



Trend Talk: Top 10 Trends in Inside Sales 2007

Objective

Inside Sales is finally getting the recognition it deserves. It continues to be a mission-critical aspect of the sales process and companies are projecting a 30% this year. As Inside Sales organizations grow, evolve, restructure and merge with other organizations, companies must be prepared to adapt processes, systems and talent to stay ahead of the game. The following report captures the top ten trends in high-tech b2b Inside Sales today.

Top 10 Trends in Inside Sales

1. Divide and Conquer

Inside Sales is now part of a larger integrated team of sales specialists all supporting the customer. They are in the driver's seat, often partnering with their field rep and a dedicated systems engineer or another solution specialist to create opportunities. Customers are comfortable working with a larger team and feel secure having the Inside Sales team member behind the wheel.

2. The Alpha Dog

The incredible value of Inside Sales today is reflected in stronger comp structures. Inside Sales people are no longer asked to simply perform transactional deals and produce non-revenue generating opportunities, and they are not another cold call mechanism for marketing to leverage. Inside Sales teams are more involved in account management and are taking on increased ownership responsibilities.

3. Bigger Deals

Average deal size continues to grow and the average cost of sale is larger. In high-tech sales, deals up to \$1 million in revenue are being generated, managed and closed all over the phone and on-line. Customers are becoming increasingly more comfortable spending money via these channels.

4. Email Rocks

Telephone call metrics are down and email stats are rising. Combined, they account for even stronger response. Instant messaging, chat and texting are becoming popular in leveraging stronger response with customers. Tech support and teleconferencing also increase the speed of the sales cycle.

5. More Technology Tools

In a recent survey conducted by CSO Insights on Improving Inside Sales Effectiveness Using Technology, they found a correlation between quota attainment and the use of more on-line tools. More tools incorporated into the sales cycle help to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of Inside Sales reps. These include: Conduct account research, customer self-



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service, conduct on-line demos, conduct Webinars, Web-based client collaboration, new customer training, interactive chat with customers and application sharing.

6. Knowledge Is Power

While Inside Sales continues to be the entry point for many new opportunities, there's greater focus on pre-call preparation and research tools. Studies show that one in four hours of possible selling time is spent conducting pre-call research or administration tasks. Tools such as Before the Call, Jigsaw and Genius, which integrate into a CRM tool, can help speed up this process to more quickly identify which customers to target.

7. Master Versus Novice

Since Inside Sales is getting the recognition it deserves with salaries to match, many seasoned field reps are balancing work and lifestyle to stay within Inside Sales. As a result, many inside organizations have a combination of very seasoned team members with very junior team members making for an extremely diversified talent pool. This puts more pressure on new hires without much industry knowledge to ramp up quickly.

8. Distractions, Interruptions and Information Overload

The extent of this problem continues to be astounding. Researchers from UC Irvine found an employee can expect, on average, to do 3 minutes of uninterrupted work on any one task before being interrupted, and 11 minutes before switching to a different project. Roughly half of the interruptions are self-inflicted and this is rampant when Inside Sales team members work together. Distractions make it difficult to listen to the customer and cause team members to shift into "reactive" mode, waiting for low-hanging fruit rather than being more aggressive.

9. Dedicated Training for Inside Sales Managers

The majority of managers start as individual contributors. The skills that got them promoted are different from the skills required to effectively manage an inside team. Many junior managers are asked to start new groups or restructure old ones, which is clearly beyond their level of expertise. Yet, they must strike a balance between building teams, growing revenue, juggling increased responsibilities and ensuring success at the executive management level. Managers have nowhere to turn for training. Most just learn from best practice sharing. Dedicated training for Inside Sales managers is on the rise and is as important for them to participate in as it is for their team members.

10. Increase in Remote Workers; the Technology Is There

In 2005, CSO Insights found that 60% of Inside Sales team members are based inside corporate headquarters, but that is rapidly changing. Since telecommuting technology exists, more and more team members are working remotely. Productivity increases and this lowers management costs.



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About TeleSmart Communications Inc.

TeleSmart is a 13-year-old global training company based in San Francisco that specializes in developing efficient, focused, and strategic telephone and on-line communications for Inside Sales teams and managers. Clients such as **Agilent, Apple, Cisco, EMC, Harte-Hanks Microsoft, and VeriSign** have certified their global Inside Sales organizations with the TeleSmart 10 system. We address communication skills from the **TeleSmart 10 Sales Booster Series**.

The TeleSmart 10 system includes essential skills inside teams and managers must have for telephone and email effectiveness. These 10 skills are organized and designed to correspond with the sales cycle. This solution is the answer to providing regular, tactical and relevant training to Inside Sales teams and managers. www.tele-smart.com

Life in the Telebusiness Trenches Blog

The first blog dedicated for the front-line sales champions and managers who are selling and servicing their customers by phone and on-line. Check out monthly podcast panel discussions on topics such as Desktop Distractions and weekly Chit Chat with a Champ interviews with the Champions. www.tele-smart.com/blog

About Sales Management Forum

The Sales Management Forum is dedicated and designed to address the tactical components of being an Inside Sales Manager —from identifying skill gaps within your teams, to understanding how to develop and grow talent, to driving revenue, to being an effective strategic leader.

It includes a curriculum of courses that deliver powerful, practical tools and techniques that managers can use to be more effective in their roles. It is founded by Josiane Feigon and industry veteran Shelly Davenport who bring their 40 years of combined experience in facilitating these seminars. www.salesmanagementforum.com
