The specific channels where companies find high-quality leads are largely consistent. Respondents had several recommendations for improving the interface between marketing and sales.

There is clearly room for significant improvement in the use of technology to analyze customer engagement and score potential leads.

Another issue relates to incentives. Sales development reps—who identify potential customers and pass them along to the sales team—are more likely to be evaluated on the volume of leads they generate than on the quality of those leads.

One source of misalignment involves the flow of information about marketing-generated leads. At many organizations, marketing passes only high-level details about leads—such as contact information—to the sales team, omitting data that would enable sales reps to make their initial call more engaging. Technology companies are an exception to this rule because they tend to pass along more-detailed information.

Not surprisingly, some inside sales leaders see significant room for improvement in their alignment and collaboration with marketing.

Not all metrics are given equal weight, with the top three among all respondents being:
- Rejection rate by sales reps
- Conversion ratio (that is, share of leads that result in future sales)
- Feedback from the sales team

Among the 12% of companies that factor in lead quality, three metrics are most important:
- Rejection rate by sales reps
- Conversion ratio (that is, share of leads that result in future sales)
- Feedback from the sales team

Table: Mix of evaluation metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric/Metric Category</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rejection rate by sales reps</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion ratio</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from the sales team</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of qualified leads passed</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of leads or opportunities identified</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of meetings scheduled</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress of leads through the sales funnel</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of calls</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of leads</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is clearly room for significant improvement in the use of technology to analyze customer engagement and score potential leads.

In addition, sales reps often don’t have visibility into the cost of generating a qualified lead.

In the seventh survey in an ongoing series, BCG partnered with the American Association of Inside Sales Professionals to assess the relationship between digital marketing and inside sales functions. The results show that although digital has changed the way companies identify and cultivate potential customers, many companies haven’t fully integrated their marketing and sales functions. (Our survey respondents are sales leaders, so the results include only their perspective.) At the same time, the data highlights specific steps that companies can take to improve.

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