

# The Modern Guide to **Outbound Sales** & **Marketing**

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 **SALES**



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“No.”

This isn't just an unpleasant thing to hear (over and over again all day long), it can have a real impact on a sales professional's morale. Their confidence. Their motivation.

Whether you're a junior sales development rep or an experienced account executive, getting a “no” sometimes feels like a death sentence. Even more so in today's world where prospects are becoming more hesitant to buy, less open to conversations, and flat out just unresponsive. COVID-19 shook things up, and the world we know is now more digital-first than it ever has been. Most sales professionals are working in a work-from-home environment, which in some cases has made everyday challenges even more daunting.

In outbound sales, you hear a “no” 99 percent of the time. That's on a good day. And it isn't always so bad when you have colleagues to lean upon, when you have a healthy working environment, and when you can shut it off at the end of the workday. But with the new work-from-home initiatives, that isn't so. The “no” will follow you from your computer and into your kitchen or living room. And the organizational support you get from your sales leader or teammates just isn't the same in a lagging zoom call or five-minute phone conversation.

To be the best with outbound sales in today's world - while still balancing one's life and happiness - it's important to look at what changes are being made in the market and take advantage of the data, channels, and resources available to you. And we didn't forget about you, marketing. You're part of this too as goals for your team are now more related to revenue than ever before.

Outbound and marketing teams are one in the same now - they have to be in order to be successful today. And if they aren't yet, both teams need to work together to make it happen ASAP. Marketers can no longer afford to just wait and send leads to their outbound sellers. Both teams need to proactively work together to create opportunities with the right accounts. It's time to acknowledge how the B2B selling world has changed and adapt before you're left behind.

Don't be alarmed though, outbound sellers. Your marketing team is here to help. There are platforms and tools out there that can help you. And this guide will also help you. Before we stuck “Modern” in the title, we first made sure we earned it. We interviewed outbound sellers just like you, both in sales development and account management. We pulled together stats, perspectives, and advice from those just like you. All in an effort to compile the most practical and real comprehensive guide for B2B selling today, while also taking a closer look at your world and what you go through every day.

**Welcome to the Modern Guide to  
Outbound Sales & Marketing.**

# The State of **Today's** **Outbound Seller**



## The Pressure

The first thing we noticed after talking to many outbound sellers is that they're under an extraordinary amount of pressure. Why? Because many B2B companies (and, consequently, sales and marketing departments) are under an increased pressure to sell. As the market pulls back and the economy becomes uncertain, marketing, sales, and customer success teams are all feeling the crunch. Companies are trying to spend less. Consumers are trying to spend less. And all of this comes down to the seller who, again, is hearing "no" a lot.

"It takes an **average of 18 calls to actually connect with a buyer** and only **24% of sales emails are opened.**"

Source: [TOPO](#)



"The pressure is always high in the sales world. In many cases, **the environment completely changed but the quota remained the same.** Today's environment can be filled with more highs and lows than years prior."

— Account Executive at a marketing consultancy



"I think **most sales people feel pressure to perform at a high level** – both from their own expectations of themselves and in having a quota to hit."

— Account Executive at an enterprise software company



"Make more calls  
and send more emails."



**"No."**

**"Not right now."**

"We need you to hit quota  
this month and quarter."



"Can you just follow up with  
an email?."

**"Not interested."**



**"Call back later."**



"We need more pipeline."



## The Emotional Highs and Lows

While a significant amount of outbound selling involves statistics, percentages, and metrics, the human element cannot be ignored. The negativity of a hearing no a thousand times can leave a seller feeling demoralized, lacking confidence, and feeling unsupported. And when a seller feels any or all of these things, it makes it even harder to sell.

In the past, sellers had some support systems within their business. There were perks; nice offices, catered meetings, and more. But today, most sellers are working from home. They feel isolated. There's no one to talk to about their losses. And celebrating the wins just isn't the same.



**“Sales is the transfer of enthusiasm and people can read our energy. If you have high energy going into a call, you have a better chance of that call going well. If you’re negative going into a call, it could result in more negative situations.”**

— Morgan Ingram, **JB Sales**

**“60% of customers say no four times before saying yes whereas 48% of salespeople never even make a single follow up attempt.”**

Source: [Invesp](#)

Outbound sellers have to be able to maintain a healthy mindset while constantly hearing no. They need to understand that a no isn't a failure or an indictment; rather, it is part of the overall process. Sellers today are going to increasingly hear “no” because of the digital saturation and marketing saturation that everyone faces. But every “no” paves the way toward a “yes” and each “yes” should be celebrated. But it's not just about celebrating the demos scheduled, meetings booked, or deals won.

It's about celebrating what's in between that. Did you send 10 personalized videos today? Did you reply back to an objection with a thoughtful answer and relevant content? Did you make a connection on LinkedIn that will lead you to the decision maker of a top account? We need to start paying attention to the little things to be successful instead of just the huge milestones. It's the process that makes us prosper, and then our desired end result will follow.

It's not only about what you celebrate, it's also about the how. If you're in sales, you're probably an extrovert. So you're going to have to find new ways to celebrate, stay motivated, be a team player, and keep up with communication. Be the person that's always willing to jump on a call to help out a teammate. Play an active role in making yourself and your teammates better. Invest in yourself and your team, and the output will eventually match the input. This will all make celebrating those wins even sweeter, even in a virtual world.



“Before early 2020, we were the strongest inside sales unit I’d ever seen. The energy on the floor was palpable and there was always cheering, high fives, and hugs. We were the very definition of a winning locker room. I thought sending the team home was the hardest thing we were going to have to do. Then we quickly ran into Zoom fatigue and burnout, that was harder. Then our pipeline fell out as our prospects struggled with their own pandemic realities, that was harder. Then we started hearing from our customers who were struggling. Then isolation set in and our jobs morphed from Sales leader to counselor, that was harder. But then something clicked. We figured it out and by Q3 we were outperforming pre-pandemic expectations. We regained our winning locker room. We’re better for it...but I’m still pissed I can’t hug or high five the team.”

— Nathan Broome, VP of SMB at Outreach





## Strengths & Weaknesses

Outbound sellers today HAVE to be creative with the how and what of communication in addition to how they use marketing content so it's relevant for the buyer. They can't be intimidated or scared to pick up the phone and start dialing. You will probably hear no, you will probably screw up a call or not, but you have to keep confident.

Maintaining a good state of mind is also important. Don't make the highs too high or the lows too low - and don't be too hard on yourself. Knowing how to build and leverage relationships might be the most important characteristic of a successful outbound seller, as it has multiple layers.

- Building a relationship with your marketing team.
- Building trust and relationships with your buyers.

Sometimes less talking actually means more - being a really good listener is also an advantage. Pay attention to what is most important to the buyer and look for cues in the conversation where you can add value. Be curious, ask the right questions, and make an effort to really learn about your buyers.

**Here are a few more characteristics of today's best outbound sellers, along with some weaknesses to avoid.**



## STRENGTHS

- Is proactive about everything and works closely with the marketing team.
- Writes their own sales messaging and works with other team members to find what has the most success in their industry.
- Is actively prospecting into their accounts and looking for new contacts that fit their ICP.
- Has the ability to gather small bits of information about buyers to compose a highly personalized message.
- Leverages the content that their marketing team provides for them.
- Is data-focused and aware of the accounts that are showing intent and engagement.
- Finds new ways to leverage tool to stand out from the crowd.



## WEAKNESSES

- Gets hung up on the small things.
- Struggles with overcoming common objectives.
- Relies on old contact records/data.
- Doesn't play an active role in making themselves and their teammates better.
- Puts too much pressure on themselves.
- Is reluctant to try and learn other facets of the business.

Ah yes, but also the age-old skill of time management. Especially for sellers who feel isolated in a work-from-environment, you absolutely have to manage your time. Our friend Morgan says it best in the quote below:

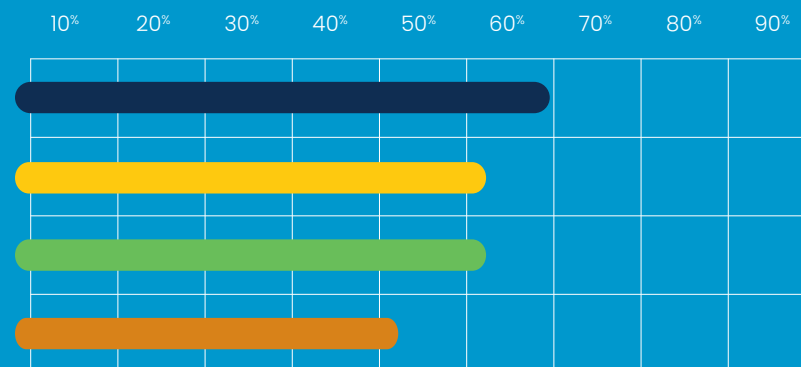


**“You have to avoid not managing your time effectively and not knowing your priorities for the week. It’s one of the main topics I have discussed with sellers for the last six to eight months – time management. No one wanted to talk about it before going virtual, but now you HAVE to pay attention to your time management. **You can easily get lost working from home.**”**

— Morgan Ingram, JB Sales

Finally, successful outbound sellers today are often able to compartmentalize. They’re able to separate their life and their work. They take a deeper look at their reports and metrics and are able to improve upon their own performance within their scope. They are able to see how their performance is being impacted by factors that may be outside of their control and are able to compensate for these changes.

### According to buyers, here at the top ways to create a positive sales experience:



- 69%** Listen to their needs
- 61%** Don't be pushy
- 61%** Provide relevant information
- 51%** Respond in a timeline manner

### The biggest challenges outbound sellers face today:

- 42%** Establishing urgency
- 37%** Getting in touch with prospects
- 35%** Overcoming price objections

Source: [HubSpot](#)

# 6 Ways Marketing Teams **Can Help** Outbound Sellers



As you can see, sellers in today's landscape are dealing with A LOT. That's why it's important for sales teams to know that marketing has their back. But it's easier said than done. Both sides are busy and sometimes can't relate to each other's challenges. So take the time to understand each other, know each other's goals, and help each other out. Alignment between all revenue teams is what will determine the winners and losers in today's landscape.

With feedback from actual B2B sellers, let's examine some of the most important things marketers can do to support their sales team.





# 1. Understand Your Sales Team

Part of the issue is that the flow of information goes only one way. Marketing gives information to the sales team and sees the sales teams' metrics — but they don't necessarily talk to the sales team. Thus, they can come up with the wrong solutions.

Here's an example. Marketing may create a new push for a new product or service. They may see that the sales team is connecting with hundreds of customers but not securing any of them after discussing pricing. Marketing may falsely conclude that the new product or service is poorly priced; they're not getting any commitments.

In reality, the sales team might be able to tell them that the customers are unclear on what the product or service does. The marketing has misled them into thinking that the product or service does something more or does something differently, so once they get to the pricing stage — which also describes tiers of service — the customers bow out. In reality, what is needed isn't a pricing change; what's needed is a change in messaging.

Marketers need to be aware of what their sales team is hearing every day. They need to be aware of objections. Ideally, they should sit in on phone calls. They may have key insights that the sales professionals don't from their marketing expertise, but they will never know unless they know what their sales professionals are hearing.



“Here is a question marketers can ask their sales team RIGHT NOW that can instantly make an impact – **what are the top 10 objections everyone is hearing from prospects?**”

— Morgan Ingram, JB Sales

42% of sales reps say they don't have enough information before meeting with a prospect. And bottom-performing sales reps struggle the most when the prospect responds back with an objection, as they are 83% less likely to effectively follow up and turn it into a meeting booked. Understanding email intent data can help with this, as well as real-time transcription and content that addresses specific objections.

Source: Outreach

## 2. Give Your Sales Team the Right Target Accounts

Marketers should organize target lists for their sales team by priority, industry, vertical, and any other useful characteristics. This is part of the hallmarks of account-based marketing and the foundation for a successful go-to-market campaign.

A sales professional only has so much time and energy. They need to be able to allocate it to the accounts that are most likely to make a purchase and most likely to continue their purchasing. This is often where intent data and an ABM platform like [Terminus](#) comes in, but marketers still need to own (or co-own) and operate it.

That's not to say that marketers are always going to be able to identify the right accounts at first. But over time, marketers will be able to adjust their targeting relative to their results, thereby getting more accurate as time goes on.

And remember, more isn't always better. The more accounts you're going after at the same time, the harder it is to personalize your outreach. Sales and marketing should work together to find a balance between volume and personalization.

"Follow the 5/2 Rule: Your revenue team should be reaching out to, or be in contact with, at least **five contacts at a target account** at anytime, and making sure **at least two of those contacts are decision makers** with purchasing power."

Source: [Outreach](#)



"I love seeing consistent campaigns that **allow me to focus on a group of accounts.**"

— Account Executive at a mid-sized B2Bsoftware company



"**We always appreciate fresh contacts and companies to target, especially if they're organized by tiers.** Of course I have my top list of accounts to target, but I don't always have the time to search and find tier two or tier three accounts."

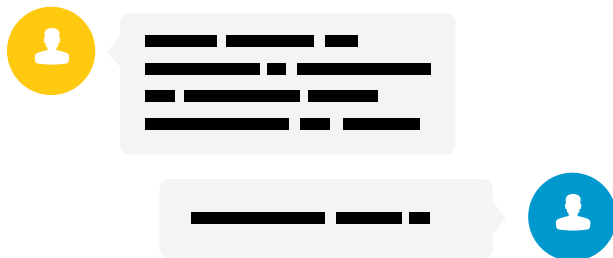
— Account Executive at an enterprise B2B company

### 3. Create Consistent Messaging

What do we mean by messaging? Marketers specialize in crafting messaging for websites, digital ads, and content, but how does all of that translate to messaging that's easy for the sales team to use? Overall messaging for a brand starts within marketing, where they develop components like:

- Brand promise
- Elevator pitch
- Boilerplate
- Tagline
- Positioning statement

Further down, marketing works on specific story components like industry trends, who we are, what we do, what we offer, and who we serve. This trickles down to the sales team, where they use it for everyday communications with customers and prospects. So having an established process and go-to resource for this is important for consistency across the entire company, not just sales and marketing.



But what about at the campaign level? Or for a specific piece of content? Content marketers, ready for the harsh truth? Your sales team won't take the time to read every word of that new piece of content you just published. They may glance at it or skim through it, but that's all they have time for. Instead of just begging them to use it and share it, help them help you. Summarize the campaign or content with a bulleted list. Put just as much time in on the enablement side as you do with the creation so your sales team quickly becomes comfortable with it enough to confidently reference it on calls and in emails.

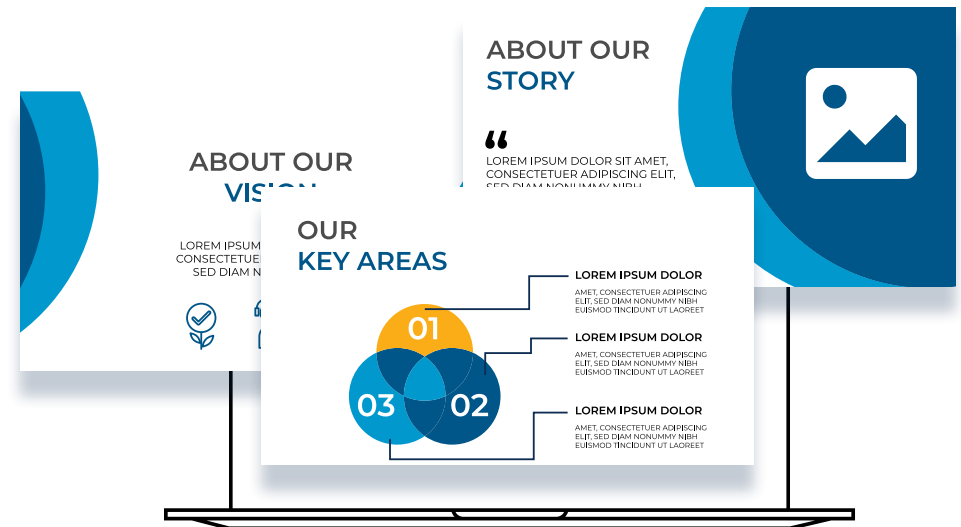
Consistent messaging is crucial, and on many different levels. Overall brand messaging is table stakes. Be sure to put in the same effort for campaign-level messaging and summaries for each new piece of content. This will allow your sales team to become more comfortable, confident, and prepared to share the right resources.

## 4. Content (Duh) – but Focus on Customer Stories and Pitch Decks First

Yes, of course content was going to be on this list. There are many types of resources and content you can create to help sales (an infinite amount really). So where do you start? Did you catch that quote from Morgan Ingram a few pages back? He encourages marketers to ask sales for a list of objections they usually hear on the phone or in emails. Marketers, use that list to prioritize your content to-do list. If you can craft content that helps overcome these objections, you'll score big points with your sales team.

Ebooks, white papers, video, infographics, blog posts, etc. They're all important, but all can't be done tomorrow. Especially for smaller marketing teams, getting through their list of content requests may take months or multiple quarters. So it's really important to think about what will have the most impact and focus on that first. Enter: slide decks and pitch decks.

For some marketers, this is a never ending story. Slide deck work will never be done - but you can make things easier on yourself as you scale. Work towards a styled template that the sales team can customize for each call rather than signing yourself up to build 1,000 different slide decks for 1,000 different meetings. But also think past a first call deck.



Create slides for certain situations, objections, product features, personas, and more. Manage expectations and remember that each prospect and call will be different, so it's impossible to create a deck that applies to each buyer. Rather, create options for your sales team to pick and choose from. And remember that slide deck enablement is just as important, as well as easy access for your sales team.

Next up, customer stories! We're talking slides, quotes, testimonials, reviews, audio, video, and yes, even old school case study PDFs. Whatever you can get from a customer excited about your product or service, package it up and make it available to your sales team. In terms of the format, remember that it doesn't have to be the same every time. Variety is good! And options for your audience to consume this content however they like is even better. So turn that customer call recording into a short audio clip, case study PDF, and testimonial graphics for social. The more options for both your sales team and your audience, the better.

## 5. Data, Such as Intent and Engagement Data

The more you collect from an environment (like plants or food from a forest), the more you know about it right? The same goes for your data. The more you collect, the better marketing and sales will get to know their target accounts. From engagement to psychographic intent, there are many sources of data that can tell you which of your target accounts are ready to buy and which ones you'll want to target next. Here's a list of today's top data sources:

- Psychographic intent data
- Hiring intent data
- Engagement intent data
- Technographic intent data
- Research intent data
- Relationship intent data
- Bidstream intent data
- Product reviews

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It all comes down to fit + intent + engagement. You can't explore a new account without these three crucial resources. Incorporating relevant, timely account data, combined with genuine personalization can make cold outreach feel like warm outreach, boosting your chances of standing out and getting your buyer to the next stage of your sales process. For even more on intent and all other data sources mentioned here, be sure to use Terminus' [Field Guide to Foraging Intent Data](#) as your perfect starting point.

**"As an outbound seller today, what do you want to see from marketing or expect from them to make your job easier and more effective?"**



**"Providing insights into my most engaged contacts and accounts is so helpful."**



**"Daily reports that show me who is showing intent across Bombora, G2, and visiting our website."**



**"I need to be able to take immediate action on intent. From the sales perspective, this should be the highest priority. Any interest by any organization on our content needs to be capitalized on."**



"For email engagement data, reply sentiment is more valuable than reply rate. Our data science team found that a positive reply rate has a 33% higher correlation with booked meetings than just reply rate. Outbound sellers can book 14% more meetings when they measure email performance by positive buyer sentiment instead of reply rate."

Source: Outreach



## 6. Campaigns and Packaged Resources

"I love having a specific reason to reach out with great messaging to go along with that." This quote from an outbound sales development rep at a B2B SaaS company says it all. Themed campaigns give your outbound sellers a reason to reach out. A packaged up set of resources allows them to deliver relevant content that provides value to the buyer, thus making your seller a trusted advisor.

What does it mean to "package up" content or resources? It comes down to creating and sharing content that speaks directly to a specific audience segment is a recipe for success. If you're executing a go-to-market campaign for the sports industry, for example, a great piece of content to create and share might be a case study on how other sports franchises use your product or service. Include that with a product overview on how each of your features can help their biggest pain points or challenges. Platforms like Uberflip and Pathfactory are great to use to organize your content by theme.

# **Bold Predictions and Sellers Challenging the Status Quo in 2021**



Marketing is changing. And the way outbound sales professionals approach their own work is changing with it. Will you rely on old habits in a now different selling environment? Or will you personally challenge the old status quo, adjust accordingly, and use it to your advantage? For outbound sellers now and in the future, this is what it will take to be successful.

### Here are a few bold predictions from outbound sellers charging into 2021:



"Sellers who view themselves as resources or consultants, rather than hard-charging closers, will allow themselves to quickly build trust and a relationship with their buyers. As a seller, allow your prospect time and space to research themselves, but also show them how you can help them hit their goals."



"Video is now no longer just a trend. It's absolutely essential to selling. If we can't have in-person meetings, rethinking the way we communicate and stay in touch with prospects will determine future success."



"Although we're in a new digital environment, relationships will still drive business. Previous relationships and referrals will become a top source for outbound sellers."



"Using intent data at the contact and account level is now more important than ever. Sellers NEED to know how to access the right data and how to act on it, which will allow them to engage buyers at the right time."

"**19%** of buyers want to connect with a salesperson during the **awareness stage** of their buying process, when they're first learning about the product. **60%** want to connect with sales during the **consideration stage**, after they've researched the options and come up with a short list. **20%** want to talk during the **decision stage**, once they're decided which product to buy."

Source: [HubSpot](#)

"The use of collaborative words had a positive impact on the calls and using 'we' instead of 'I' increased sales rates by 35%."

Source: [Gong](#)

At the same time, sellers should still be mindful of these fundamentals:



"Do the work every day. Be consistent and be persistent. There doesn't have to be a silver bullet to win in sales. If you do the small things consistently, you'll be successful."



"Focus on sales and marketing alignment. The primary function of marketing should be to align with sales on which accounts to focus on, create campaigns or messaging around, and inform them how they're engaging with their brand."



"Be genuine in email communication, yet straight to the point. No fluff - concise and relevant messaging. Be super intentional with your first four to five words on your email. Do you have a reason to reach out with this outbound email? Then state it right away."

"Outbound sellers can book **14% more meetings** when they measure email performance on positive buyer sentiment instead of reply rate."

Source: [Outreach](#)

Revenue teams need to acknowledge that the selling world has changed and adjust accordingly. But also be cautious of not overthinking it. Adapt to your new environment and remember the fundamentals of a good seller or marketer. Support each other and look for ways to get your brand to stand out amongst all of the digital noise out there today.

Whatever this looks like for you personally and your team, look to challenge the status quo in 2021. And marketers, do everything you can to support your sales team and set them up for success. Use the right foundational technology internally to connect with each other and collaborate. Then find the right technology to find and track target accounts together more effectively and reach out to them with greater consistency. What is most important is that sales professionals and marketing teams alike recognize that the world is changing — that this change is permanent — and that they, too, will need to change if they want to succeed.



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