

## Call centres do generate leads

Cape Town-based call centre DigiCall Solutions generated more than 170 sales leads during two recent lead generation campaigns for companies with technology solutions geared for the South African market.

Each of the campaigns ran over a week period in late 2005. The HansaWorld campaign aimed at securing meetings with executives who identified the business need for enterprise-wide business management software. The RedLinX campaign focused on growing its client base for open-source product and service offerings.

The outsourcing of lead generation campaigns to DigiCall Solutions offered these technology companies the means to maximise sales reach without deploying additional internal resources.

Graham Maart, sales manager for RedLinX, says: "The campaign was a positive experience for us as the number of leads generated was above out expectations. We were able to convert quality leads from the campaign and gained a better understanding of technology needs among out targeted market."

In preparation for the campaigns, DigiCall's agents were trained on the respective technology solutions and products. They were given specific requirements to qualify a lead.

Brendan Peo, country manager for HansaWorld, says: "I was very impressed with the quality of the agents. Their quick learning curve meant that they were able to confidently discuss business and technology requirements with prospective clients."

According to Maart: "The last quarter of the year is not a good time to conduct a sale campaign. We had great difficulty following up with leads in December due to the holiday season. We found some leads had become cold on our return in the New Year."

Peo concurred: "The timing of the campaign was not good. When follow-up calls were undertaken by HansaWorld in November and December many leads were not available. The last thing a decision-maker wants to do is meet to discuss a business solution just before going on holiday."

The companies both felt that the agents should receive ongoing technical training from the client as the campaign develops to enhance the lead generation process and ensure the hand-over of quality and qualified leads.

"Part of the training could include the role-playing of sales interactions with our staff before the campaign goes live. However, a further step provided by DigiCall Solution includes remote listening in to agent's conversations to identify and address further issues that may arise from a customer perspective," says Maart.

In looking at converting more leads into sales, Peo felt there should be a mechanism for an agent to book a meeting then and there with a prospective client: "The agent had done the hard work of getting a decision-maker on the phone and securing a meeting date with one of our representatives would ensure a lead is not lost in a follow-up process."

The key learning emerging from these case studies is that a lead generation campaign requires a consistent business process outsourcing (BPO) approach and a seamless fit between the call centre and its clients to maximise the conversion of quality leads into sales.

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