Cognism

B2B OUTBOUND:

Building predictable growth

Contents

Outbound sales: your route to predictable growth

Anyone can start a business.

In the UK alone, 660,000 new businesses are registered every year. But of those 660,000 companies, 60% of them will fail within three years. 20% of them will collapse in their first 12 months of trading. That leaves only 20% who will really go the distance.

So yes, anyone can start a business - but the real trick is growing it and making it successful.

Why do so many new businesses go under? It can be for any number of reasons, but for a lot of them, it may have been that they didn't develop an effective outbound sales system. Outbound sales is the surest route for building predictable growth, particularly in the B2B sector, where competition is fierce and startup growth targets are aggressive.

What is B2B outbound?

B2B outbound is the process of engaging with buyers and decision-makers inside a company to generate interest in a product or service and, hopefully, make a sale. The telephone is the main driver of B2B outbound, through an activity known as "cold calling".

Other techniques can be used as well, including email and social media platforms such as LinkedIn; the combination of all these methods at once is known as a "cadence".

B2B outbound is a proactive approach which requires identifying the key contacts in your target companies, going out into the market and selling to them.

The difference between B2B and B2C outbound

B2B outbound is not like selling to ordinary consumers. When you sell to consumers, you usually only have to convince one person on the merits of your product. When you sell to businesses, you often need to win over a group of people, sometimes entire departments. That's why B2B outbound often takes a long time and comes with a multitude of challenges that need to be addressed.

Who conducts B2B outbound?

B2B outbound is conducted by salespeople. Depending on the size of the company, they can be working alone or more usually in teams.

What skills does B2B outbound require?

We'll cover this question in more detail later, but generally, B2B outbound demands salespeople who possess motivation, persistence and resilience. This is due to the length of the B2B outbound sales cycle and the number of stakeholders who are involved in any one deal.

Why is B2B outbound important?

Beyond the baseline objective of growing your customer base and revenue, B2B outbound delivers two important benefits to a business:

- **It builds trust around your product or service** - remember that people buy from people. B2B outbound is a process designed for human interaction - salespeople contacting and engaging with prospects.
- **It provides a predictable growth model** - with B2B outbound, you can create a sales framework that is scalable and repeatable, empowering you to grow your business quickly and efficiently.

Your guide to B2B outbound

At Cognism, we are masters of outbound sales, using it to help our company grow from $2.5 million to $7 million in ARR in 2019. In 2018, we grew our revenue by 250%. Now, we're going to open our vault and share our secrets with you!

Over the course of this exhaustive guide, you'll learn:

- How to build a B2B outbound sales team, geared for high-performance.
- What the must-track B2B outbound metrics are.
- How to create a team culture that supports your outbound growth engine.
- Cold calling hints, tips and tricks from Cognism's high-flying B2B sales team.
- How to put together the perfect cadences for B2B outbound.
- World-class advice and guidance from the B2B sales frontline.

This is ***B2B outbound: Building predictable growth***.

How to build a high-performing B2B outbound team

Successful B2B outbound all starts with one thing: people. Human beings are the drivers of B2B outbound. As we've identified, cold calling is central to an effective outbound strategy. You need people to conduct cold calling - people to lift up the receivers, dial the numbers, and persuade the prospects on the end of the line.

However, you can't just hire anyone, stick them in front of a desk with a phone and a laptop and hope for the best. You have to think strategically and scientifically if you want to build a high-performing B2B outbound team. Think of B2B outbound as an engine; an engine needs people, qualified people, to steer and maintain it.

In this section, we're going to show you how to structure a B2B outbound team and hire the right individuals to fill that team. Plus, you're going to get top tips and advice from business leaders working in some of the world's hottest B2B SaaS companies. Let's get started!

1. Structuring your B2B outbound team

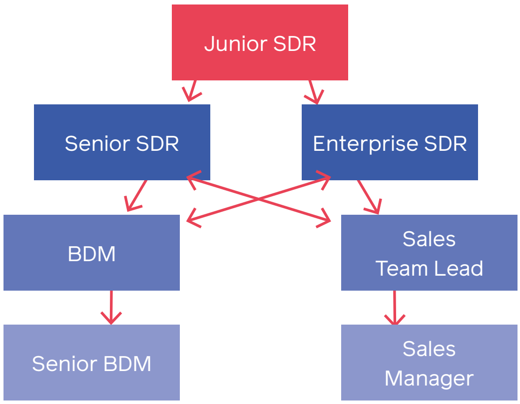
Cognism's sales team structure is a good model for B2B startups to follow. The team is split into two "pods", based around clearly delineated roles:

SALES DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATIVES (SDRS)	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGERS (BDMS)
Responsible for creating opportunities and booking meetings. Key Tasks: • Cold calling • Outbound email • Qualifying prospects • Booking demos	Responsible for closing deals and generating revenue for the business. Key Tasks: • Conducting demos • Negotiating deals • Drafting contracts • Closing business

We also segment the roles further by the size of companies we wish to target - so that there are two separate streams, for SMBs and enterprise.

The overall team structure looks like this:

Team structure: focused roles



What are the benefits of adopting this model?

- It allows the employee to focus solely on just one responsibility, meaning that they quickly become experts in their roles.
- It creates a roadmap for progression: if an SDR consistently hits their targets, they become eligible for promotion to a BDM.

"Core outputs need to be owned by one focused role. With this process, you'll find that your team quickly become experts in their fields."

– Nazma Qurban, Chief Revenue Officer, Cognism

Cognism

2. Important B2B outbound metrics

Your outbound team can't be flying blind; there must be metrics underpinning and informing everything they do. During this section, we'll be covering high-level and individual outbound metrics and KPIs.

Team metrics: the capacity model for B2B outbound

At Cognism, we adhere to the capacity model for B2B outbound. It works like this:

If in one month your revenue target is $32k and your average deal size is $1k, then you need 32 closed-won deals.	Based on a 25% conversion rate, you then need to create 97 opportunities in that month.	So, in order to hit your $32k target, you need to have 7.5 SDRs working on outbound sales activity (cold calling, email outreach etc.).

Essentially, it's engineering your outbound team in reverse. It's starting off with your ultimate goal (the revenue you want to create) and then working backwards scientifically, to the point where you can calculate the number of sales reps required to hit that target.

It's a good model to follow because it's predictable and it allows you to manage your resources on a month-by-month basis. Here is an example of capacity in modelling in action, from Cognism's own data (January-June 2018):

	Revenue target	SDR	SDR Target P/W	Monthly Mgts	**Marketing meetings**	**Total Meetings**	**Meetings Attended**	**Mtgs >> Opp**	**Opps Created**	**Won conversion**	**Deals won**	**Number of AE's**	**Meetings Per AE Per Week**	**Meetings Per AE Per Month**	**SDR Ratio BDM**
January	£32,000.00	7.5	45	180	54	234	175.5	55%	97	25%	32	5	12	47	0.63
February	£36,000.00	11.6	70	233	116	349	262	55%	144	25%	36	6	14.75	59	0.79
March	£44,000.00	14.2	85	284	142	427	320	55%	176	25%	44	7	15.25	61	0.93
April	£44,000.00	14.2	85	284	142	427	320	55%	176	25%	44	7	15.25	61	0.93
May	£44,000.00	14.2	85	284	142	427	320	55%	176	25%	44	7	15.25	61	0.93
June	£48,000.00	15.5	93	310	155	465	349	55%	192	25%	48	8	14.75	59	1.05

"If you know what your inputs are and you measure them consistently, you will get consistent outputs."

– Neil Ryland, Chief Revenue Officer, Peakon

Peakon

"If your revenue target is a certain amount, understand exactly how many deals you need, what the average deal value is and how many opportunities you need to convert. That feeds into the capacity which is: how many SDRs you're going to need."

– Nazma Qurban, Chief Revenue Officer, Cognism

Cognism

"Ask yourself what success looks like. If you have to secure 40 meetings in a month, how many cold calls do you have to make to book those meetings? How much time do you have to spend on LinkedIn or anywhere else looking for prospects? How many emails do you need to send per day to hit those numbers?"

– Nigel Dunand, Director at Sandler Training

Sandler Training

Individual metrics or KPIs

As well as high-level team metrics, it's vital to track individual metrics, or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). They're the only way that you can measure how well your outbound team is performing. Tracking sales KPIs is particularly important if you work in the B2B SaaS sector, where deals are signed and revenue is calculated on an ongoing, monthly basis.

Both halves of Cognism's outbound team are tracked using different sets of KPIs. These are the KPIs for our SDR and BDM teams:

SDR KPIs

These are the KPIs tracked by Cognism's Sales Development Representative (SDR) team.

PRODUCTIVITY

Emails sent

The number of emails an SDR sends during a specific time period.

Calls made

The number of phone calls an SDR makes during a specific time period.

LinkedIn activity

How many LinkedIn InMail and connection requests an SDR sends and receives during a specific time period.

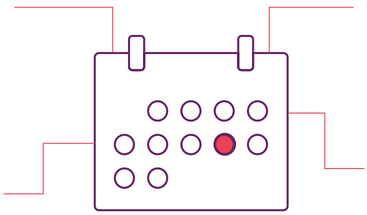
SUCCESS RATES

Meetings booked

How many meetings an SDR successfully books in the calendar during a specific time period.

Meetings attended

The number of meetings booked by the SDR where the lead shows up.



Booked to attended ratio

The number of meetings booked vs. the number of meetings attended.

Meetings booked based on lead source

Whether the lead was sourced via inbound or outbound methods.

BDM KPIs

These are the KPIs tracked by Cognism's Business Development Management (BDM) team.

BDM METRICS

Average deal value

The average dollar amount of each BDM's deals.

Demo attended to opp won rate

The number of demos attended vs. the number of opportunities won.

MONTHLY RECURRING REVENUE (MRR)

Amount

The amount of MRR booked by each BDM, in dollars.

Target

The MRR target for each BDM in dollars.

% of target

The percentage amount of MRR won by each BDM vs. their target.

DEMOS

Number of demos booked

The total number of demos booked by SDRs for each BDM.

Number of demos attended

The total number of demos attended for each BDM.

INBOUND VS. OUTBOUND

Inbound conversion rate

The percentage of leads converted from inbound.

Outbound conversion rate

The percentage of leads converted from outbound.

Inbound won

The total number of deals won from inbound.

Outbound won

The total number of deals won from outbound.

Inbound revenue won

The total amount of revenue generated from inbound, in dollars.

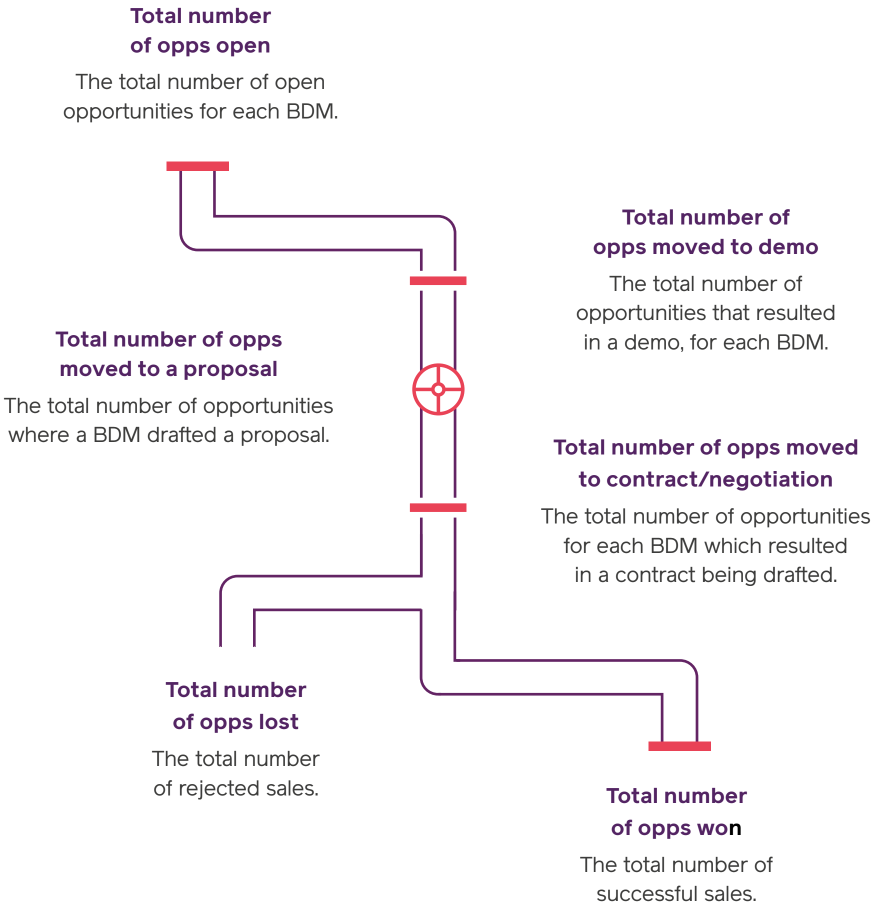
Outbound revenue won

The total amount of revenue generated from outbound, in dollars.

Total revenue won

The total amount of revenue generated from both inbound and outbound.

PIPELINE


Total number of opps open
The total number of open opportunities for each BDM.
Total number of opps moved to demo
The total number of opportunities that resulted in a demo, for each BDM.
Total number of opps moved to a proposal
The total number of opportunities where a BDM drafted a proposal.
Total number of opps moved to contract/negotiation
The total number of opportunities for each BDM which resulted in a contract being drafted.
Total number of opps lost
The total number of rejected sales.
Total number of opps won
The total number of successful sales.

Setting benchmarks

How do you set benchmarks for your B2B outbound team? One idea put forward by Collin Waldrip, Sales Development Manager at SalesLoft, is to take the top three or five performers in your team. Study their performance (e.g.: calls made and account conversion rates) and work out what the averages are for each KPI.

Then, communicate those averages to the wider team as the “benchmarks” that every SDR or BDM should be aiming for.

“Take your top three or five performers. Get their average metrics for the last month or quarter. On average, how many calls did they make every day, how many emails, how many LinkedIn touches? Then make those averages the foundation benchmarks for the rest of the team.”

– Collin Waldrip, Sales Development Manager, SalesLoft

SalesLoft

“Review your data on a weekly basis. Don’t wait until the end of the month or the end of the quarter. Doing this will help you ensure your metrics are being met.”

– Nazma Qurban, Chief Revenue Officer, Cognism

Cognism

3. Creating a culture that supports your team

No matter the structures or processes you put in place; in the end, a successful B2B outbound operation all comes down to the people. Issues of hiring, retention, incentives and progression are critical. If you want to create a scalable outbound sales team, you have to hire highly-motivated people and build a supportive culture around them.

We’ll be dealing with this all-important concept of culture throughout this section.

Hiring

How can you find those highly-motivated individuals who will motor your outbound sales? The SDR role requires singular people with very particular qualities.

In B2B outbound, these are the type of people you want to hire as SDRs:

- They must be **resilient** and capable of dealing with rejection every day.
- They must be **overachievers** - in their personal lives, if not their careers.
- They must be **enthusiastic** about a career in sales and developing their skills.
- They must be **creative and tech-savvy** - able to communicate in-person and by phone, email and video.

"You need to take a step back and understand what are the must-have characteristics for a career in sales."

– Collin Waldrip, Sales Development Manager, SalesLoft

SalesLoft

"I always want somebody who wants to progress and learn in sales specifically. The individuals who perform really well in an SDR role are those who are very focused on developing their sales skills."

– Nazma Qurban, Chief Revenue Officer, Cognism

Cognism

"A good SDR must be articulate. You need product knowledge and also the verbal skills to communicate that knowledge to others."

– Karen Muldoon, Sales Leader, Zendesk

zendesk

Top 5 SDR skills

It's important to stress that while the SDR role is entry-level, it's by no means easy or simple. Being an excellent SDR requires a great deal of skill and hard work.

David Bentham is Cognism's Inside Sales Director, overseeing a team of busy SDRs. He is an expert when it comes to scaling a B2B outbound sales team. We asked him for his top five skills that every SDR needs to master.

1. Organisation

To be a top SDR, organisational skills are imperative. It may not be the most glamorous part of the sales process, but it's nonetheless essential. Your admin game has to be strong!

At Cognism, we have a motto: "*If it's not in the CRM, it doesn't exist.*" Most other sales teams will have a similar philosophy. Calls need to be logged quickly and in detail. You need to create follow-up tasks that others can follow easily.

It's vital to have an in-depth technical knowledge of your CRM, to help your team, but also yourself. For example, if you can quickly build reportsther, you can better analyse your own performance and improve it.

2. Active listening

Ideally, for a cold call, you want the prospect to be doing **70% of the talking.** You, the SDR, should only be talking for 30% of the time. That means you need to be a good listener.

The best SDRs listen carefully to what the customer says, as well as how they say it. Then, they respond accordingly. It's being able to do this that stops you sounding like a robot, which can happen quickly if you don't have a handle on it.

You might be making hundreds of calls a week, but your prospect wants to think that they're the only person on your mind!

3. Knowledge

To be a top-performing SDR, you need to know your stuff:

- Your product.
- Your industry.
- Your competition.

If you can demonstrate a breadth of knowledge to your prospects, you'll gain their trust. They will then be more open to your message and be more likely to book demos and attend meetings.

4. Creativity

Think of the number of cold calls, emails, LinkedIn messages and everything else a prospect receives every day; the best SDRs find a way to stand out from the crowd.

In 2019, standard sales training tells SDRs to create personalised emails based on the articles prospects write, or their educational background etc. – but now, everyone is doing that! It's all about staying ahead; thinking outside the box to get noticed.

Video is an excellent tool for creative SDRs. It's a quick and easy way to get attention. Plus, it produces results - video has been shown to **triple response rates** and increase the number of meetings booked by 500%!

5. Passion

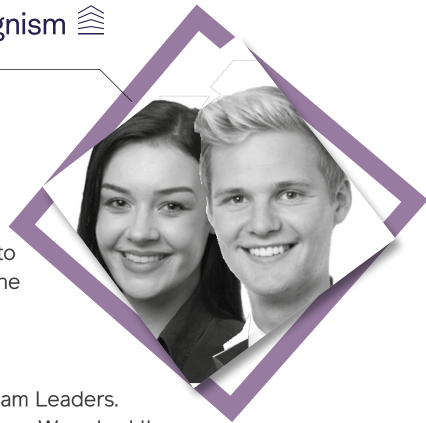
Everyone needs to have a passion for what they do if they're going to become successful. The best SDRs are "sales geeks". SDR work is famous for being difficult and repetitive at times. However, the best will seek perfection within those constraints. They will consume books, articles, webinars and more. They will own the process of getting better.

This passion is what keeps you coming back, staying engaged in a repetitive job where you face a mountain of rejection.

David's final thought

"If you're an SDR, you should be looking to master these skills every day. Curiosity is the key. When you are genuinely curious about your prospect and how you can help them, you will succeed. When you have a sense of curiosity about other ways of doing things and how you can get better, you will win."

Cognism



10 questions to ask when hiring an SDR

How can you find people who demonstrate all these qualities? For most sales leaders, it all starts with the interview. You have to ask relevant, searching questions that'll help you determine if the candidate is a good fit.

Harry Brown and **Catherine Gardner** are Cognism's Sales Team Leaders. They're in charge of the SDR recruitment process at our company. We asked them what they look for in an SDR candidate, and the top 10 questions they would ask during an interview.

"A good SDR interview should be like qualifying a lead," Harry told us. *"You have to qualify the candidate. Are they a good fit for your company? It's not about asking questions simply to progress the interviewee to the next stage or not - you have to pick up on other things as well."*

Catherine agreed. *"There are things you have to look out for during the interview. Their tonality, are they articulate, do they have confidence when speaking to strangers? Are they able to think on their feet? Some of our top questions aren't the usual 'sales interview' questions. Some candidates are thrown off by those questions, but the best ones aren't. That's a good indicator that they'll be able to handle the pressures of a fast-moving sales job."*

"The big thing we look for at Cognism is, do they fit into the company culture?" Harry said. *"Are they going to fit into the team, will they work well with others? A good sales team is like a family and especially at Cognism, we have a very diverse group of people working for us. It's very important that we maintain that culture."*

With all this in mind, Harry and Catherine selected their top 10 questions to ask when hiring an SDR. They also gave their thoughts on why you should ask them.

Question 1: What do you know about the role you have applied for?

HARRY:

"This is a good first question to ask. As the SDR role is heavily weighted towards cold calling and outbound sales, it's important for prospective candidates to know exactly what they're getting themselves into. This kind of work, day in day out, isn't for everyone. It can be very gruelling and there can be long periods where all you get is rejection. We want to hire people who will be happy in the position."

Question 2: Why are you interested in a sales role?

CATHERINE:

"Along the same lines of the first question, we want to interview candidates who know exactly what they want to do. This question helps us understand both what they perceive a sales role to entail, helping us align candidates to our working culture, and what motivates them. Understanding what motivates a new starter early on is the most important factor in ensuring their success in the role."

Question 3: What do you understand about our product or service?

HARRY:

"A lot of candidates for our SDR positions will be sent to interviews by recruiters. We know exactly how we have prepped those recruiters. Asking this question helps us to separate those candidates who simply recite from the recruiter's hymn sheet and those who have actively done their own research on what we offer."

Question 4: What do you know about the company journey?

CATHERINE:

"At Cognism, we pride ourselves on our company journey. Similar to question 3, knowing a candidate has gone out and made the effort to learn about the company can really set them apart from the rest."

"What we're looking for in SDR candidates are high achievers. We want people who see a sales target and want to do even better. Those who do the bare minimum preparation are unlikely to want to achieve above and beyond the targets we set for them."

Question 5: What's your ideal workplace culture

HARRY:

"Retention is usually something that's difficult to maintain in entry-level sales roles. At Cognism, we're very proud of our 98% retention rate. One of the main reasons for this is that we align candidates and our company culture during the interview. This question helps us to do this. It also shows candidates that we care about their working lives and gives us a chance to really sell the business to them!"

Question 6: What traits does your ideal leader embody?

CATHERINE:

"Following the same lines as question 5, we want to understand exactly where a candidate sees themselves and how we can align the business with them. What kind of support would they be looking for? It's a good question because it also helps us to review our own processes. Are we missing out on something that we should be providing to our new SDRs?"

Question 7: Without being too personal, can you tell me about a time you've overcome a challenge?

HARRY:

"All too often in sales interviews, candidates state classic characteristics that they believe to be important without backing it up with evidence. I ask this question to understand how a person has demonstrated resilience."

"It's a vital trait that every SDR must have, due to the highs and lows of the job. Asking the candidate for a real-world example will help you as an interviewer determine whether they genuinely possess this quality."

Question 8: What non-sales skills would you like to work on during your time at Cognism?

CATHERINE:

"Rather than asking a simple strengths and weaknesses question, which candidates often prepare for, ask this question! It'll help you judge if the candidate is able to think quickly. Another important SDR trait!"

"When you're cold calling, you'll be speaking to people from all walks of life, from receptionists to CEOs. You'll be asked difficult questions with no preparation. This question will show you if the interviewee has what it takes to face that."

Question 9: Do you have any questions for me?

HARRY:

"It seems basic, but it's always important to give candidates the opportunity to ask questions about the role, company and expectations. The best interviews I've conducted have had a near 50-50 split of me asking questions vs. the candidate asking questions. It should be a two-way conversation."

"You need to sell the role to the candidate as much as possible. Especially if they've come from a recruitment agency, as chances are they'll have a high number of interviews in any given week. You want to be memorable. The more buy-in you get from the candidate early on, the greater the chance that they'll stay on and find success at your company. That's a win-win situation for both parties!"

Question 10: If you could do this interview again, is there anything you would do differently?

CATHERINE:

"At the end of the interview, just as we're preparing to part ways, I always ask the candidate to reflect on their performance. It's unrealistic to be 100% amazing during an interview, and we find that candidates often leave us wishing they had done something more."

"This is a question you can't prepare for, so it demonstrates if the candidate can think on their feet. It also gives them the opportunity to display their analytical ability. We want candidates who are accountable for their own actions, strive to do better and learn from every experience."

Promotions and compensation

A lot of SDRs aren't after greater compensation for their efforts - they're after greater recognition. SDRs often feel like they're at the bottom of the company ladder and they can be too easily ignored. A tactic used at Cognism to counteract this is to foster a culture of micro-promotions, where top-performing SDRs are elevated to mentor or team leader roles.

Compensation schemes should also be highly personalised to fit the life goals of each SDR. This will give them greater motivation to succeed in a repetitive job. If, for example, one of your SDRs wants to a new car, then you can pivot commission payments as saving up to buy it!

"It's very important to set out clear, well-defined progression plans and to manage expectations with individuals."

– James Ski, Founder and CEO, Sales Confidence

SALES CONFIDENCE

"Creating a visible culture of performance and reward has been core to Cognism's success."

– Nazma Qurban, Chief Revenue Officer, Cognism

Cognism

"SDRs really just want recognition. They often feel like they're at the bottom of a company. Ask yourself: am I making sure that a rep is recognised if they're doing something right?"

– Collin Waldrip, Sales Development Manager, SalesLoft

SalesLoft

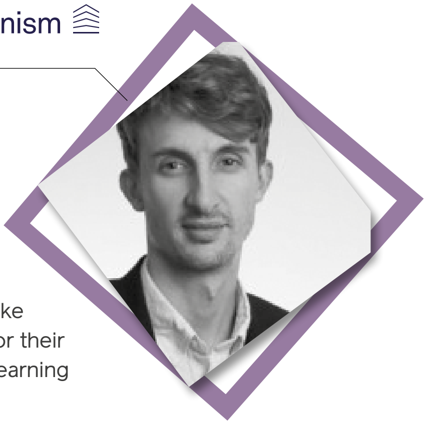
Training

The days of fortnight-long sales training workshops are long gone. Today's generation of salespeople expect and respond best to a dynamic training structure.

At Cognism, we pride ourselves on being able to ramp up new SDRs in 3 days! It's a big reason why our company has scaled so well (from 0 to over 500 customers in 3 years). We can take enthusiastic but inexperienced salespeople (98% of Cognism's B2B sales team are recent graduates) and get them match-fit for selling in 72 hours.

How do we do it? **David Bentham**, Inside Sales Director at Cognism, returns to share our company secrets.

Cognism



How to ramp up an SDR in 3 days

1. Don’t overtrain

Here at Cognism, we’re firm believers of getting stuck in. Unlike other companies who provide week-long training sessions for their new SDRs, we only provide our new starters with 2 days of learning before we get them on the phones.

We give them all the information they need to get started quickly. Just the basics - a little product knowledge, a little cold calling roleplay - and no more.

We also believe in individuality in selling. We don’t want robots all following the same script. Instead, what we prize are people with passion, energy and flair.

As a salesperson on the phone, you have to make an immediate impression. People who’ve just started a new job have a lot of drive and motivation in their first few days. It’s good to take advantage of that “new job energy” and get them selling as quickly as you can!

KEY TAKEAWAY:

A short training schedule for new SDRs is the perfect way to take advantage of that initial “new job” energy.

2. Put a robust support system in place

On their first day in the office, every new SDR is allocated a mentor who sits next to them. Typically, the mentor will be a senior colleague in the SDR team - someone who’s done the job before, someone who knows the ropes and understands the pressure.

It’s the mentor’s role to support the SDR as they’re being ramped up. They help them to set goals, get settled into the office environment and get used to the different processes and procedures. Over the first 2 days, the new SDR will sit beside their mentor and listen in as they make cold calls. A new joiner can get a lot of value from seeing how a senior colleague approaches the art of selling.

The mentor-mentee scheme is all about creating a safe space for new starters, where nothing is out of bounds. We have a saying at Cognism: *“no question is a stupid question.”*

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Encourage your new SDRs to ask questions. For them, it's the best way of learning quickly – and making them feel valued in those crucial early days in the role.

3. Make use of content

There is a wealth of content out there now for B2B salespeople. Much of it is freely available. There are all manner of guides, ebooks, playbooks, webinars, whitepapers and podcasts (such as this one, for example!).

As a sales team leader, you can help your new SDRs out massively by making use of this content. Build up your own resource library and share it with your new starters.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Let your SDRs go through your content library at their own pace. Remember that different people work in different ways and at different speeds. Let each SDR find his or her own value out of your content library.

4. Deliver personalised learning

Everyone learns differently. Just as we don't want conformity in selling, we don't want conformity in learning, either!

When it comes to training our salespeople, Cognism is very different from most other companies. At other businesses, they train all their salespeople the same, using the same materials and the same uniform style. We don't do that. We provide our new SDRs personalised learning materials. We recognise that people like to learn differently from one another and so we provide a variety of training methods. For instance:

- **Saif Khan** joined Cognism as an SDR in June 2019. He found that the group training and product knowledge sessions in the first 2 days were the best way for him to learn.
- **Elizabeth Alli** was another new SDR in June 2019. Her preferred learning method was to sit with her mentor, listen in on cold calls and get started on the phone quickly.
- **William Gay** also joined us in June 2019. He gained a lot of motivation and confidence from listening to sales audiobooks which Cognism provided.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Diversifying learning for your SDRs is a simple thing to do, but it will help you get the best out of them.

5. Get them started!

All the learning and mentoring in the world can't compare to actually doing the job. It's still the best way for anyone to learn and get better.

So, after 2 days, we stop the learning and get our new SDRs on the phone! From the third day on, their working life is 100% cold calling. Are we worried if they make mistakes? Not a bit - making mistakes is a vital part of gaining experience and improving your skills.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Don't throw your new SDRs entirely in the deep end, though. Make sure their mentor is still there to answer any questions or concerns they might have. Have the mentor sit in on their mentee's cold calls, make comments and suggest improvements.

Results

A common concern we hear from other companies when we explain our ramping up method is: *"Aren't you just burning through leads?"*

Not at all! We can tell you that this approach works. Every new SDR at Cognism started on a Monday and they were ramped up to cold calling prospects in 3 days. By Friday, every one of them had booked a demo!

Still not convinced? Take a look at these results:

- Less than one month after he joined us, Saif was booking up to 7 SQLs a week.
- In her second week in the role, Elizabeth booked 8 demos after 300 calls.
- 6 weeks after starting, William hit his July target halfway through the month.

Other training strategies

There are many other training strategies which can help new SDRs. Here are some of our favourites:

Call libraries

A central resource of recorded cold calls, categorised by persona.

Sales camps

Training days based around topics picked by the team (e.g.: objection handling, email sequences).

Cold call workshops

Weekly meetings where the team listens to the week's worst cold calls and discusses areas for improvement.

Persona training

Recently-closed prospects are invited into the office and speak with the SDRs about why they bought the product.

"Training is sitting in a room and absorbing information to apply at a later date. The fact is, it's better to learn from experience and actually doing the job."

– James Ski, Founder and CEO, Sales Confidence

SALES CONFIDENCE

"We really focus on the phone. When a new SDR is onboarded, for the first 2 weeks, all they do is call."

– David Bentham, Inside Sales Director, Cognism

Cognism

Generating leads for B2B outbound

You've gone through the recruitment process, you've hired some top SDRs and ramped them up quickly. The next question is: *who are they going to reach out to today?*

The answer should be on your B2B sales lead list; a list of contacts you can move through your sales funnel to become customers. However, so many businesses waste time and leave money on the table by using lead lists that are inaccurate and out of date. That's bad news for **B2B lead generation**; if you don't have an accurate list of target customers, how can you sell?

Let's look at how you can build a list of leads that take your sales to the next level.

1. Define your ideal customer

When it comes to B2B lead lists, size isn't everything. What is important is that your list is well-targeted, with everyone on it having a problem that your product can solve.

Develop an Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) in your team. Your ICP is a comprehensive description of your perfect customer; the kind of customer that can find massive benefits from your product or service, while also being able to give you enough value in return to make your business profitable.

Here are some tips for building your ICP:

- Analyse your current customer base and look for commonalities between your super-users.
- Look at the industries they are in. Consider company size, location and the job title of the buyer.
- Take this a step further by talking with your best customers about the challenges they face and how your product helps to overcome them.

All of this will help you paint a picture of your dream customer. This what Cognism's ICP looks like:

COGNISM IDEAL CUSTOMER PROFILE

Industry
B2B Sales, SaaS

Geography
USA

Company Size
50 employees

Budget
$10,000/month

Buying Process
Reliance on referrals for buying decisions

Decision Makers
CEO, CRO

Pain Points
Generating high-quality C-suite leads

Automating outbound email campaigns

Increasing sales team productivity

Business Goals
Short term: grow their client base by 20% over the next 3 months

Long term: raise their next funding round and expand their sales team

Technologies
Salesforce CRM

SalesLoft

Chili Piper

Attributes
Primary social media channel = LinkedIn

Gaining a reputation as SaaS industry thought leaders

Uses ABM strategies

2. Build your list

There are many different ways to build a list of sales leads. All of them can be effective. The method you choose depends on the budget you have at your disposal and how quickly you need to generate your leads.

The traditional way was to buy lists from lead generation companies. Today, companies can create content that is super-relevant to their Ideal Customer Profile, publish it on the web and social media and drive engagement that way.

LinkedIn is an excellent way to build your lists in 2019. Users voluntarily publish every detail of their business lives, which you can filter to create lists. However, the sheer size of LinkedIn (260 million monthly active users at last count), can make creating something comprehensive a challenge.

3. Scale your list

One of the problems with your list will be that many of the names on it will not be looking to buy your product at the moment you contact them.

Our advice is to use sales triggers. They're a good means of ensuring that when you do reach out, your product is more likely to be something a prospect is looking for. Sales triggers are events that signify if a company is in a position to make a B2B purchase.
Many different events could be sales triggers, including:

- **Receiving a new round of funding** - signifying the company has a renewed budget.
- **Appointing a new CEO** - this could point to a new direction for the company as the CEO wants to make their mark.
- **Hiring new employees** - which shows the company is confident about their future growth prospects.

You can look for sales triggers in the trade media for your industry or set up Google Alerts. However, the easiest way to scale your list using sales triggers is through specialist B2B lead generation software, such as **Cognism Prospector.**

4. Refresh your data

However you build your list, the problem with the data on it is that it deteriorates quickly. For example, every day, people move jobs or change responsibilities in their organisation. Around a third of lead data goes out-of-date every year.

This leads to sales reps wasting time trying to contact people on the list who have long since moved on. It leads to emails that bounce back. It leads to buyers using your competitors instead of you, because they don't know about you.

Your goal should be to keep your data as fresh as it can be. Use data enrichment tools, such as **Cognism Refresh**, to make sure your lead list data is always up to date.

The two major types of B2B outbound activity

The two main types of B2B outbound activity are cold calling and emails. We'll take a look at each of these in turn.

Cold calling

Salesforce defines *cold calling* as:

"Any attempt to solicit business from a potential customer, via the telephone, who may or may not know about your company."

Cold calling is a fast, cost-effective and powerful part of the outbound sales process. Rumours of its death have been greatly exaggerated; for many businesses in B2B and SaaS, cold calling is still very much alive. It's been identified that **92% of all customer interactions** happen over the phone.

"The death of the cold call is simply not true. People still buy people. It's important to build an outbound engine for human interaction."

– Neil Ryland, Chief Revenue Officer, Peakon

Peakon

"There is no such thing as cold calling. If you pick up the phone, and you're calling another human being, then that's warm."

– James Ski, Founder and CEO, Sales Confidence

SALES CONFIDENCE

Top cold calling tips

Cognism's sales team are experts in the art of the cold call. They've put together their ten top tips for refining and improving your cold calling strategy.

1. Planning makes perfect

Your cold calling strategy cannot be simply picking up the phone and getting on with it. You need to sit down and plan. If you're calling to pitch a product or service, you must take the time to educate yourself about it.

Doing this will increase your chances of success, because it changes the way you speak. If you know everything about the product you're selling, you will speak with confidence and authority. This builds trust with your prospects.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

A good cold caller must be a product expert - you must know everything there is to know about the product you're selling.

2. Define your objectives

Before you start, you must work out what you're looking to achieve from your cold call. Are you looking to secure a face-to-face meeting? Are you trying to invite them to an event? Keep your objective in mind and don't stray from it.

Remember, cold calling is just one part of a multi-stage sales process. It's not the entire sales process. Do what you need to do on your cold call, no more and no less. Don't bring up pricing, for example, if your mission is to book a demo - it's irrelevant at this stage.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Work out your goal for each cold call before you pick up the phone. Stay 100% focused on it and don't allow yourself to deviate.

3. Research your prospects

We've already spoken about ICPs and sales triggers. These can be very useful on your cold calls, in terms of knowing who and when to dial.

But, as helpful as they are, ICPs and sales triggers can only take you so far. You have to dig deeper into your prospects find out as much as you can about them.

Here are some tips:

Look up your prospects on LinkedIn. It's a straightforward way to gather valuable information which could "warm up" your cold call. LinkedIn profiles can also help you to verify if the prospect is in a decision-making position.

Has the prospect published a blog or written any articles online? If so, read them! They'll help you to work out the kind of person you'll be talking to. If the articles are data-heavy and full of facts and stats, then you know to adjust your pitch accordingly. Always try to speak the way your prospect speaks - it's a great way to build rapport!

Are there any career events in the prospect's life that you can mention? For example, have they recently won any industry awards or had a big promotion? Use these events in your cold call to help forge a stronger relationship with them. Remember that everyone likes to be flattered from time to time!

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Conduct your own primary research on every one of your prospects. Use the insights you gain to make your cold calls even more successful.

4. Timing is everything

There are times of day when people are happy to take cold calls. There are also times when it's just not convenient. Research when the best times are in your industry.

Contrary to popular opinion, lunchtime can be a very good time of day for cold callers. It's the time when PAs and secretaries ("*gatekeepers*") take their lunches, while the CEO or Director ("*decision-maker*") often works through lunch. You could cut out the gatekeeper altogether by calling at this time!

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Research the best times to cold call and get dialling! Study your most successful cold calls and see if they happened at similar times of day.

5. Get past the gatekeeper

If you do find yourself talking to a gatekeeper, you need to have a plan to get past them and get through to the prospect. Here are some ideas:

- **Try to sound senior** - keep calm! Speak confidently, slowly and concisely. If you can do this, you will sound experienced and important. The gatekeeper may be less inclined to hold you up.
- **Don't sell to the gatekeeper** - remember the gatekeeper is not a decision-maker, so don't pitch to them. In fact, say as little as you can get away with. But always be friendly and professional.
- **Give the impression that you know your prospect well** - use first names when you ask to speak to your prospect.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

More than 50% of cold calls *are answered by some sort of gatekeeper. Devising effective strategies to deal with them is an important first step for any sales rep.*

6. Qualify your prospects

Jonathon Ilett is the Sales Director at Cognism. He is responsible for managing our team of BDMs, as well as conducting demos and negotiating and closing deals with VP and C-suite decision-makers.

As such, he is well-placed to give us a run-down of cold call qualification, why it's important and the best tactics for getting it right.

What is qualification?

JONATHON:

"Qualification is the process of evaluating whether a prospect is a good fit for your product or service. The core principle is to identify the prospect's pain and judge if your solution can be prescribed to fix it."

Why is it important?

JONATHON:

"All salespeople are fighting against the clock. We've all got targets to hit and a finite amount of time in which to hit them. You don't want to be wasting your time on a prospect that isn't a serious contender for making a purchase. This is why qualification is important - it saves you time and means that you can quickly see if the prospect is a good candidate to be progressed to the next stage."

How can you qualify correctly?

At Cognism, we teach our SDRs to qualify cold call prospects according to the BANT criteria:

Budget	Is the prospect able and willing to spend?
Authority	Is the prospect the ultimate decision maker?
Need	Does the prospect have a problem that your product can solve?
Time	Is the prospect looking to buy quickly?

All of the questions we recommend our SDRs ask during their cold call qualification are based around these four areas.

Jonathon had some more tips:

JONATHON:

"Use open-ended questions to get the prospect talking. These are questions that don't elicit a 'yes' or 'no' response. They help to get a conversation going. The more information you get from the prospect, the easier it is to qualify them."

"If you find you can't qualify the prospect, walk away. Never close a client that you know you won't be able to deliver to."

Sample questions

- What does your current business development process look like?
- How does your sales team generate new leads?
- Who would normally be involved in buying decisions for new tech?
- What tools are you currently using?
- What regions are you looking to prospect into?
- Have you used data providers in the past?
- What did you like about them? What did you dislike?
- What are your current business growth goals?
- Are you in a position to take on new clients right now?

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Use the BANT criteria to qualify prospects on your cold call. Ask open-ended questions to make the process easier.

7. Use a script

Charlie Beale is a Business Development Manager at Cognism and the co-writer of our SDR Playbook. He was responsible for developing the cold call script that every new SDR at Cognism is given.

This script is at the heart of our B2B outbound strategy and we're delighted to present it to you now, in full!

The structure

The script is broken down into the following 5 segments:

1. Opening
2. Pitch
3. Questions
4. Conversation
5. Closing

It's important to stress though that this is used as a general guide, not an absolute rule. At Cognism, we encourage all our SDRs to find their individuality in selling. We all convey our messages in different ways, using different tones and vocabulary. The structure is there to help our reps with the flow of the conversation, not to pin down their every word.

After all, the last thing any prospect wants to hear is someone reading robotically down the phone - that's the surest route to cold call failure. When it comes to cold calling, one size definitely doesn't fit all.

Opening

This is the very start of your cold call. More often than not, if you're calling a senior-level prospect, it's the gatekeeper (typically a PA or secretary) who will pick up the phone.

"Hi, it's Charlie from Cognism. Is (first name) available?"

The gatekeeper will likely respond with:

"What's it regarding?"

This is your chance to get creative. If it's a first-time call, here are some replies you can use:

- ***"New business."***
- ***"Your client acquisition process."***
- ***"How you find new clients."***

Think about how you can make this work with your offering.

If it's a follow-up, try:

- "***Oh, I'm just following up on an email I sent to (first name)***."
- ***"I'm just chasing up on some emails. They'll know what it's regarding."***

When speaking to the gatekeeper, don't be afraid to think outside the box. It could make the difference between being put through to the prospect, or never having your message passed on.

One great tip which we teach our SDRs at Cognism is to always sound senior. If the gatekeeper thinks you're a management-level peer, rather than a salesperson, they're much more likely to transfer your call.

Assuming your call is transferred and the prospect picks up...

"Hi, it's Charlie from Cognism. How are you?"

"Good."

"Great! Look, (first name), I'll keep it brief as I appreciate you're busy. I came across (company name) online and I can see you do (B2B sales/marketing/other). Have you got 30 seconds for me to explain the nature of my call?"

It's vital to establish rapport early on in your cold call. Acknowledging that the prospect's time is limited, and asking for their permission to continue, is a good way to start.

"Okay."

Pitch

Once you've got the all-clear from the prospect, it's time to pitch. Again, the pitch isn't something that's set in stone. It can change depending on the SDR and who they're talking to. But there are 3 things it must be:

- **Clear** - the prospect must be able to understand it. Make sure you adapt the pitch for each prospect. It must be relevant to them and their industry.
- **Concise** - think of it as a springboard to further the conversation; you don't need to reveal absolutely everything about your business. One good tip is to think of your pitch as a tweet - what can you convey in 280 characters or less?
- **Easy to remember** - you don't want to get tongue-tied or lose the flow on your cold call. Keep in mind 2-3 facts or stats and use them every time.

An example would be...

"We help companies like yours prospect and gain new clients by giving you access to our lead generation tool that contains over 400 million B2B profiles."

Or...

"We provide companies like yours with direct and accurate contact details for key decision-makers in your target industries and locations. Ultimately saving you an abundance of time prospecting."

When you've delivered your pitch, it's time to progress to the next stage.

Questions

Asking open-ended questions (questions that don't require a simple "yes" or "no" answer) is one of the most essential things any cold caller can do. Remember that in any cold call, the prospect must do 70% of the talking, while the salesperson should do only 30%.

Why is this? Because the more the prospect talks and feels they're being listened to, the more likely they are to buy. In a recent study by HubSpot, **69% of buyers** said that the one thing they wanted from sales reps was to *"listen to my needs."*

Open-ended questions are a great technique for showing the prospect you're a good listener. They open up the conversation, allowing you to gain vital insights that'll help you in the last stages of the call.

Here are some good examples:

- ***"How do you currently go about finding new clients?"***
- ***"What does your outbound process look like at the moment?"***
- ***"How are you generating new leads?"***
- ***"What are your frustrations with your prospecting data currently?"***

These types of questions usually work very well with senior-level prospects, as they are focused around common pain points for a business - finding new customers, **B2B lead generation** and data quality.

Conversation

Having delivered your pitch and asked some searching questions, by now your cold call will be in full swing. There are a number of routes your call could go down. The prospect could hang up, or they could be very much open to a conversation.

There are a number of tactics you can use to keep your prospect engaged. Here are some good methods for getting the most out of your conversation:

Tonality

Tonality - the way you speak - is very important. You must always sound excited and enthusiastic (the old *"smile and dial!"*), especially if the prospect is being blunt and unresponsive. A lot of times, the prospect will be doing this on purpose to see how you react.

Remember that often you'll be calling people who are sales professionals in their own right, and know all the tricks of the trade.

Pauses and hyperbole

We teach our SDRs to use pauses and hyperbole to emphasise certain points. For example:

"Our lead generation tool gives you access to 400 million B2B profiles...globally."

Just using a simple pause will ensure that important points are quickly highlighted and are more likely to stick in the prospect's mind.

Mirroring

Doing this can lead to great results on your cold call. All you have to do is keep your ear out and listen to how the prospect speaks and the words they use. Then, imitate the way they talk. It's as easy as that!

What's the purpose behind this? It's proven to be an effective way of building rapport and increasing the odds of being "*accepted*" by the person you're talking to. It relaxes the prospect and makes them feel more comfortable talking to you.

Repetition

Don't be afraid to repeat what the prospect says in a questioning tone. You'll be surprised how much someone will reveal when they're questioned like this.

For example, if the prospect says something like:

"All my sales team manually find their leads."

You should then respond with:

"Your sales team find ALL their leads MANUALLY?"

Repeating their words back to them acts as a guide, leading them towards revealing more about their business - what the process looks like, how long it takes, the amount of resources they put into it. These are further pain points which you can then address one by one, steering them ever closer to the final stage in your cold call.

Closing

Following a conversation, you might be ready to go in for the close. If you feel like you can close early, if you've addressed all the key pain points and the prospect has shown interest in seeing your product in more depth - go for it!

"Look, (first name), I appreciate this is a lot to take in over the phone. It would be great to show you the tool and run some live searches for you. Have you got 15 minutes free later this week?"

At this point, you're likely to encounter some objections. The prospect will come back with some obstacles that you'll have to overcome. One of the most common ones that'll crop up at this stage is:

"Please could you send me some more info first?"

Some good responses to this are:

"I could send you some more information, but by the time you've read through it, I could answer the questions you have. What would you like to know?"

Or...

"It would be quicker and more useful to show you the platform. How does (day) at (time) sound?"

An element of judgement is needed, however. If you feel the prospect is on the move or very busy at the time, and perhaps pushing harder for a demo will irritate them, you need to judge whether sending them a further email would be easier.

In which case, a good option is to find out exactly what information they want in the email. Like this:

"What would you like me to include in the email?"

This will get the prospect to reveal their concerns, which you can then address on the phone - eventually leading them back to the close.

Try out the above strategies for handling objections and persuading a hesitant prospect to agree to a demo. Before you do so though, you must first gauge the receptiveness of the prospect. Some people do not respond well to being pushed for a meeting.

When you get to the close, always make sure you qualify the prospect further before you let them go. Like so:

"Great! In order to tailor the demonstration as best as possible, so you get the most out of it, I just need a few details. Please can you tell me about your target (industries/job titles/locations)."

This will help the BDM or account executive to personalise the product demo to exactly the prospect's needs, increasing the chances of a sale. Then, when that's over, it's time to end the call.

"That's great, thanks a lot for your time just now (first name). I really appreciate it. Do you need anything else from me or would you like me to include anyone else on the call?"

You can also repeat the agreed time of the demo back to the prospect. It's another way of making sure the demo stays in their mind and means that (hopefully!) they'll show up.

"That's great, thanks a lot for your time today (first name). I look forward to seeing you on (day) at (time)."

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Write down a cold call script that works for you - but don't stick to it rigidly. Follow a set structure but within that, give yourself room to be flexible.

8. Learn how to handle objections

Knowing how to handle objections during a cold call is a key skill that all B2B salespeople have to master. Especially so if you're working in a scaling business, which may have limited manpower, resources and technology at its disposal. When you're scaling, you need all the wins that you can get!

By learning how to handle objections smartly, you will increase your chances of closing a sale.

What is objection handling?

HubSpot defines *objection handling* as:

"Objection handling is when a prospect presents a concern about the product/service a salesperson is selling, and the salesperson responds in a way that alleviates those concerns and allows the deal to move forward."

It's important to remember two things about objection handling:

- **Objections aren't a sign that the prospect isn't interested.** Quite the opposite, in fact - they're an indicator that the prospect is interested, but doesn't yet have a full understanding of your product or service. It's your job as a salesperson to give them that understanding.
- **Most objections are entirely valid.** You can't just brush them off. You have to provide insight and give the prospect a compelling reason to buy from you.

Why is objection handling important?

Being able to handle objections effectively can determine whether a deal is won or lost.

Always address objections on your cold call as quickly as you can. The longer you leave it, the stronger the prospect's concerns will become - and the harder it will be for you to change their mind.

A five-point plan for cold call objection handling

In B2B outbound, preparation makes perfect. This is especially true when it comes to handling objections, which could come at any time during your cold call and be about any subject.

Don't improvise and make it hard for yourself. Instead, ensure you have a process in place. Cognism's sales team uses the following five-point plan when they face objections on their cold calls:

LISTEN	• Listen to the prospect and their objections. • The more the prospect feels like they're being heard and understood, the more likely they are to buy.
ASK	• Ask qualifying questions (see above). • The more information you gain from the prospect, the easier it is to handle their objections.
SOLVE	• Create a sense of urgency. Remind the prospect of the costs of not buying your product now. • Answer the prospect's most urgent objection first. This makes answering all the other, less troublesome objections much easier.
CONFIRM	• Find out if the solution you've offered meets the prospect's requirements. Ask them if they're happy with what you've suggested. • Repeat the prospect's words back to them - for example, if they've objected to the pricing, you can say, "*I understand the pricing is higher than you expected.*"
MOVE ON	• Don't spend more time on one objection than is strictly necessary. Listen to the objection, ask questions, define it, provide a solution - and then progress to the next one. • Never go back to an objection once you've addressed it.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Investigate each objection, ask searching questions, listen to the prospect, uncover the reason behind each one - and then use the information you've learned to handle them effectively.

9. Analyse and adapt

To understand how well your cold calling strategy is working, collect as much data as you can. Take notes on every call. Everything you hear is information that may come in useful later. Even if you're logging calls in your CRM later, don't rely on your memory.

What times of day are best to call? How many calls does it take to get through to a prospect? How long are you spending on each call? How can you improve these numbers? Record your calls and go through them with your mentor, to look for ways to enhance your skills.

One useful piece of advice is to A/B test your cold calls. Try out different versions and approaches. Do certain lines or ways of speaking work better than others?

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Be scientific about your cold calls - log your results, analyse the data and learn from any patterns that emerge.

10. Keep calling!

It's a well-known fact that cold calling is a numbers game. On average, it takes **eight cold call attempts** to reach a prospect. The more calls you make, the more opportunities you have of making a sale. So even if you've had a bad call or numerous rejections, always make one more dial.

The trick is to remain positive and persevere. Never give up. Rejection is a fact of cold calling life. But there are tactics you can use to turn even the most difficult cold call to your advantage.

If the prospect says they're not interested, ask them "Why?" This makes the prospect come up with reasons for their rejection - reasons that may help you to improve your pitch or technique in the future.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Don't take rejection personally. Stay professional, ask the prospect for feedback and thank them, even if it's negative. Then, take a deep breath and move onto your next call. Never let rejection affect your confidence!

B2B outbound email

Sales Hacker defines outbound email **as:**

"Outbound email is a type of email sent by sales reps and business developers to establish a connection with anyone they've identified as a potential customer. Email outbound is primarily used in B2B types of businesses."

Outbound email is a cost-effective way to reach lots of prospects quickly, so it's an attractive option for scaling B2B and SaaS companies with limited resources.

- **81% of SMBs** rely on email as their primary customer acquisition channel.
- For every $1 spent on outbound email, you can expect to see an average return of $42.

If you're a sales rep working in a scaling business, it's essential that you master the outbound email. Think about it this way - the outbound email is highly scalable - you can send out 1,000 emails a lot quicker than you can make 1,000 calls.

6 steps for building an effective B2B outbound email

Here are 6 tips on how to craft a B2B outbound email that delights your audience and makes them take action.

1. Focus on benefits, not features

The recipients for your outbound emails will more than likely be high-level decision-makers. They're not going to have much time on their hands. If they open your email, they want to know what's in it for them, pretty quickly.

That means you can't waste time telling them how great your company is. Your recipient doesn't want to know how long you've been in business or any other accomplishments.

So, get to the point! Identify your prospect's pain points (you'll know them from your ICP) and talk about how your product solves them. Focus on the benefits of your product and how it will improve the prospect's life for the better!

2. Drop names (in a targeted way)

Nothing makes a buyer sit up more than thinking a competitor has an advantage over them.

If a company in your prospect's industry is using your product and getting results, tell them. Don't be afraid to drop their names. If you can, use statistics to show how your product benefitted them. It's all social proof, which creates FOMO (fear of missing out!) for your prospect.

However - and this is absolutely vital - *just make sure the clients you mention are in the same sector or industry*. Social proof only makes an impact if it's targeted and relevant.

Another benefit of this approach is that it shows your prospect that you've done your research. It helps to position you as an expert.

3. Don't be boring

Possibly the most critical piece of advice here; make sure your outbound email is interesting! If your prospect is bored after the first paragraph, they're probably not going to bother reading the second one. You need to grab their attention straight away.

Don't be afraid to use humour in your email. You can also be provocative. A conversational style usually comes over well.

The best advice is to judge your audience. The ideal tone of voice will differ depending on the seniority of the client. Using slang, emojis and text speak probably won't work on company CEOs - but may produce good engagement from marketing agencies, for example.

4. Always include a Call To Action

Your outbound email must have an overarching goal. It could be to book a meeting or demo or renew a contract; it could be to make people aware of an event and get them to register or buy tickets. Whatever it is, your goal will be something you want your recipient to do after they've read your email.

The only way to get your prospect to take action is to tell them what to do. This is your Call To Action, or CTA. Here are 3 CTA tips:

- If you are offering something for free (e.g.: trial, scoping), mention it in your CTA.
- If your offer is time-sensitive, tell them. Create some urgency!
- Make your CTA very clear. Don't have more than one CTA in an email.

5. Make sure your subject line stands out

The first thing your recipient will see when your email lands in their inbox is the subject line. When they see this, they will make an instant decision on whether your email is worth reading or not.

Your subject line has to be as good as it can possibly be. Here's Cognism's best practice on subject lines:

- Keep it short – 50 characters max.
- The subject line should match the content and tone of the email. Be honest!
- Use personalisation if you can.

6. Always test

If you're sending outbound emails at scale, chances are you'll be using email automation software, such as **Cognism Prospector**. This software will collect response data on your outbound emails, such as open rates, click-through rates and reading time. Study this data and use it to improve your email campaigns.

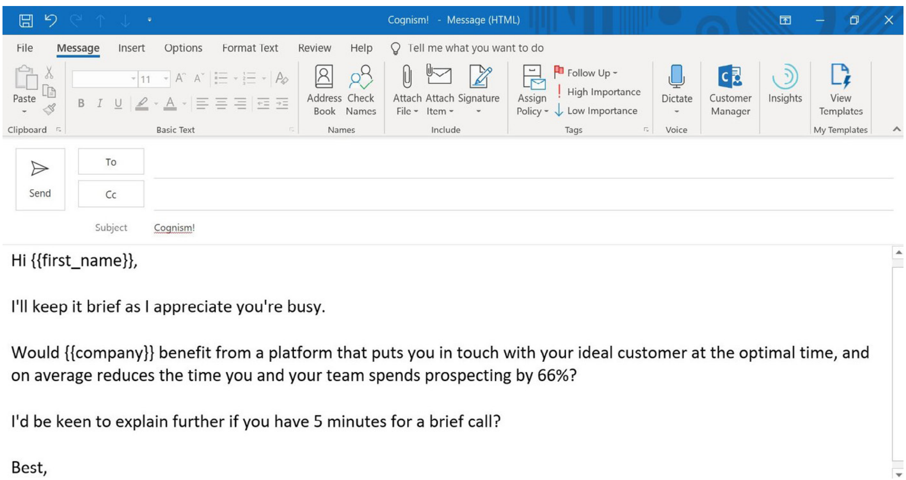
A/B test different messages to find out what resonates best with your target audience. You can also experiment with what days and times you send emails. Boosting responses, even by a small amount, can make a big difference.

5 examples of successful outbound emails

Looking for more practical advice? We've studied the **B2B data** from our own email campaigns and we have identified five outbound emails which had the highest response and engagement rates. They are drawn from all stages of the sales cycle.

These are Cognism's five most successful outbound emails, presented with commentary on why they were so effective!

1. The first email in a cadence

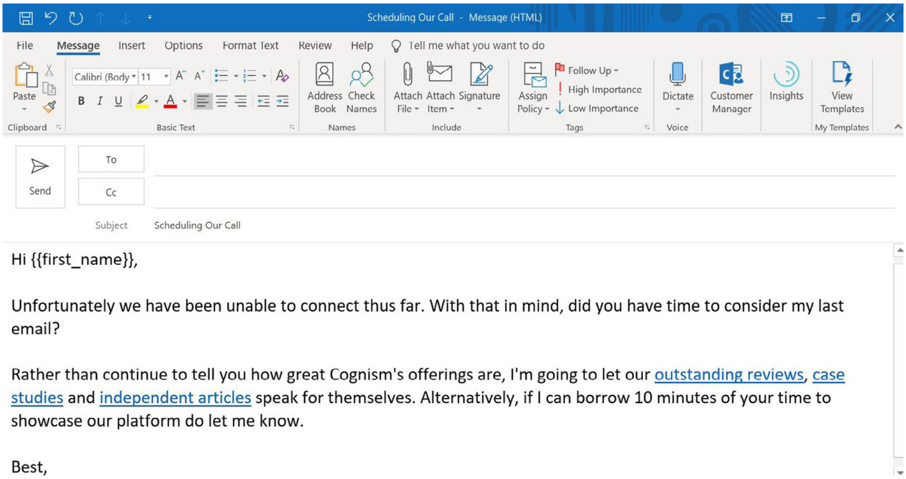


Why does this email work?

- **One-word subject line** - one simple word: "*Cognism!*" Our email campaigns have shown us that one-word subject lines lead to higher response rates. The use of our company name creates intrigue and makes sure it sticks in the prospect's mind.
- **Short and concise** - at only 60 words, this email is shorter than the average outbound email, which is 125-150 words. Yet our campaigns demonstrate that the shorter the email, the higher the response rates.
- **It's personalised** - the email mentions the prospect's name and their company name. We've found that including both increases conversion rates by up to 20%. Personalisation can determine the success or failure of an outbound email!
- **Easy to read** - sentences and paragraphs are as short as possible. If an outbound email isn't easy for a prospect to read, it'll simply go straight to 'Deleted Items'!

- **Facts and statistics** - the sales rep has included a statistic that shows the value that Cognism can deliver to the prospect.
- **Clear and simple CTA** - the prospect is being guided to one single outcome - are they free for a short phone call?

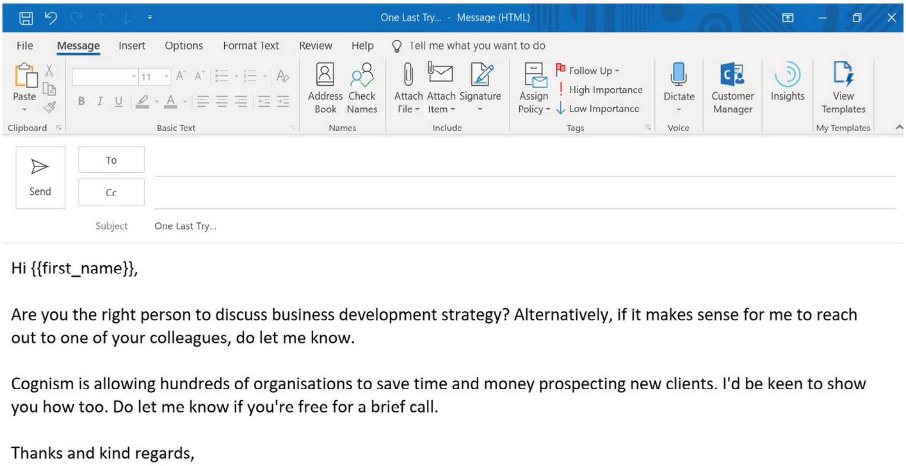
2. The follow-up email



Why does this email work?

- **Subject line as CTA** - the subject line acts as a de facto CTA, directing the prospect to take a specific action. Also note the length - only 19 characters.
- **Short and concise** - at 69 words, it's shorter than the average outbound email. The shorter they are, the more chance you have of getting a response!
- **Useful resources and advice** - the sales rep has included links to reviews, case studies and articles showcasing Cognism's value. The links aren't just to the Cognism website, but to articles hosted on external sites. Doing this shows the prospect that you're not just there to sell, you're providing value for free. The prospect is much more likely to remember you and engage.

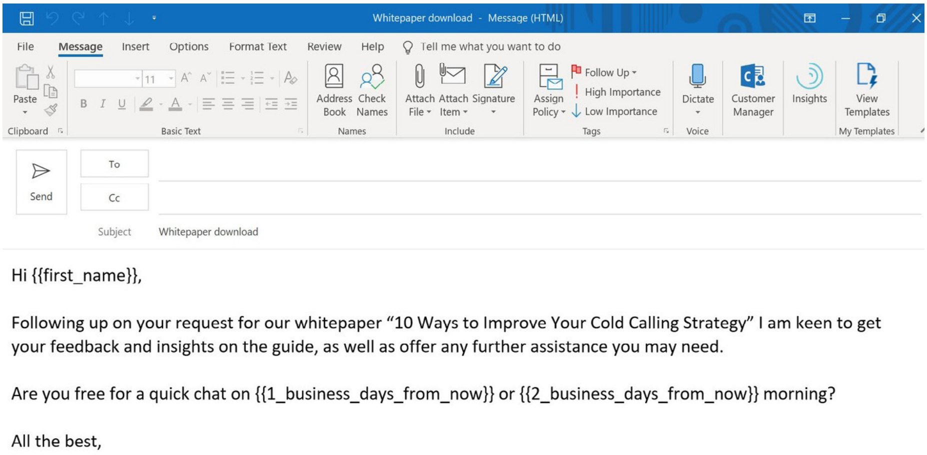
3. The referral introduction email



Why does this email work?

- **Humourous subject line** - don't be afraid to use a little humour! It's a good way to engage the prospect and get them to open your email. Remember the old business adage: people will forget what you did, people will forget what you said, but they will always remember how you made them feel. Again, note the length: very short at 15 characters!
- **Brief and to the point** - the sales rep has written a direct message that clearly states their reason for emailing. This email is only 68 words. Don't waffle; get to the point as quickly as possible.
- **Value statement** - a short statement displaying the benefits of Cognism has been included - the platform will save time and money. Think of a short value statement for the product or service you're selling. What is the most important thing, or the two most important things, that it does for your clients?
- **Short CTA** - always include a CTA. Think about what you want to get from the prospect.

4. An email to inbound contacts (following a whitepaper download)

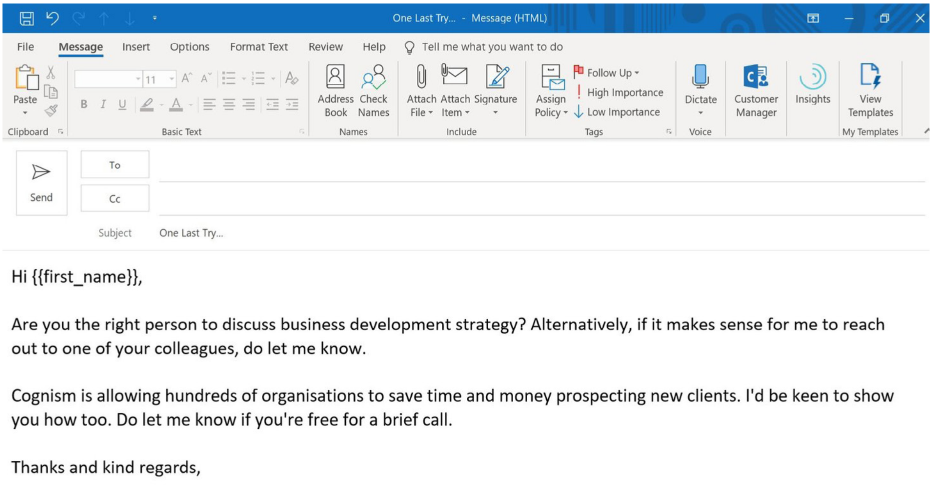


Why does this email work?

- **Clear subject line** - the subject line makes it very clear why the contact is being approached. Always use the subject line to share the reason why you're getting in touch.
- **Short and concise** - the shortest of our templates yet, at only 56 words. We've found that this email has got a 16% response rate, which is 4x the industry standard!
- **Show interest** - the sales rep is showing that they're interested in what the contact thought of the whitepaper they've downloaded. This is an excellent way to build rapport. With emails to inbound contacts, it's all about creating a relationship, which you can then build on to potentially make a sale.
- **Offer advice** - the sales rep is offering the contact some assistance. Again, this is a great way to get the contact to engage and build rapport.
- **Create urgency** - the CTA gives the inbound contact a choice of times in which to respond. The times are not too far in the future. This is a good strategy, as it gives the contact time to read the whitepaper, but not too long for them to forget about it.

5. The break-up email

We asked our friends at **Juro, the contract management platform**, which of their emails got the highest response rates. They provided us with this winning break-up email. **Alex Moir,** their Business Development Representative, told us that this email received very high response rates - both positive and negative!



Hi {{first_name}},

Are you the right person to discuss business development strategy? Alternatively, if it makes sense for me to reach out to one of your colleagues, do let me know.

Cognism is allowing hundreds of organisations to save time and money prospecting new clients. I'd be keen to show you how too. Do let me know if you're free for a brief call.

Thanks and kind regards,

Why does this email work?

- **Short and simple** - only 32 words. This break-up email cuts straight to the point, with a higher chance that the prospect will finish reading it, and therefore bother to reply.
- **An antagonistic tone** - the wording suggests to the prospect that they don't have the authority to make a decision on the matter. When read this way at the end of a long string of outbound emails, it can warrant negative responses. It can also result in a simple "I am the right person, but not right now" type of response, which can give you good leverage to reach out in a few months' time.
- **A referral request in the CTA** - by asking the prospect to pass them on to a colleague, the sales rep is creating another chance for engagement. If the referral is successful, it can lead to a very beneficial outcome. This is one of the most powerful tools in a rep's arsenal, as it gives you the credibility of a recommendation by someone from within the team.

B2B outbound cadences: combining cold calling and emails

Even more powerful than cold calls and emails on their own are combining the two in a sequence, along with other touchpoints (e.g.: social or video). This is known as a cadence.

G2 defines an outbound cadence **as:**
"A scheduled sequence of touchpoints created to establish a connection with a potential buyer."

This section will show you how to build a winning outbound cadence, and provide two example cadences aimed at different senior-level audiences.

How to create a B2B outbound cadence

When creating your outbound cadences, you need to remember three important numbers:

45 25 17

This is Cognism's formula for outbound success. We'll deal with each of these numbers in turn. First up...

45

45% represents the largest single demographic of buyers today. Surprisingly, these are **millennials** (the generation defined as being born between 1981 and 1996, with ages between 22 and 37 years old). This cohort has sparked a revolution in culture, politics, and business. They bring with them needs and aspirations which are markedly different from older generations.

What does this mean for B2B outbound? Quite simply, it means you have to up your game! The way millennials consume content is unique. They are online more often than their older peers and they engage across multiple channels - Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, to name just a few!

So, to engage and convert the biggest group of B2B buyers today, you need to understand where millennials spend their time and how they want to buy. You're prospecting an audience whose attention is split across many different channels. Your outbound cadences have to rise to that challenge if you want them to succeed.

With this in mind, here are some tactics for creating outbound cadences which convert millennials:

- **The first step in the cadence is crucial.** With so much noise and online chatter vying for millennial attention, you have to make a big first impression!
- **You will need to create multiple touch points across multiple channels.** Millennials are used to frequent engagement with their favourite brands and businesses. And it's not just the length of the cadence which matters - you'll have to diversify, pushing out your message on many different networks at once.
- **Personalisation is key.** Cognism's own research into outbound emails shows that simply by adding the prospect's first name and company name into the text of an email, you can increase conversion rates by up to 20%. But you can do even better than that! Forensically research each prospect. Swot up on their LinkedIn profile. Find out if they've recently won any awards, for instance. Use sales triggers to discover if they've been promoted or changed jobs. Leverage that information to create a truly personal cadence that won't fail to get responses.

25

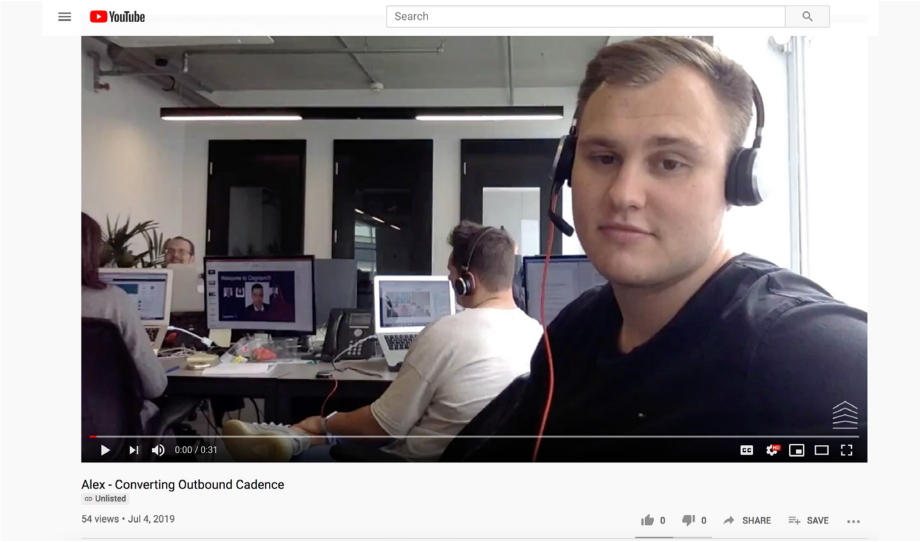
The second number in our formula, 25%, signifies the percentage increase in conversions you can expect to see, if you use video at the right time in your cadence.

When you think about the majority of your buyers now being millennials, it makes sense that video should play a key role in engaging with them. They've grown up in a world where online video has exploded in accessibility and popularity. Video must play a part in your outbound cadence - your conversion rates will thank you for it!

Here are some stats to back up the power of video, taken from our own research:

25%	If used in the second or third step in a cadence, video increases conversion rates by 25%.
95%	If video is used in a confirmation email on the day of a demo, attendance rates are lifted from 75% to 95%.
75%	75% of our late-stage prospects who received a personal video message from us decided to buy.

Here's an example of a B2B outbound video in action. This is a video recorded by **Alex Shorthose**, a Senior Business Development Specialist at Cognism. He sent it to one of his prospects at the end of the month. It's a great illustration of how video can be used to engage with potential buyers.



17

The ultimate B2B outbound cadence

There are a few things to note:

- **The first step must be multi-step.** Use phone and email together in the first step of your cadence.
- **You must include phone calls in your first step**. Our sales reps found that 80% of their most successful cadences contained phone calls in the first step.
- **Video increases engagement rates** – but it's best used further down the cadence. This is where it will have the greatest impact and increase scalability.

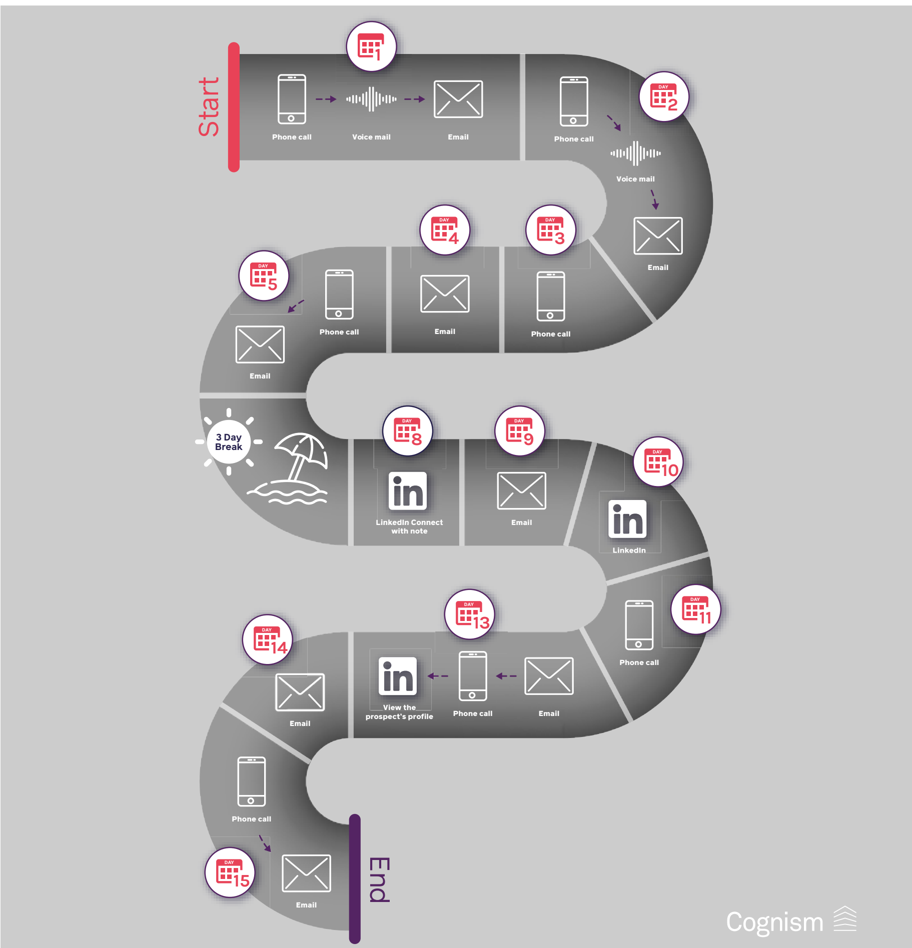
2 examples of successful B2B outbound cadences

Sales leaders

As a **B2B lead generation** platform, one of Cognism's biggest markets are sales leaders and directors. Outreaching to this senior-level audience is something we do every day.

There is a skill in communicating with this group, however. Their calendars are usually chock full of appointments and they don't have much time, if any, to listen to an outside sales pitch. Is there a technique for engaging with this audience quickly and in a way that maximises success?

We asked our sales team to provide us with a winning cadence geared at sales leaders. Here is an overview of the cadence:



The purpose of the cadence

The cadence is designed to be fast and hard-hitting. The intention is to create urgency, to connect with the prospect as quickly as possible and to get appointments booked in a short space of time.

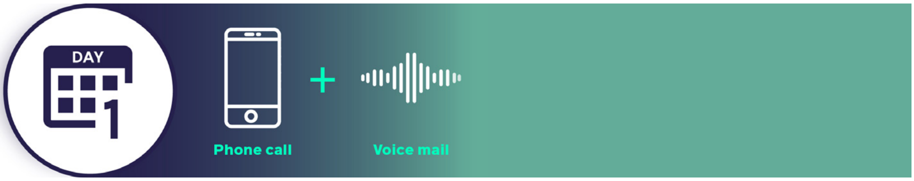
The ultimate goal is to get the prospect to convert to a meeting in 15 days. It's the cadence of choice for the sales rep who's working in a scaling company and wants to generate some quick wins.

Results

Here are the results generated by this cadence:

- 341 calls were made and 341 emails were sent.
- Of those 341 emails, only 5 bounced - a bounce rate of 1.47%.
- 116 emails were opened - an open rate of 34.52%.
- Of those opened emails, 38 of them had the prospect click on a link - a click-through rate of 32.76%.
- 10 emails received a positive response where the prospect booked a demo - a conversion rate of 2.98%.

The cadence



The first step is to call your prospect, pitch your value proposition to them and attempt to get them booked in for a meeting. It's an introductory call, but by trying to get a meeting booked straight away, the sales rep is building up some urgency.

If you can't get through, leave a voicemail explaining your product's value and promising to follow up with an email.

Follow this call on Day 1 with an email.

Subject: Cognism!
Sent: Jul 15, 2019, 09:15
From: roshan@cognism.com
To: jaroldan@salesforce.com

Hi {{first_name}},

I wanted to present myself as interesting and witty. Alas, I called and emailed instead...

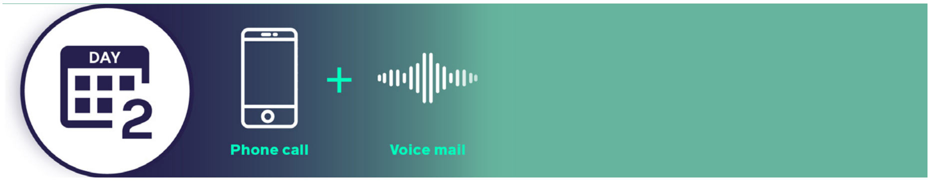
I am contacting you regarding Cognism- a software tool that helps you to lower your client acquisition costs by providing intelligent data for your business.

Would you be interested in finding out more?

Thanks in advance,

Keep this short and to the point. Remember that sales leaders have very busy lives and are more likely to respond to a succinct and snappy message. This email is only 53 words long.

A good outbound email should be based around your product's benefits, rather than features. It should demonstrate the value that your product can deliver to the prospect. Don't just reel off a list of product features - instead, think about the advantages that the prospect will gain from using it. You're much more likely to get a response that way.



Start the second day with a phone call showing your product's value. See if the prospect has considered your earlier emails and phone calls and if they're interested in booking a meeting.

Again, if there's no connection, leave a voicemail!

Scheduling our call

Subject: Scheduling our call
Sent: Jul 16, 2019, 13:05
From: roshan@cognism.com
To: jaroldan@salesforce.com

Hi {{first_name}},

I thought I'd touch base and see if we could pencil in a time to speak about how Cognism can help you. How is {{2_business_days_from_now}} looking for you?

Best,

The follow-up email on the second day is even shorter than the first - 31 words. The messaging is easy to read and simple to understand. It's demonstrating value ("Cognism can help you") while still reinforcing the intention to get a meeting in the diary.

The email ends on a strong CTA, asking the prospect to consider connecting on a specific date.

If you haven't had any traction over the first few days, now's the time to ask the prospect for alternative contacts. Call them, check if they're the decision-maker and if there's anyone else in their organisation that you should be talking to.

What's the purpose of doing this? If they are the decision-maker, it may spur them into a conversation. If they're not, they may provide you with the contact details of someone who is.

How Cognism can help {{company}}

Subject: How Cognism can help {{company}}
Sent: Jul 18, 2019, 09:05
From: roshan@cognism.com
To: jaroldan@salesforce.com

Hi {{first_name}},

I'm sorry we haven't been able to connect.

Cognism can help {{company}} in three ways:

- We save you time manually prospecting for new clients
- We provide intelligent contact data (incl. direct emails & phone numbers) so you will be at the front of your prospects' minds
- Smart sales triggers to give you unique insights and notifications as to the optimal time to reach out

Don't just take my word for it - check out our G2 Crowd Reviews here.

If you aren't the right person to deal with this, could you please point me in the direction of somebody who is?

Thanks in advance,

This email works in much the same way as the last phone call. The intention is to find out if the prospect is qualified to deal with your query, and if not, to get them to refer you to a better qualified colleague.

The email also keeps the value proposition to the fore. It provides three clear reasons why Cognism can make the prospect's life easier. It deepens the value proposition by providing something new - a link to a page of external customer reviews.

This phone call should also provide something new. Call the prospect and quote a relevant case study or industry statistic. It's a way of maintaining interest and making the prospect look again at your product.

A bit more information

Subject: A bit more information
Sent: Jul 19, 2019, 12:15
From: roshan@cognism.com
To: jaroldan@salesforce.com

Hi {{first_name}},

I thought I'd provide you with a bit more information around Cognism and illustrate exactly how we can help {{company}}.

I've researched {{company}} and the wider industry and it's clear that sales technology is growing rapidly. Companies need to embrace the technological change that's taking place to stay ahead of the game.

Cognism is a sales acceleration solution that will save you time and lower your client acquisition costs. I've attached some reading around how.

Would you be interested in having access to our platform so I can show you in more detail how we'll help?

Thanks in advance,

The purpose of this email is to provide knowledge and insight. By saying that they've researched the prospect's industry, the sales rep is building up trust and rapport. This is backed up by the attachment of a case study that's relevant to the prospect's industry. The email includes a clear value statement ("save time / lower costs").

Finally, it ends with a strong CTA. Never forget the ultimate goal of your cadence is to secure meetings!

Note: the cadence now includes a three-day break. This is to give the prospect time to read the materials you've provided, and also prevents them from getting fatigued.

After the three-day break, it's time to ramp up engagement. On the eighth day, connect with the prospect on LinkedIn. Include a polite note with your connection request. Boost their ego in no more than 20 words!

Remember to research the prospect thoroughly. It can really help you with this message. Have they recently written an article that you can quote? Have they won an industry award or been featured on an external website or publication? Leverage that information to keep your conversation going.

Scheduling our screen share

Subject: Scheduling our screen share
Sent: Jul 23, 2019, 08:55
From: roshan@cognism.com
To: jaroldan@salesforce.com

Hi {{first_name}},

I know how much of a good fit Cognism is for {{company}} and I would like to show you.

Can we schedule a 15-minute screen share? I will show you how Cognism will lower your client acquisition costs and grow your client base.

When's the best time for you?

Best wishes,

At this point in the cadence, it's important to offer the prospect something of value. The sales rep suggests a 15-minute screen share. This is something that won't take up too much of the prospect's time, while also giving them a fairly detailed overview of the product.

An open-ended question is used to close the email. Open-ended questions (questions that don't require a "yes" or "no" answer) are the best techniques for staying engaged with a prospect.

If they haven't responded already, the prospect may be getting a little tired of seeing your name crop up in their inbox! Defuse this tension by sending them a LinkedIn InMail.

Apologise for your persistence, but stick to your game plan. Tell them you really think your product is a good fit for them and you'd like to show them over a short demo.

The day after the LinkedIn message, call the prospect directly and repeat the same message. Apologise for your persistence, but try to persuade them to commit to booking a meeting.

Did I reach out to the wrong person?

Subject: Did I reach out to the wrong person?
Sent: Jul 27, 2019, 09:05
From: roshan@cognism.com
To: jaroldan@salesforce.com

Hi {{first_name}},

It's a shame we haven't been able to connect thus far.

Would you mind pointing me in the direction of someone who can help?

Thanks in advance,

This email is a simple request to be introduced to other stakeholders. Again, it may be the catalyst for the prospect to initiate a dialogue.

Call the prospect and repeat much the same message from the above email. You're sorry you haven't been able to connect but you'd like to move forward by contacting someone else.

Take some time to scroll through the prospect's LinkedIn page. Maybe like or comment on one of their recent posts. This shows that you're still very keen.

One last try...

Subject: One last try...
Sent: Jul 28, 2019, 13:00
From: roshan@cognism.com
To: jaroldan@salesforce.com

Hi {{first_name}},

I've been trying to reach you because Cognism will help {{company}} to reach new clients at the optimal times.

Can we organise a quick call to discuss this further?

If you're not the right person, please could you point me in the direction of somebody who is?

Thanks in advance,

This email is the last roll of the dice. It's simple, direct, short at only 52 words and includes everything you've communicated so far. If you get a response at this late stage - great! If not - it's time to move on to prospects new! Which brings us to...

DAY 15

Phone call

This is the break-up phase of the cadence. You've tried everything, but it hasn't quite worked. Give the prospect a call and tell them you recognise that now isn't the right time for them.

But...leave the door open. Don't write the opportunity off completely. Say that you'll get back in touch in 6 months' time. Who knows what might change for the prospect between now and then?

DAY 15

Email

Let's revisit this at a better time

Subject: Let's revisit this at a better time
Sent: Jul 29, 2019, 09:00
From: roshan@cognism.com
To: jaroldan@salesforce.com

Hi {{first_name}},

I have been trying to reach you for a number of weeks, as I know Cognism can help {{company}} to reach new clients at the optimal times.

Even though I know how much we can help, I will respect your silence as now may not be a good time for you.

I will try to get hold of you in the coming months. In the meantime, you know where I am should you need anything.

All the best,

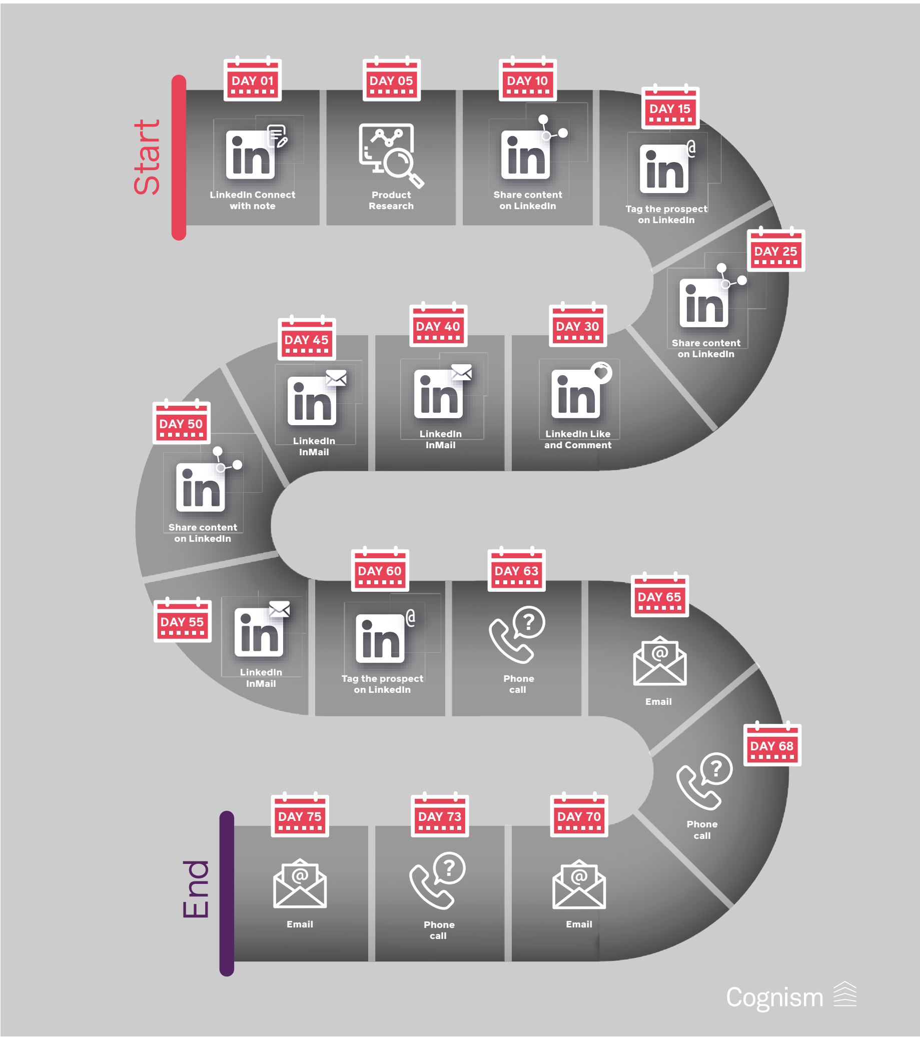
The final email in the cadence copies the messaging from the final phone call. It's a break-up, but it finishes on the intent to follow-up in the future. Until you hear a definite "no", the opportunity isn't closed...just put on hold!

CEOs

Every B2B salesperson worth their salt knows that engaging with CEOs can be a tricky business. Typically, they have little time at their disposal and they have needs and wants that are very different from their lower-level colleagues. This makes prospecting CEOs to be a difficult undertaking - difficult, but not impossible.

We asked **Charlie Beale**, Cognism's Business Development Manager, for a winning cadence aimed at CEOs. Charlie shared with us an epic 75-day cadence, which he's used before to engage with C-suite prospects. We also asked **Hector Forwood**, our Senior Business Development Manager, for his advice in pitching to this highly specific and specialised audience.

Here's an overview of the cadence:



The purpose of the cadence

Before you start out with this cadence, first of all forget everything you've learned prospecting to managers, team leaders, department heads and the like. Prospecting to CEOs requires a very different mindset. Don't go charging in asking for a meeting right off the bat; you haven't earned it yet! Expect it to take months of engagement before you get to that point.

This cadence isn't designed to get a quick win; quite the opposite, in fact. It's about building a relationship, establishing a meaningful dialogue and nurturing the prospect over an extended period of time. The usual sales patter won't work with a CEO. Instead, you'll have to show that you're...

- Fully prepared by researching them and their industry thoroughly.
- Ready and able to share relevant, insightful content.
- Focused on the challenges and pain points that affect them.

If you can do all that, then - and only then - you will get your meeting. As always in B2B outbound, but especially so in this case, persistence really will pay off.

Results

Charlie saw some impressive results by using this cadence:

- Email response rates of up to 15%.
- LinkedIn engagement rates of up to 52%.
- Asset download rates of up to 24%.

The cadence

Charlie Beale

Charlie Beale • 15:00
Jun 01, 2019

Hi {{first name}},

I want to make sure I have the right information when I call {{company}} about your lead gen. Where can I find out more about this, or is there anyone you can point me towards?

Thanks,

For a lot of salespeople, this first touch may seem counter-intuitive. It doesn't mention anything about the sales rep's business or product. It's not providing any useful information or memorable statistics.

What it is doing, however, is starting a relationship. By asking the CEO to provide you with information, instead of the other way around, you're increasing your chances of getting a response. CEOs are generally outgoing and they love to share knowledge and talk about their companies. They're used to being the public face of a business and being asked questions about it. If you can play on that, you'll find that the CEO will be more than willing to engage.

DAY 05 — Product Research

In the run-up to Day 5, take the time to complete detailed research of the CEO's company, product or service. Browse the company website and take notes on their offering and USP. Read any blogs or articles on the website, to get an idea of the company's tone and voice. Watch any videos or listen to any webinars or podcasts - especially if the CEO is involved.

If the company offers a free demo of the product, make sure you book yourself in for one. This way, you'll be fully prepared for future interaction with the CEO.

DAY 10 — Share content on LinkedIn

Ask your B2B marketing team (if you have one) if they have any content you can share on your LinkedIn feed. It can be anything - a blog, a video, a webinar - but it must be focused on the CEO and their business or industry.

If the content you require doesn't exist, work with marketing to see if they can produce something for you. A good piece of advice - and this is something that has helped at Cognism - is to hold a weekly meeting between your senior salespeople and marketers, to identify the content pieces that are needed going forward.

DAY 15 — Tag the prospect on LinkedIn

Find a relevant article (preferably one published by your own company) and tag the CEO in it. The purpose of this is threefold:

- It furthers engagement with the CEO - look out if they reply or like!
- It shows that you're keen to share knowledge, not sell a product.
- It keeps you and your business in the CEO's busy mind.

DAY 25

Share content on LinkedIn

On Day 9, you shared content about your company. On Day 25, you have to do something different. This time, you have to get personal. Share some thoughts about your industry. Focus on the pain points that might be affecting the CEO.

End your post with a CTA - a question asking for people to respond. If the cadence has been working well, then you may get a reply from the CEO!

DAY 30

LinkedIn Like and Comment

Scroll through the CEO's Recent Activity tab. Have they shared an article, or better yet, written one themselves? If so, like and comment on it - especially if it's relevant to your product or service.

DAY 40 — LinkedIn InMail

Now that you've seeded some good, valuable content, it's time to ramp up engagement. Send the CEO a LinkedIn message, including a short offer. If the CEO did recommend that you talk to a colleague, make sure you mention them! Leveraging internal champions will give you even more of a buy-in with the CEO.

It doesn't matter hugely if you don't receive a reply at this stage - this is just the first step in building a deeper relationship. Here's an example:

Charlie Beale

Charlie Beale • 13:00
Jul 11, 2019

Hi {{first name}},

Thanks for pointing me in the direction of {{colleague name}}. I really think there's a good opportunity for Cognism to help {{company}} find new customers.

Would you be open to a quick phone call to explore the possibilities?

Best,

DAY 45

LinkedIn InMail

If you don't receive a positive response on Day 40, follow up on Day 45 with another LinkedIn InMail. This time, instead of going for the standard sales message, try one of these tactics:

- Drop in a referral from an internal or external contact.
- Boost the CEO's ego by mentioning a recent occurrence in their career – an award win, perhaps, or good quarterly financials, or the completion of an important project – anything that will get their attention!
- Keep the student-teacher relationship going by asking them for something. A good idea is to look at their LinkedIn feed. Have they announced that they're going to be speaking at an event in the future? Most CEOs are active participants on the trade show and industry conference circuit. Use that intel to your advantage! But make sure the speech is relevant to your product or service.

Like so:

Charlie Beale

Charlie Beale • 18:00
Jul 16, 2019

Hi {{first name}},

I saw you're going to be speaking about {{topic}} at {{event}}.

I can't attend the event unfortunately, but I'd love to see a sneak peek of your speech. It sounds really useful!

Would you mind sending me your notes?

Thanks in advance,

DAY 50 — Share content on LinkedIn

At this point in the cadence, the content you share must be super-relevant and hyper-focused on the CEO's business or industry. Your best bet is to look at your own list of clients. Choose one based on the following criteria:

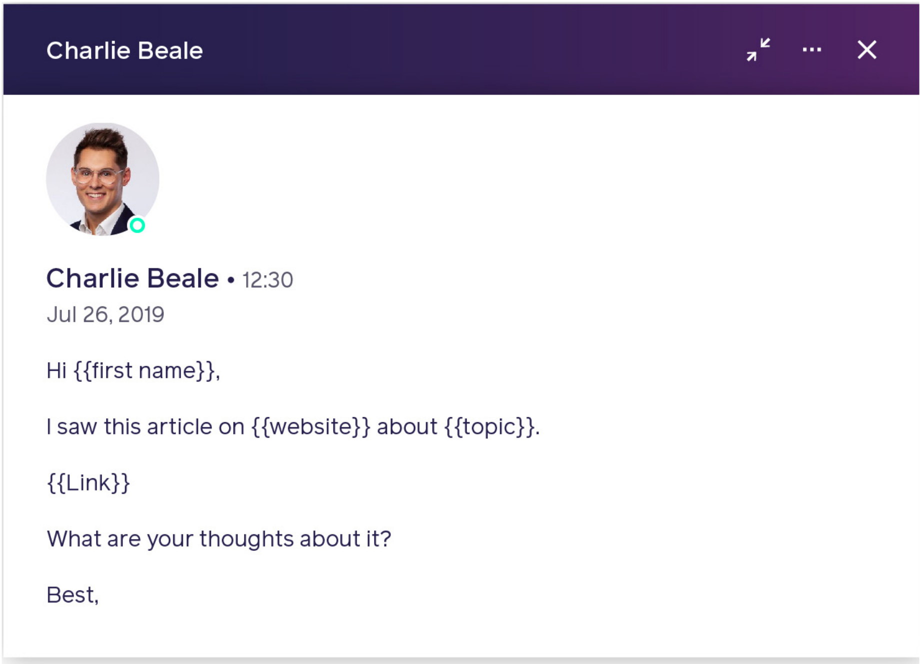
- They must be in the same sector as the CEO's company.
- They must be based in the same geography (or nearest to) as the CEO's company.
- They must be the same size as the CEO's company (e.g., a startup, SMB or enterprise).

Then, ask your marketing team to produce a case study for the client (if one doesn't exist already). Share the case study on your company's LinkedIn page and your own LinkedIn page. If the CEO sees it, they'll see how your business has helped another exactly like theirs - a powerful message which you can return to later in the cadence.

DAY 55 — LinkedIn InMail

Continue the mutual knowledge sharing by sending the CEO a recent article or industry report. Keep your eyes peeled for any developments in the CEO's sector. They will be watching the business news channels and websites like a hawk, so you should do the same.

Include a CTA asking them to respond. As ever, remember that CEOs love to share their insight and comment on events!



By now, you should've built up a good rapport with the CEO. You'll know the sort of approaches they like and the kinds of messages they respond well to. Find another good article or news story that matches their business and tag them in it.

DAY 63 — Phone call

The time has come - time to pick up the phone! Call the prospect and give them your best 30-second pitch about why your product matters and which pain points it can solve.

When calling a CEO, however, remember that the best times to call are very different from other workers. Here's Charlie Beale's advice:

- Mornings aren't usually a good time as the CEO will be distracted, planning and working through all the varied tasks they have to accomplish that day.
- Lunchtime is better. CEOs often work through their lunch break, while other workers are out. It's also a good time to reach the CEO without having to speak to the gatekeeper. Chances are, their PA or secretary will be out on lunch, meaning you can bypass them and get straight to the decision-maker.
- Later in the day or after working hours (5-8pm) are also good times to call an executive. Their colleagues may have already left for the day, meaning that there will be less activity in the office. The CEO may be more relaxed and more open to receiving a call.

DAY 65 — Email

For this touchpoint, you'll have to provide the CEO with a proof of value (POV) document. Typically, this is a longer-form document (maximum 2 pages), which sets out on a practical level how your product or service will help the CEO's business. The clue is in the name - you have to prove the value of your offering.

Unsure about what a good proof of value document should contain? Hector Forwood has some guidance for you:

- Start with a short introduction about the end goals. What is the best result the CEO can expect from using your product?
- Then progress to a list of benefits your product or service can provide. What are the 3 most important things you can deliver for them?
- Then give a POV timescale. List in detail the steps you'll need to take to get the prospect onboarded and using the product. Include the resources required from each company for each step.

- Set some customer success parameters. What will the prospect be required to do in order to maximise their chances of success?
- Make sure to include any legal considerations (if relevant and/or necessary).
- End the document with some bullet points detailing the immediate next steps. These can be anything from promising to provide more information by a certain date to setting a time for a follow-up call or face-to-face meeting.

DAY 68

Phone call

Use this call to check in with the prospect, if they haven't already replied. Try and schedule a meeting with them, as per the next steps from your POV document.

DAY 70

Email

Follow up on your POV document by sending the CEO something of benefit. A report detailing the difference that your product or service can make, or a comparison between your company and your biggest competitors.

This is the last touchpoint before break-up, so don't waste it!

What do you think?

Subject: What do you think?
Sent: Aug 10, 2019, 13:30
From: charlie.beale@cognism.com
To: jaroldan@salesforce.com

Hi {{first name}},

I thought I'd send you our latest battlecards, comparing Cognism to our main competitors.

What are your thoughts? I'd be happy to jump on a quick call to discuss this further.

Best wishes,

DAY 73

Phone call

You've done your best, but it hasn't worked. It's time to break up.

Give the CEO a call and tell them that you'll close their file...for now. Don't completely end it, though. Say that you'll check up in 6 months' time, just in case.

DAY 75

Email

This is the very last touchpoint in the cadence. Follow up your phone call with an email, repeating the same break-up message.

Not a good time right now

Subject: Not a good time right now
Sent: Aug 15, 2019, 09:00
From: charlie.beale@cognism.com
To: jaroldan@salesforce.com

Hi {{first name}},

Although I know Cognism could hugely benefit {{company name}}, I recognise that now isn't the right time for me to pursue this any further.

I'll stop reaching out, but in case finding new clients becomes a pressing issue in the future, please feel free to contact me at any time.

All the best,

Thoughts from a CEO

We asked **James Isilay**, Cognism's founder and CEO, how he likes to be prospected. He gave us the following tips:

- **Focus on the pain points.** They're likely to be the only things that a CEO will respond to.
- **Keep your messages short and simple.** Don't waste a single word. A CEO's calendar is full enough without having to read email essays! If your email is too long, it will just get deleted.
- **Be persistent. It will take some time for a CEO to reply.** But if you can convince them that your product can remove their pain, you will get a positive response.

Perfecting B2B outbound: top tips from 3 top SDRs

B2B outbound isn't something that you can lock down and set in stone. You have to keep reviewing your processes and continually make adjustments and improvements.

Elizabeth "Lizzie" Alli, **Hugh Campbell** and **Saif Khan** are three of Cognism's top-performing SDRs. We asked them for their tips on how to succeed in one of the hardest jobs in B2B outbound. Their thoughts will help you and your team perfect the outbound process. Over to them!

Hi team! First question. What qualities/characteristics are essential to being a top-performing SDR?

LIZZIE:

"Resilience, persistence and drive. As an SDR, you're going to face a lot of rejection every day. You have to be a really tough person to be able to handle that. Having great support from your team will help you to get through it."

SAIF:

"My number one quality for a top-performing SDR is aspiration. You should always be aspiring to do better. If you're given a target, don't just try to achieve it - try to smash it! Always go one hundred times better!"

HUGH:

"You have to have confidence on the phone. People can tell if you're not speaking confidently, or you don't know enough about the product you're selling. My number one quality for a top sales rep is a willingness to learn - you need to know everything about your product. Only then can you sell it effectively!"

Cognism is a fast-growing, scaling company. Our sales team headcount has doubled in less than 12 months. What's it been like working in sales here?

HUGH:

"I love the fast pace. It's really exciting. But it can be really difficult. You can't rest on your laurels in outbound sales. If you have a great month in January, in February you're back to zero again. Support from your team is so important in keeping you motivated."

SAIF:

"I used to work in corporate sales. Cognism is the first startup I've worked for. What I love most about working at a scaling company is that you see the company grow as a direct result of your efforts. If the company hires new SDRs, then that's because we've all been doing our jobs properly!"

LIZZIE:

"What I love about Cognism is that everyone in sales started in the same position. Our CRO and Sales Director used to do cold calls! It means that they know how hard the SDR job can be. We can all relate to each other in a way that doesn't happen in other companies."

How do you know when you're succeeding as an SDR? Is it purely based on metrics, or is there a "feeling" behind it?

LIZZIE:

"I'd say it's a bit of both. Metrics obviously give you a clear picture of how you're doing. They're especially useful when you first start out. But you can also tell when you're improving, based on the conversations you have. One thing that really helped me was listening back to my least successful cold calls and learning from them, making adjustments to my tonality and pitch."

HUGH:

"It's all about growing professionally and personally. Are you hitting your targets? Great! But are you also learning and improving what you do? A top sales rep should always be looking to diversify and get creative. Don't just do what everyone else does. Cold calls and emails are a core part of the SDR role, but there are lots of other channels you can use. Create videos and send them to your prospects. Attend as many industry-relevant events as you can."

SAIF:

"All sales jobs are measured, but what's important to me is, are you delivering value to your prospects? Are you solving their pain points? Are you helping to make their lives easier? That gives you a great feeling."

What tech has helped you in your role? Do you have to use tech to be a top sales rep?

SAIF:

"Tech is important, for sure. The top four for me are SalesLoft, Salesforce, LinkedIn - and Cognism! Our own platform is ideal for **B2B prospecting***. To succeed as an SDR, you definitely need to plug into a sophisticated CRM. That'll help you out so much when it comes to organising your time."*

HUGH:

"Lead generation software is essential for me. At Cognism, we use our own tool, **Prospector***, to find leads and engage with them."*

LIZZIE:

"You could do this job without tech. You could just pick up the phone and have a copy of the Yellow Pages next to you. But why would you want to? Sales is a numbers game. You're up against the clock every single day. Anything that helps you speed up the process and drives efficiency has got to be good."

How do you juggle the different aspects of the SDR role? There's the cold calling, the email outreach, but also the admin side as well. How do you cope with that?

HUGH:

"Your CRM is your best friend! I use Salesforce every day. Create tasks, track and update them daily if not hourly! If you've got something to do - just do it! Don't put it off. In sales, you can easily get swamped.
At Cognism, we also have a zero inbox policy, which is a big help to me in organising tasks."

LIZZIE:

"Good admin is half the battle for an SDR! Get a good workflow going for yourself. Put in your own rules and KPIs. For instance, if I go to an event, then I always block out time in my calendar the following morning for follow-ups."

SAIF:

"A lot of salespeople overlook Outlook, but it's vital for keeping track of your time. I log everything on my Outlook calendar, even lunches! That way, you know exactly where you should be and what you should be doing every hour and every minute of the day. One thing we do at Cognism is "power hour", where the whole team just gets on the phones and cold calls for an hour straight. That's a great way to reset yourself and focus on your core responsibilities."

Are there any processes that you've put in place for yourselves that have really helped you succeed?

LIZZIE:

"One thing I do is allocate time every month to review my own performance. What were my successes, what were my failures? What's working for me right now and what isn't? Doing this gives me some great takeaways for improving my performance."

SAIF:

"You have to have in-depth product knowledge to be a successful sales rep. You need to buy in to the product to sell it! Go beyond the product training your company gives you. Block out time to use it for yourself. If you have any questions, ask your product team. Build up good relationships with them."

HUGH:

"Keep an eye on the collateral that your marketing team produces. They can be a great resource for the SDR. Read your company blog and case studies and use the messaging to improve your pitch."

How do you manage expectations in sales? How do you keep the motivation going?

HUGH:

"If I'm given a target to make X number of calls in a day, then it's my job to do that. It's as simple as that for me. Always keep your targets in mind and organise your day to hit them. Saif already mentioned them, but our power hours are critical to getting you 100% focused on cold calling. Ignore everything else, pick up the phone and get selling!"

SAIF:

"Don't overthink it. Keep moving ahead, keep calling. Believe in your own ability. In my experience, self-belief is the key to consistency. If you go into sales with confidence and persistence, then you'll succeed. Don't let rejection get to you. So one call didn't go your way? Never mind - move onto the next one! The more calls you make, the better you'll get, and the more successful you'll become."

LIZZIE:

"If you're having a bad week and you're feeling demotivated, don't be afraid to ask for help! Sales is a very fickle business. You can have the best day you've ever had followed by the worst. If you've got a good team around you, then the support is there, all you have to do is ask for it."

I'm an SDR and I'm failing to hit target. What advice can you give me?

SAIF:

"LinkedIn is a great tool to find people but it's also a great knowledge hub as well. If you're having difficulties with a part of your role, search for it on LinkedIn! Chances are, someone with experience has written a blog about it or hosted a webinar about it. Leverage the knowledge of the online sales community. Write a post asking your peers for their advice. Learn from them and use their knowledge to sell better."

HUGH*:*

"Good salespeople should always be good listeners. Listen to your peers and colleagues. Speak to people in other departments - CS, marketing, product. Your own company is a huge resource of knowledge and information. Get a complete picture of your company so that you can create a seamless journey for your prospects."

LIZZIE:

"If your company hasn't got a mentor-mentee system in place, then I recommend that you start one right away! This is where a senior salesperson is given a junior colleague to look after and advise. It's a brilliant scheme because it means you'll be learning from someone who understands the pressures of the job and knows the best shortcuts to success."

It's my first day as a sales rep and I've never done this job before. What would your top tip be?

LIZZIE:

"Just pick up the phone and do it! The best teacher is experience. Don't be afraid of the unknown - learn from it!"

SAIF:

"When you first start, just focus on getting your pitch and conversation right. It's not about closing deals on day one. It's about building your confidence and getting familiar with selling your product to others."

HUGH*:*

"Outbound sales involves a lot of trial and error. Don't be afraid to experiment. Try out different styles of pitches until you find one that works."

The science of B2B outbound

At Cognism, we're fond of the saying, "*sales isn't an art - it's a science.*" B2B outbound is your pathway to introducing a scientific sales process into your business. With outbound, everything can be measured and tracked. It creates **B2B data**, which you can use to analyse your performance and sharpen your selling. It creates a data-driven sales team, fully focused on goals and revenue.

Follow the steps outlined in our guide and you too will make your growth predictable and repeatable. Be sure to share your successes with us on our social media:

We look forward to hearing from you!

Contact Cognism today

Cognism is the number one platform for B2B outbound. Our all-in-one, globally compliant prospecting solution is designed to help B2B sales teams scale as quickly as possible.

Using our technology, you can:

- Build personas of your ideal customers, using a range of person and company filters.
- Generate leads from our global database of B2B firms and individuals.
- Take advantage of our event-based triggers, which highlight the best times to outreach.
- Engage with your leads through multi-touchpoint sales cadences.

Interested? Then book a demo with us today!

Request your demo now

Cognism

Cognism is the world's leading all-in-one globally compliant prospecting solution.