

**COLD
CALLING**

vs

**DIGITAL
PROSPECTING**

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY
TO BUILD PIPELINE?



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03 Introduction
- 04 Cold Calling vs Digital Prospecting - What's in the Future of Sales?
- 05 Statistics - Cold Calling Conversion Rates vs Digital Sales Prospecting
- 06 Do's and Don'ts of Cold Calling vs Digital Sales Prospecting
- 08 Tools & Technology For Cold Calling and Digital Sales Prospecting
- 09 The 5 Strategies to Work With Cold Calling and Digital Sales Prospecting Today
 - Leverage All Communication Channels
 - Personalize the Content
 - Always Be Where Your Buyers Are
 - Starting Out With a Digital Sales Strategy
 - Handling Rejection on Cold Calls

INTRODUCTION

Cold calling vs digital prospecting is a powerful debate dividing the sales world. Some are looking to old-school cold calling, while others say the modern salesman only needs LinkedIn and digital prospecting to build pipeline.

The truth is, technology has changed the way sales representatives work and reach their quota, but that doesn't mean cold calling is dead. It just means that sales reps today have more tools in their arsenal to solve the ever complex challenge of building pipeline.

What you choose will always depend on what your customer responds to: you need to sell the way your buyers buy.

Gabe Larsen, VP of Growth for XANT, and Mario Martinez Jr., CEO of Vengreso, battled it out in an online webinar to see what prospecting method is best. Together they have over 35 years of sales experience and were well versed in working with both methods to build millions of dollars in pipeline.



During this debate, over a thousand sales reps joined the webinar to ask questions about how cold calling vs digital prospecting work in real life.

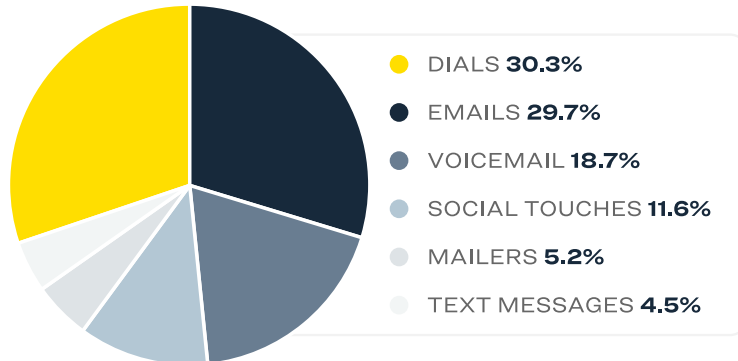
[Register and watch](#) the session online to see who won!

We've condensed all our knowledge on the topic into this little eBook. Read on to understand how the two work and complement each other to build a solid and sizeable sales pipeline.

Cold Calling vs Digital Sales Prospecting

What's in the Future of Sales?

Sales reps today are using a combination of prospecting methods, with phone calls and email being the most common ways to contact prospects. Here's what the average inside sales rep's day looks like, according to [XANT research](#):



MADE **36.8 CALLS** | SENT **34.6 EMAILS** | LEFT **14.2 VOICEMAILS** | MADE **18.1 SOCIAL TOUCHES**

We expect this trend to continue, as buyers continue to be responsive to a [variety of communication media](#).

However, the opportunity of each communication is based on how the customer prefers to be contacted and how often they respond via that particular channel.



Digital prospecting is not the answer to every question in sales. You can't build pipeline by hanging out on Facebook groups. Youtube is not an activity that helps reps meet their monthly quota. Not every one of my buyers is on social media, and not even LinkedIn has all the buyers in the world. (...) Traditional cold calling is dead, but [cold calling with AI](#) is a powerful method to build pipeline.

Gabe Larsen

VP Marketing & Sales Dev. at XANT



No, the cold call is not dead, but it IS dying and modern sellers need to connect with buyers the way buyers want to connect with us. That might mean a phone call, but with digital prospecting it will be a warm call. Digital selling doesn't mean that it's all about social media! It also includes email, message boards, social video and text messaging. It's any digital engagement that your prospect responds to willingly.

Buyers are going to buy the way they want to, and our job as salespeople is not to put blindfolds on to the way they want to engage.

Mario Martinez Jr.

CEO of Vengreso, the digital sales transformation company

Statistics

Cold Calling Conversion Rates vs Digital Sales Prospecting

Statistics are always going to be changing, and for the most part you will have different results based on who you ask and how they formulated their experiment. However, one thing they demonstrate is that both cold calling and digital prospecting work to fill your pipeline with leads and appointments.

To say something 'is dead' would mean it is now producing 'zero' results on building pipeline and setting appointments-- and that's just not true for any of the communication channels we studied.

COLD-CALLING CONVERSION RATE STATISTICS

75% of surveyed executives are willing to make an appointment or attend an event based on a cold call or email alone - [DiscoverOrg](#)

If you call a lead in the first 5 minutes of first contact, they are 100x more likely to qualify - [XANTI](#)

6.3% of cold calls turn into meaningful conversations - [XANTI](#)

Inside sales reps make around 30+ calls every day - [XANTI](#)

DIGITAL SALES PROSPECTING CONVERSION RATE STATISTICS

You are 4.2x more likely to get an appointment if you have a personal connection with a buyer - [Sales Benchmark Index](#)

91 percent of consumers use email at least once per day - [ExactTarget](#)

71% of consumers would rather watch a video to learn about a product than read text - [Hubspot](#)

LinkedIn InMails have a 53.8% open rate and a 17.8% click-through rate ([XANTI](#))

98% of B2B enterprises see short and long-term value in social selling - [Forrester](#)

B2B sellers who embrace social selling are 72% more likely to exceed quotas - [Forrester](#)

Do's and Don'ts of Cold Calling vs. Digital Sales Prospecting

COLD-CALLING

DO:

- Call back as soon as you hear from a lead. Getting back within the [first 5 minutes](#) increases your chances of contacting and qualifying a lead
- Wednesdays and Thursdays are the best days of the week to make contact
- You have a higher chance to qualify leads between 4-5PM in the afternoon
- Always make at least 6 call attempts to maximize the chance of getting in touch
- Voicemails should be [under 30 seconds long](#)

DON'T:

- Spend [more than 10 minutes](#) on pre-call research
- Use the same script on [everybody you are calling](#)
- Talk too much [about yourself](#) or [talk too much](#), period
- Call using your area code. Use smart tools that display a local phone number for they increase your chance to connect
- Call blindly without knowing anything about the prospect. [AI sales tools](#) automatically give you the info you need to build rapport
- Spray and pray - calling randomly without a plan or outreach strategy



Traditional cold calling is dead, but [cold calling with AI](#) is a powerful method to build pipeline. If you are still using a list and using scripts, you are disconnected from reality. Intelligent sales systems can show you the optimal people you should go after, what to say, best time to call, the best number so they can pick up telephone. It can give you the information you need so that you don't have to do any research.

Gabe Larsen

VP Marketing & Sales Dev. at XANT

Do's and Don'ts of Cold Calling vs. Digital Sales Prospecting

DIGITAL SALES PROSPECTING

DO:

- Be persistent. Only [24 percent](#) of sales emails are opened
- Use referrals [to get introduced](#) and build trust
- Use more than one communication method - [three is optimal](#)
- Use text messaging when needed - [81% of respondents](#) say they are likely to respond to texts at work
- Use video in emails or via social messaging - it will [triple your click-through rate](#)
- Personalize email subject lines - it will [increase open rates dramatically](#)
- Use social media to get information about your prospect and use it to build rapport
- Convert [social connections into meetings](#)

DON'T:

- Connect and forget your new buyers, [bring value every time](#)
- Send the same thing to everybody. Segmented emails [get more clicks](#)
- Drop your leads automatically if they don't respond. Nurtured leads have [shorter sales cycles and higher deal sizes](#).
- Get wordy. Emails shorter than 300 words perform better than longer ones.
- Ignore LinkedIn - InMail response rates are [three times higher](#) than regular email
- Approach social media prospects without [showing some LUV first](#) (leaving unsolicited validation by engaging with their content)



Social selling is dead. Digital sales prospecting is about leveraging all digital communication channels: video, email, social, text and even artificial intelligence to engage with a buyer. The days of the Rolodex on your desk are over. Today, social networks like LinkedIn are our new Rolodex and they contain much of the information we need to be successful in connecting with buyers.

Mario Martinez Jr.
CEO of Vengreso

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Tools & Technology For Cold Calling and Digital Sales Prospecting

No sales method is perfect, but they all can contribute heavily to the bottom line. Intelligent tools and technologies can help sales professionals become more efficient at working with both cold calling and digital sales prospecting. Increasingly, sales systems incorporate [predictive analytics and machine learning technologies](#) to help sales reps make better decisions about who they should contact, what methods to use and what messaging works best.

The “[State of Sales Development 2017](#)” research from XANT identified five types of tools that sales development reps are using for prospecting on a daily basis:

- SOCIAL PROSPECTING
- DATA/LIST SERVICES
- EMAIL ENGAGEMENT
- PHONE/TELEPHONY SYSTEMS
- SALES CADENCE TOOLS

The highest adopted sales technologies for SDRs were social prospecting (82.5%) tools like LinkedIn Sales Navigator, data and list services (58.5%) like ZoomInfo, and email engagement (55.3%) like XANT.

New to the list was [sales cadence tools \(37% adoption\)](#). These combine phone, email, social, voicemail and video, as well as a variety of other tools, allowing reps to manage their follow up strategy effectively and not let any leads slip through the cracks.

INFOGRAPHIC

**26 THINGS A SALES
CADENCE TOOL
SHOULD DO FOR YOU**

The 5 Strategies to Work With Cold Calling and Digital Sales Prospecting Today

So when do you use cold calling, and when do you need to do digital prospecting? It can get confusing, and the last thing sales professionals want to do is waste their time on strategies that don't work for their customers. Lead quantity and quality are the top challenges for salespeople, according to [XANT research](#).

1. LEVERAGE ALL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The truth is, each client has a preference as to whether they use the phone, email, watch videos, read text messages or leverage social media. The only way to figure this out, with a cold prospect, is to use more than one prospecting channel-- and then test how others perform.



The truth is every audience is different. Some will prefer voicemail, others will prefer phone calls. There is only one answer when knowing which method for sales comms is better. It starts with a T and ends with a T and it is 'TEST.' You need to know your customers and know which method is they are actually responding to: phone, voicemail, email, direct mail, social, text messages. Find which one works for your audience and work with that.

Gabe Larsen

VP of Growth at XANT

2. PERSONALIZE THE CONTENT

Personalize your content for higher chances of success. That sounds easy enough, but ‘how’ you do it is very much a debate. Personalizing with digital or the phone is the modern alternative for the “fish on the wall,” according to Mario Martinez Jr..



Digital prospecting starts with trying to find the fish on the wall. Back in the day, when we walked into someone’s office, the first thing we were trained to do was to look for the fish trophy on the wall, or the family photo, something that can start a conversation or be the ice breaker and help us build a relationship. This is what digital prospecting allows you to do. You go online, review somebody’s social media profiles and you may have your fish on the wall.

Mario Martinez Jr.

CEO of Vengreso

Sometimes you need to make sure you aren’t being too straightforward with your introduction. Finding that personal story that matters to your client is not as important as finding the solution to a professional problem they have, advises Gabe Larsen.



People are always using little glitchy things hoping to get a conversation with me - but they start with something so far removed from the problems I encounter in my professional life. When they try to weave in the conversation about sales, about building pipeline, it doesn’t work at all. I love it when people just hit me with a problem instead of finding funny things about me that they can approach. I want to hear that. Personalize around the persona, not the person.

Gabe Larsen

VP of Growth at XANT

There's also a lot to be said about how much time it takes to do pre-call research on social media. The average sales development rep has 74 accounts, and they do 17 minutes of research per account. This adds up to a lot of hours researching and very few hours actually selling. Sales reps, on average, spend just about [35 percent of their time selling](#).



Is that really what you want to be doing with a sales development rep's time? Is there not a better way to automate that and feed the sales rep directly with [data from an AI-based system](#)? Automate the research, make sure your tools are showing you exactly what's relevant at exactly the right time, and things will go a lot smoother.

Gabe Larsen

VP of Growth at XANT

ARTICLE

**COLD CALLING WITH
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

THE NEW WAY OF SELLING

3. BE WHERE YOUR BUYERS ARE

Always be prospecting, it's the secret to keeping your pipeline full of hot leads. However, for modern sales professionals, it's sometimes hard to know where the buyers are. This means that even if you're used to cold calling, you can't ignore social media, the use of videos for prospecting, email or even texting.



We need to look at the way the buyers are engaging with our content - if buyers are not on social, you can text them, or send them a video message through email or a text. When someone comes into our funnel and they submit the phone number, it means they are ready to take a phone call. We usually send an email, place a phone call and shoot them a text. The text message has the highest response rate, and you can even include a personalized video for them in that text.

You can't be just a one-trick pony, and you need to use #TheOmniChannel to move that conversation offline as quickly as possible to a face to face conversation or an online meeting.

Mario Martinez Jr.

CEO of Vengreso

You also need to be persistent enough to get to your target-- decision-makers are usually busy and need extra effort to reach.



A lot of sales reps struggle with the phone because they think they are bothering prospects. But the truth is, when we spoke to C-levels and asked them how they like to be contacted, they replied that you need to call 4-5 time before they answer, because they are busy.

Gabe Larsen

VP of Growth at XANT

4. STARTING OUT WITH A DIGITAL SALES STRATEGY

There are still thousands of companies that are new to digital sales, so it helps to get an idea of where to start. Mario Martinez Jr. advises business leaders to start implementing the right technology that allows you to identify your ideal buyer, and only target the audience which fits the description. “Spray and pray” is a thing of the past.



We’ve worked with over 100,000 sales and marketing professionals and we were surprised to see that most of them don’t refresh their top prospects either weekly or monthly. When we ask them to pull up their top 10 prospects, we often get blank stares... If you don’t have a target that you are going after or a strategy, and you are just performing random acts of digital or traditional sales prospecting, then shame on you!

We have a great podcast with Kurt Shaver, our chief sales officer, ‘[How YOU can adapt to the Digital Sales Revolution](#)’ - and it will clearly explain all the reasons the modern seller needs to embrace digital selling strategies as part of their approach to engaging the modern buyer.”

Mario Martinez Jr.
CEO of Vengreso

PODCAST

SELLING WITH SOCIAL

HOW YOU CAN ADAPT TO THE
DIGITAL SALES REVOLUTION



5. HANDLING REJECTION ON COLD CALLS

Cold calling is hard work. It's moving through dozens of 'no's' so that sometimes you might just get one single 'yes' at the end of the day. And then your prospect might not show up for the meeting. Digital prospecting might be no different, even with all the advantages of transparent profiles and user-generated content.



I did door to door sales for a while. One time, I'm overseas and this man opens the door. He was a big old guy and he angrily says-- 'What the F*** are you doing here?' I'm 19 and scared out of my mind, I am thinking maybe I should run at this point. However, a kind lady comes out from behind him, taps him on the back and says: "He is just having a bad day, how can I help?"

It was a psychological change for me to understand that they may just be having a bad day, they may be struggling, they may have an emergency -- it's never anything personal.

You really need to get into this mindset. I'm just looking for people who need help, and I can help them. Nobody wants to take my phone call, but the truth is they need me. If you see the platform I am offering, you will be able to see how it can help you build more pipeline. As a salesman, I find the people who are struggling and I know I have a solution for them. It's just what I do.

Gabe Larsen

VP of Growth at XANT



PLAYBOOKS

PROSPECTING WITH AI
IS THE NEW WAY OF
SELLING

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LEARN HOW TO IMPLEMENT
A **WINNING** DIGITAL SALES
STRATEGY.

GET YOUR COMPLIMENTARY
DIGITAL SELLING ASSESSMENT