

## India Based Sales – Happening or Not?

Tele-callers in India and around the world have been around for a long time. The success or failure of these agents have largely depended on getting hold of you when you are between meetings or when your guard is down when one is off work. Basically the agent hopes he or she is lucky getting hold of you in a good mood. However there is a science to selling whether it is face to face or via email and phone. This involves lots of preparation, practice and perseverance. Innumerable management books would tell you that success in sales comes from a simple but powerful equation:

“Knowledge of product or service” X “Number of people reached out to” = “Success in sales”

Adapting this fundamental principal to an India based sales model has generated huge success for small and medium enterprises who often do not have the money to leap into international business development. In fact today this model has been used by companies to offer this service to others in need of this structured approach to business development.

Let’s look at a couple of models at work here. The first model is to have a set of market research people whose role will mostly revolve around doing web based research for onsite or traveling sales people to then use the information / intelligence gathered to then address targeted people, companies or opportunities. The second model is to have marketing people in India who would use the web to create awareness or demand for a product or service. And finally the third model is to have inside sales people who would actually use voice and non voice processes to generate actual sales independently.

Any of these models or a combination of them would be a successful model for any company selling a product or a service. Let’s look at each of these models a little more closely.

Research Executives can be a big boon to frontline sales people providing much needed intelligence in a number of areas that a traditional sales person would take ages to find out. So for example if this is a ERP solutions company that the research executive is working for, his typically the job profile would be spending time pouring over news reports and case studies of ERP vendors on who and how the ERP was implemented. Then the executive would do a detailed analysis of the target company where a ERP is installed and detail out all company executives who have their name out there using tools like [www.zoominfo.com](http://www.zoominfo.com) or [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) or [www.spoke.com](http://www.spoke.com) and finally a analysis to tear apart and understand the annual financial report to figure out an ROI or business model by which you are going to approach the target company. Now armed with all this information the sales person can make his move and directly get in touch with the right person and get that contacts attention by making the sales pitch relevant to the contacts needs. The true value of these resources show up when you start getting a higher hit ratio when it comes to reaching out to high value customer or big ticket opportunities.

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Let's look at the second model where you have Marketing Executives looking to increase the awareness of your products or services and thereby drive up the enquiries you may get. I have always believed that the first step to successful business development is a great looking website with all the content one could look for arranged in an easy to locate manner. Now come the hard part. How to get your message out there so that prospects and interest groups know about your site and ultimately use information dished out to send in an enquiry.

This is where your marketing executive steps in and ensure three key deliverables are met. The first priority is to scour the web and identify as many interest groups there are out there and then get involved and uses the group not only as a valuable source of information but also contribute and post as many white papers, case studies, web links and generic solutions as possible to create awareness about the company. The second to send out targeted mails with useful whitepapers or case studies to individuals in your business who have been on speaker panels at all shows pertaining to your industry. And third is to work through Google Ads and other ranking software to ensure that your site is ranked in the first page when anyone looks for related keywords in any search engine. This can also be achieved by designing a site that can be indexed well. The combination of these three activities is bound to give high visibility to your online presence within your targeted individuals or community.

The final model is obviously the most interesting of them all. This is where you see the actual returns vis a vis the costs. One would naturally think that such concepts are far fetched but you would be pleasantly surprised to hear that we have over 10,000 people in India who are doing outbound calls to the US and Europe to sell products ranging from credit cards / mortgages to IT software services. These are an army of inside sales associates who are on the telephone most of their day making targeted calls at individuals who would be pre screened. There are multiple ways of pre-screening these individuals. The most obvious way is to buy databases. The second way is to use services like [www.spoke.com](http://www.spoke.com) or [www.zoominfo.com](http://www.zoominfo.com) or [www.jigsaw.com](http://www.jigsaw.com) as mentioned earlier where you would get contact details of a lot of folks at targeted companies. The best way however to get these contacts who could be truly interested is by sponsoring white papers at any of the industry websites so that interested parties would need to fill in their details which is somewhat like the activity a marketing executive does.

Of course the most important part of the inside sales executives training is to be the storyline he or she adopts when she calls the prospective buyer. The most effective person has been the pitch that you are a "domain consultant" or "service expert" or "technical consultant" who is trying to help the prospect get a better product or service etc. Although most people see through this within the first ten seconds, sometimes that is all the time one needs to get one's foot in the door. Another important area one needs to look at is packaging your product or service so that the inside sales person can easily describe the benefits, return on investment, advantages and differentiators vis a vis competitors within three to five minutes max. This kind of short and decisive pitch helps move a sales process to the next stage of evaluation which is fundamental to every sale. The backbone of an effective sales process is also a good CRM system which not only keeps track of all the prospects called but also helps schedule and deliver

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post call follow up mailers as well as regular marketing updates that are always a good hook to get your message across at regular intervals.

Needless to say the success of all these activities depends on how relevant, intuitive and content rich your website is. A lot of companies today do not pay much attention to the only public face of their companies. It is almost inevitable that a person who has just been reached by an inside sales or marketing executive would click on the url link or search for the company in any of the search engines. Most companies believe a website is to put up information on a company. While that is true we all sometimes forget that the website is primarily an advertising medium. It needs to be rich in look and feel, user friendly in terms of navigation, full of relevant content and portray an image of being the knowledge portal of that industry.

On the human resource angle these individuals need to be kept highly motivated through a “real-time” incentive policy that has weekly, fortnightly, monthly and yearly components to it. It is the visibility of the executives to see such a vibrant cash incentive program that drives these individuals to make each email and call count.

Finally having set up three such teams in the last five years has strengthened my belief that a robust and repeatable sales process is always the most important aspect of a good sales program. Just adding a set of highly motivated individuals to this makes it a recipe for success. Wish you happy selling.