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Sales tips for reaching HR professionals

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Human resources professionals get overwhelmed with marketing and sales emails soliciting their business. In fact, our HR manager received 87 marketing and sales emails in one typical week.

The human resources market is an important one, because they influence so many purchasing decisions.

Companies around the world are increasing their investment in HR infrastructure.

HRmarketer.com estimates the value of the human resources marketplace to be more than $1 trillion dollars annually.

Inevitably, HR professionals get a heavy dose of sales and marketing messaging on a daily basis. Most of it ends up in the proverbial or literal trash can. Money wasted.

Human resource professionals influence more purchasing decisions than any other department. They are the gatekeepers to upper management. They weigh in on organization-wide initiatives, and affect a wide array of corporate decisions.

However, human resource professionals are rarely your primary decision maker. Their budgets are tight and frequently fixed annually.

Avoid these common mistakes
Most of the time, marketers and sales people have no clue what it is that HR does every single day. This is, in part, because human resources is a workforce of specialists.

Responsibilities span the range:

Staffing

Payroll

Recruiting

Employee benefits

Health and wellness

Training

Background screening

Team management

Employment law

Labor or union relations

HR information systems

Compliance

Crisis communications

Community relations

Workplace safety

Most sales and marketing teams make the same two mistakes with HR lead generation:

1. Neglecting to communicate with the larger sphere of influence within a company

2. Targeting specialists with generic messaging

Effectively selling into HR requires clear organizational visibility for targeting decision- making panels not just individuals and audience segmentation for more relevant messaging.

Focus on the many

An account-based marketing strategy is similar to what is traditionally called enterprise sales.

The primary difference is that an account-based strategy can be used to target a company of any size.

Instead of messaging only to decision-makers within a company, sales and marketing work together to simultaneously target multiple decision makers, with different roles and responsibilities. The concept involves leveraging dynamics of group psychology to close an account.

Account-based tactics can be effective for lead generation in any industry. But for HR, it is an imperative.

Business-to-business purchases always close faster with organizational buy-in.

Even with small to midsize businesses, there will be, at a minimum, an HR professional who will use the product or service, a decision-maker who will sign on the dotted line, and others who will be impacted by this decision.

Whether HR professionals are inbounding through your Web site, or you are building an outbound campaign to target via email, sales reps need to identify two things when building or enriching lists of prospective HR customers.

1. Where this individual falls within their organization's hierarchy

2. Contact information and job titles for additional decision makers at the company

When generating lists of companies that fit your ideal customer profile, these additional data points should always be baked into the lead-generation process.

Using the free Synoptic View Salesforce app, sales reps can visually identify the dark spots in an account's organizational structure at any time. The same visualization can be achieved with most other CRMs.

Outreach strategy

A complementary outreach approach that targets additional decision-makers at the company might go something like this.

First, a quick round of light social touches such as Linkedin profile views or Twitter likes. These can be executed manually by your reps or automated.

Next up is a four- to eight-touch outreach email sequence using a service such as Yesware or Outreach.io. Your goal is to get a positive response to a simple question, not make a hard sell. For example:

"Do you experience this industry-specific pain point?"

"Do you use X technology?"

"Are you tasked with such-and-such goal?"

These emails should be short less than 50 words each.

Once you have templates written for each of your buyer personas, you do not have to write one-off variations for each new campaign. Simply personalize with name, company, industry and other merge fields. The messaging is up to you.

In addition to your one HR-specific lead, you now have other contacts that are actively being developed on the same account.

Some will respond to your email. Some will visit your Web site and be served retargeting ads. Others might inbound separately now that your product or service is top-of-mind.

THIS TYPE OF organizational awareness allows you to speed up your lead to close, empower HR professional to discuss your company with others, and address internal objections before they ever come into contact with one of your sales reps.

By the time someone at the company requests a demo, there will be a panel of people at the company who are, at the very least, aware and hopefully somewhat knowledgeable and interested about what you offer.

When they go into their next meeting, your company's name is on the tip of everyone's tongue.

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