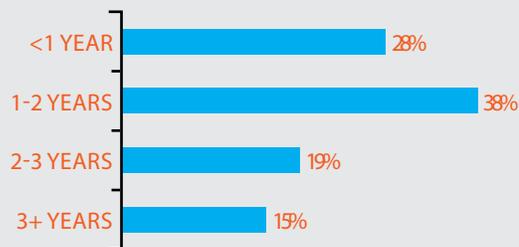
The graduates have a mindset of consultative selling—they understand how to ask the right questions. They ramp up significantly faster in the process which is continuous (learning new products/training). It is easier to train graduates because they already comprehend the process. I agree that the turn-over rate is 50% less.

# DEMAND FOR SDR TALENT FAR OUTSTRIPS SUPPLY

Demand for SDR candidates has risen steadily since 2010. At the same time, we've tracked a steady decline minimum sales experience requirements for SDR roles.

THIS YEAR, WE FOUND AVERAGE 'SALES EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO HIRE' TO BE 1.8 YEARS. THAT IS AN ALL-TIME LOW.

## WHAT DO YOU REQUIRE AS EXPERIENCE WHEN HIRING?



## AVERAGE REQUIRED EXPERIENCE TRENDING



Three times as many companies require 'Less than 1 year's sales experience' in 2014 as did in 2010.

A point worth mentioning is that required experience rises along with a company's average sales price. Companies with ASPs of less than \$25K.

Complex solutions require complex conversations and often occur higher up in prospect organizations. It takes time and experience to achieve comfort at that level of selling.

## REQUIRED EXPERIENCE BY ASP

