

WHITE PAPER

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**The Staffing Solution for Enhanced Lead Generation Initiatives****The trend of enhancing lead generation programs is met with challenge**

Companies are increasingly focused on prioritizing lead generation as the pressure to enhance sales force effectiveness grows. Although these types of programs are significant business drivers with substantial ROI benefits, they are typically a challenge for both small and large organizations to develop and execute in a way that achieves desired results. Not only do lead generation and other business development initiatives require time and expertise associated with strategic planning, development and testing, they also require additional financial resources and human capital. And often, it is finding the right staffing solution to support a results-oriented program that proves to be the greatest challenge in enhancing lead generation initiatives.

**Hiring a permanent insides sales team that brings ROI**

A lot of companies depend on sales reps, and in some cases marketing, to keep the sales pipeline filled with qualified opportunities. However, many organizations are beginning to realize the amount of time and effort required to generate *qualified* leads and maintain a robust pipeline. As a result, sales and marketing executives are beginning to build new inside sales teams in an effort to free up their sales rep's time and enable them to focus on what they do best-*selling*. Sales reps spend up to four hours of every eight-hour day researching accounts and generating leads; this is an expensive use of time considering they could generate more revenue if they were able to use that time in front of prospects selling.

The challenge with hiring new sales staff however is the ability to make the time and financial resources associated with recruiting and training a valuable investment. Consider the time and money needed to manage recruitment ads, network for referrals, sort through responses and resumes, coordinate phone and face-to-face interviews, conduct interviews and complete all necessary paperwork only to realize the individual isn't right for the job after they've been hired as a full-time, permanent employee with salary and benefits.

Hiring managers openly admit they experience anxiety associated with the need to hire new employees. It is often the case that candidates master the interview process but fail to demonstrate necessary skill sets or interpersonal skills best suited for the corporate culture or industry. The International Customer Management Institute (ICMI) reports that based on a study conducted by Leadership IQ, "46% of newly hired employees will fail within 18 months, while only 19% will achieve unequivocal success. Poor interpersonal skills are mostly to blame – flaws that many managers admit were overlooked during the interview process."

Sometimes, a candidate may be a good fit, but they require a significant amount of time and resources to train; this is costly in terms of lost productivity and business. The fear also exists that substantial resources will be lost to an employee that leaves after a short period of time which is not uncommon, particularly in sales.

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The cost of turnover for a company's inside sales/contact center staff can range anywhere from \$10,000 to \$50,000 for specialty positions according to the article *Where are your next 1,000 workers coming from?* published by ICMI and written by Harry Sheff. With these statistics, it is paramount that companies have a well-managed and refined staffing model in place to build and maintain a successful insides sales team.

Establishing fit before hire is one of the best ways to avoid costly hiring mistakes. Adding simulation and validation aspects to the interviewing process raises the overall level of talent in sales and service organizations which results in the delivery of better results to employees, customers and shareholders according to a study conducted by Dennis Adsit, Ph.D. and Warren Bobrow, Ph.D that was published online by ICMI. Establishing ways to "test-drive" employees prior to hiring them will also lessen hiring anxiety as managers have the chance to assess a candidate's performance prior to extending an offer. It may seem more expensive to pay a premium for high-level contract work or buyout employment contracts, but consider the thousands of dollars that may otherwise be lost due to an un-informed hiring decision.

### **Staffing talent while maintaining program flexibility and control**

Oftentimes, companies look to outsource their lead generation and business development activities to an experienced third party as an alternative to hiring full-time employees. Contracting with professional contact centers increases productivity and eliminates the issue of adding headcount, however, it is often the case that these establishments are unable to accommodate the need for program flexibility. Outsourcing business development work to contact centers also means managers lose the ability to supervise program activity on a day-to-day basis and must manage the regular transfer of confidential information with an external organization.

To combat issues related with outsourcing lead generation and other business development programs to contact centers, some companies turn to staffing agencies and hire temps. It is not uncommon however, for these individuals to lack appropriate skill sets or the level of expertise required to be successful at inside sales. Oftentimes, temps will come to a job having just completed an assignment in an unrelated field and have little or no real inside sales experience. Or, if they do have experience, they may be out of practice due to time spent away from the industry. These individuals can require more substantial training and may or may not possess the unique discipline needed to make outbound calls for hours at a time.

One of the best ways to maintain a high degree of control and flexibility over business development initiatives is to execute programs on-site with contract professionals that have *proven* business development talent and arrive at your job with *sharp* skills. Sourcing contractors through an organization that specializes in lead generation and business development staffing and is structured so that contractors are continuously honing their skills prior to off-site opportunities is a good way to ensure your programs are staffed with the industry's best talent. After all, each live touch represents your brand; it should be top priority to staff your programs with highly experienced, knowledgeable professionals.

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### **Staffing right-sized, right-time programs positioned for immediate results**

In order for a company's business development program to positively affect the bottom line, it must be scaled appropriately to meet business objectives, be priced within budget and be strategically developed to bring ROI. For some companies, business development initiatives are only needed during certain times of the year to support cyclical sales cycles or special, high urgency projects. These situations create the need for extreme program flexibility, quick project ramp-up and the ability to quickly turn programs on and off in response to program goals and corporate objectives.

Consider a business that experiences seasonal increases in sales. Someone needs to manage the increased number of inquiries received during a particular time of year, however, there isn't enough work year-round to support hiring a full-time employee or justify additional headcount.

Or consider companies looking to implement a pilot program to test new market segments or alternative channels prior to changing strategic direction or investing in a full-scale campaign. These short-term pilot programs can be costly if they don't yield positive results and the company has allocated significant internal resources to its development and execution.

Companies with short-term, periodic programs require immediate access to business development talent capable of performing right out of the gate to avoid losing productivity. Partnering with an external organization that has access to a pool of *business development and inside sales* talent as well as the resources to scale projects up and down is one of the best staffing strategies for these types of programs.

### **The competitive advantage of partnering with lead generation experts**

Whether the goal is to staff short-term, periodic programs, build a permanent inside sales team or hire contractors to work on-site at your location, partnering with a third party industry expert can offer a significant competitive advantage. Teaming up with an external organization that has access to a network of lead generation and business development professionals will provide an initial pool of pre-qualified candidates to accelerate the recruiting, hiring and training cycles and increase employee ROI potential. Generally these candidates are capable of immediate productivity and need only be assessed for interpersonal and other company-specific skills as they relate to the corporate culture and customer/prospect audiences. Working with a third party to find qualified candidates also provides the opportunity to establish fit before hire with temp-to-hire placement options and helps ensure productivity with the ability to change out contractors quickly if performance issues arise. Finally, some third party lead generation experts have the resources to support program flexibility and scale projects enabling companies to enhance lead generation and business development initiatives of all types.

The Volkart May & Associates, Inc. (VMA) **staffNow!**™ division provides highly qualified professionals to staff business development programs scaled to your size on-site at your location. If you would like more information about how VMA can support your ROI initiatives with the industry's best talent, visit us at [www.volkartmay.com](http://www.volkartmay.com).