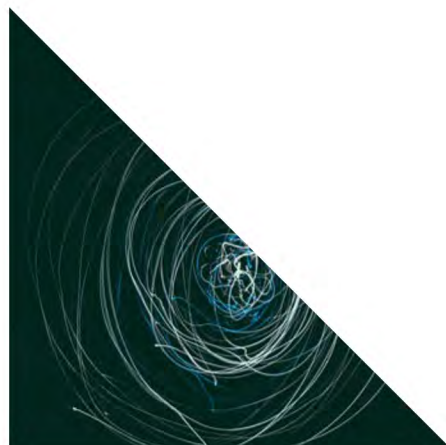


**AKTIFY**

# Prospect Activation

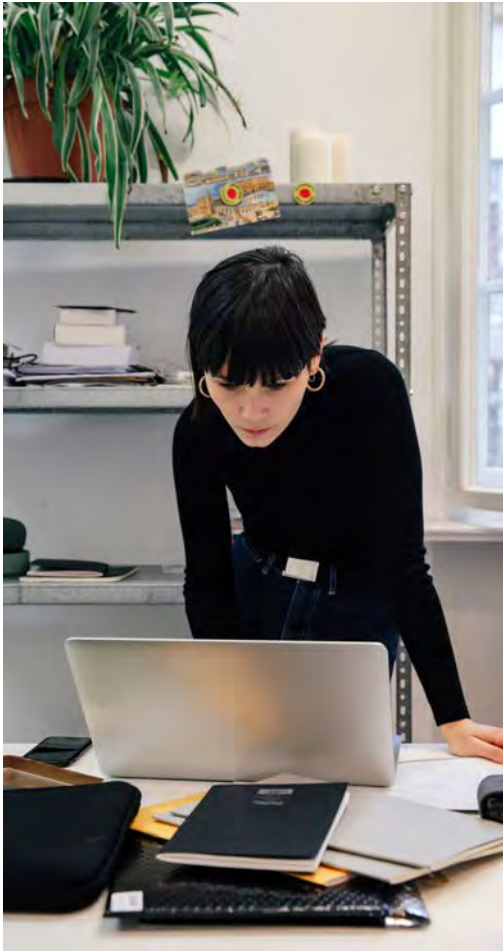
How to Use Artificial  
Intelligence to Boost Sales  
and Marketing Revenue



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# Introduction: Marketing, Sales, and the Never-ending Quest for Revenue



Leslie is the CMO of a large, successful B2C company. As head of marketing, she carries the long term vision. Building the brand. Optimizing the message. Nurturing the prospects. All these efforts take time, but her marketing machine is humming.

Leslie's budget is tight. Still, she takes advantage of marketing automation, analytics, and social media. Her team builds buzz, generates leads, and sends qualified prospects to the sales team. By all accounts, she's doing everything right.

"We're connecting with potential and current customers in meaningful ways," Leslie says.

But her success is not guaranteed. The sales team's performance affects her achievements.



David, VP of sales, focuses on the short term. He wants qualified leads, and he wants his team to close deals. Now.

“Our priority is to build trust with prospects and close deals,” he reminds his reps.

David has several teams dialing, taking calls, and closing deals. For him, sales is a science. It is testable. Predictable. And he doesn’t want unqualified leads. They waste time.

He needs Leslie’s team, however. His success depends on her ability to generate qualified leads.

Though they represent separate departments, David and Leslie have a common goal: generate more revenue.

They are not alone. This is a familiar scenario facing B2C marketing and sales leaders every day.

## The Revenue Challenge

Revenue is the company’s lifeblood. It signals everything going right (or wrong) with sales and marketing. The question comes up daily: how do we increase revenue?

Revenue growth correlates with:

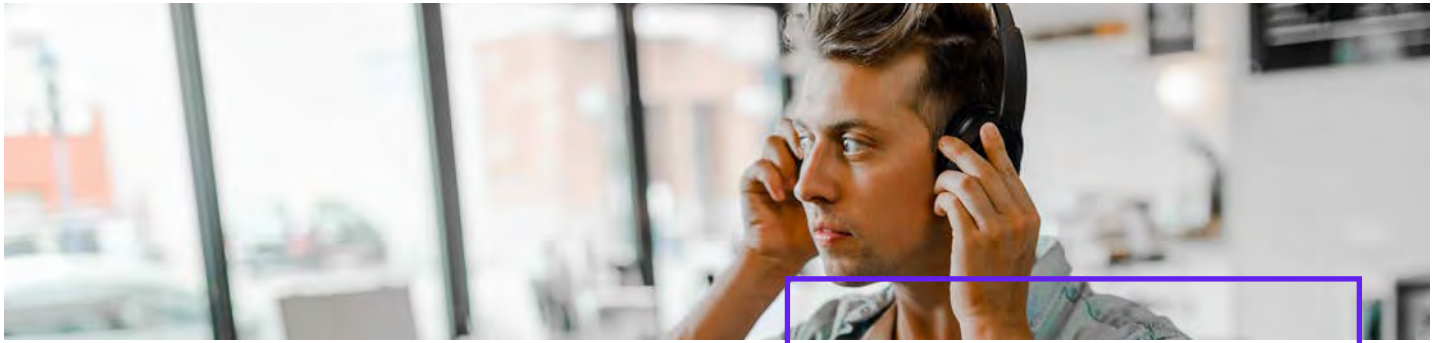
1. How many qualified leads marketing generates
2. How many qualified leads convert to sales

Leslie and David are no slouches. They create a constant flow of leads running through the sales funnel. Sales and marketing activities are working. And they’ve reached their greatest output with the resources they have.

But hitting revenue goals is a constant challenge. Is there anything more sales and marketing can do?

## Prospect Activation

This book introduces the concept of prospect activation for B2C companies. Prospect activation helps marketing and sales teams increase their output—without making drastic changes. Modern businesses use prospect activation methods to boost qualified leads and conversions.



# Why Qualified Leads Don't Convert

Businesses have an opportunity to find high-intent leads among low scoring leads.

Marketers are more empowered than ever to automate and scale campaigns. CRM applications, automation tools, and analytics tracking all help to nurture quality leads.

Excitement grows when marketing generates fresh leads. Prospects may come from a campaign, trade show, or other content. But excitement fizzles into frustration when those leads fail to convert into sales.

When sales lag, pointing fingers is easy. Sales blames marketing for lead quality. Marketing blames sales for not making enough outreach attempts.

Finger pointing does not solve the problem. But understanding why sales qualified leads fall out of the funnel may help. Here are the top reasons why qualified leads don't convert.

## Reason 1: The Lead Never Makes it to the Sales Team

Many B2C companies generate more leads than the sales team can handle. That's why marketers score and rank the leads. Automation programs assess values like job title, email address, and web activity. But these systems are not perfect. Some leads might receive a low score despite having high intent. Sales and marketing teams pass over these leads for their higher-scoring counterparts. Businesses have an opportunity to find high-intent leads among low scoring leads.

## Reason 2: Failure to Follow Up

Just because a qualified lead is next in line for outreach doesn't mean he is ready to talk. Sales reps find it easy to move on after only two or three attempts. It's human nature to assume a prospect isn't interested. Research shows it takes an average of 8-12 outreach attempts to reach a prospect<sup>1</sup>. That type of follow-through requires a high amount of patience and discipline. Sales reps find it easier to move on to the next opportunity. Fresh leads await.

## Reason 3: Unanswered Phone Calls

Reaching prospects by phone is difficult. Prospects screen phone calls. Robocalls, telemarketer fatigue, and local presence numbers are all factors. And communication channels like email, Slack, and texting, make answering the phone less essential. That's why 80% of calls go to voicemail<sup>2</sup>. Getting buyers on the phone is a challenge, but it remains a critical step in the sales process.



## Reason 4: Unread Emails

Almost every business utilizes email outreach. It enables prospects to engage on their own schedule. But consumers ignore most emails, especially when the sales pitches. Sometimes the emails go straight to the spam folder. These factors mean just 19.7% of emails are opened by prospects<sup>3</sup>.

## Other Stall Reasons

Despite sales and marketing's best efforts, leads go cold. Here are some common stall reasons:

- The product is unaffordable
- There's a lack of trust with company
- The prospect is no longer looking
- The prospect found a more attractive solution

Sales and marketing face many hurdles. What can companies do to address these lead conversion challenges?



# Prospect Activation: Bridging the Gap Between Marketing & Sales in B2C Companies

B2B companies generally need a long nurturing process. High selling prices, complex features, and a niche target market are factors. Some businesses use a dedicated team of sales development reps (SDRs) to speed up this process. These reps handle cold calling and follow-up activities. And they transfer only qualified leads to closers.

For B2C companies, deploying a full-time team of SDRs doesn't make sense. Sales cycles are shorter and products or services aren't as complex. So who is in charge of identifying, connecting with, and qualifying leads? Sales or marketing?

In a perfect world, neither department is responsible. Marketing already serves many functions. They conduct buyer persona research, refine the brand, create content, and launch campaigns. And sales should focus on what they do best: closing fresh, qualified prospects. Successful B2C companies recognize the need for a third area: prospect activation.

Prospect activation is a system that sits between marketing and sales. It's main purpose is to convert cold and marketing leads into sales-qualified leads. Here are some of its functions:

- Qualify leads from marketing campaigns as sales opportunities
- Contact potential prospects through cold calls, emails, or SMS
- Present the company to potential prospects
- Identify prospects' needs and suggest appropriate products/services

- Build trusting relationships with prospects
- Set up meetings or calls between prospects and Sales Executives

Prospect activation assists sales and marketing through all aspects of the sales funnel. After initial campaign awareness, it can send reminders and notifications. At the consideration stage, the system shares deals and goodwill gestures. During the decision stage, it leaves voicemails and schedules appointments. And it follows up when prospects no-show.

In short, prospect activation keeps sales and marketing in alignment.



# Activating Prospects With SMS

When it comes to prospect activation, there isn't one silver bullet method. But SMS stands out as one of the most reliable ways to reach customers. SMS stands for "Short Message Service", also known as text messaging. It's a simple but powerful communication tool to send promotional messages. And with a receptive audience and 98% open rate<sup>4</sup>, SMS is becoming a favorite among marketers.

SMS has a 98% open rate







## The SMS Opportunity

Companies in all industries are finding success with SMS. Marketers in finance, retail, smart home automation, and more use it. Even small businesses — from auto body shops to pizza joints — send specials and coupons. Why? Because 90% of all text messages are read within 3 minutes<sup>5</sup>.

Advertising agencies were among the first to use text messaging in marketing strategies. Here's one example. Sprint's ad agency encouraged consumers to text a woman on her 100th birthday. The results? Over 500,000 birthday wishes. That's half a million consumers who opted-in to receive communications from Sprint.

In another example, HBO launched a messaging experience for Game of Thrones fans. The service invited fans to subscribe for a sneak peak of an upcoming season. 70,000 watchers subscribed within the first two months. The campaign went viral.

## SMS Considerations

Many companies are eager to try out SMS. To get SMS programs started on the right foot, consider these 3 best practices:

### 1. Get permission to text.

SMS messaging is permission-based. Companies should only send text messages to prospects who have opted-in. Compliance is also crucial. Marketers must adhere to local laws and CTIA (Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association) guidelines. These recommendations protect consumers from unwanted solicitation.

### 2. Keep the conversation going.

Texting allows marketers to deliver timely, relevant messages. This creates a personal connection with prospects. When a customer responds, businesses should respond in real time. This keeps prospects engaged and creates a productive conversation. Auto-responders help automate the conversation by sending customized, follow-up messages.

### 3. Make it measurable.

With the right SMS solution, marketers know how their campaigns are performing. With this data, they prove ROI. They determine which messages and promotions are working. Knowing what is working helps refine text campaigns and improves marketing messages.

## Creating a Solid SMS Foundation

Text marketing is on the rise. SMS is one of the most reliable ways to connect with an audience. In fact, brands using SMS reach 95% of users<sup>6</sup>, on both smartphones and non-smartphones. But success isn't achieved overnight. Building a solid SMS program starts with the technology behind the message.



## SMS + AI: Automating Prospect Activation

SMS is a proven prospect activation method to contact, nurture, and engage leads. It gives marketers the tools they need to make timely and relevant messages. Until recently, SMS has been a function of digital marketing. Artificial intelligence now enables SMS for both marketing and sales. AI-powered conversations bridge the gap between automated marketing tools and the sales team.

Here's how SMS, built with a layer of AI, increases sales and marketing output:

### **Conduct automated outreach and persistent follow up.**

Consider this scenario. Marketing receives an inbound lead. Next, an AI agent sends a text message to start a personal conversation. It gauges interest and schedules a phone call. When the lead responds, the AI interprets the text and takes the appropriate next step. Depending on the company's needs. The agent may send another text, schedule a call, or alert the sales rep.

## Speak naturally, in real-time.

Data scientists and engineers optimize AI agents to always be learning. The AI absorbs context, colloquial styles, and intents. This is all part of natural language processing (NLP). AI messages look and sound like they are coming from a real person. Using AI, businesses can generate and personalize real-time responses.

## Create more conversations at scale.

An AI agent can initiate simultaneous conversations. And it handles as much or as little lead volume a marketing team generates. An AI machine is more aggressive than a typical sales rep. But it's only as persistent as what it's been programmed to do. Plus, AI agents never wear out or go on vacation.

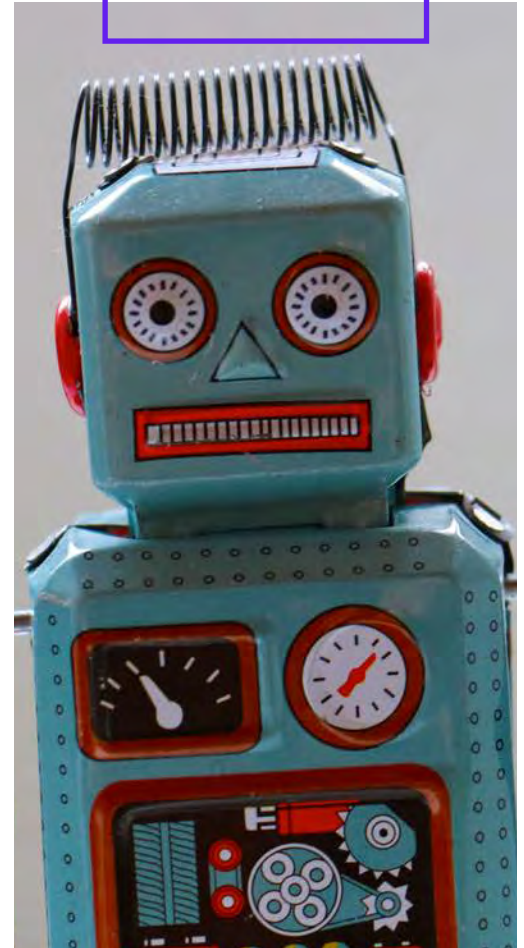
## Nurture leads behind the scenes.

SMS nurturing and lead engagement happens behind the scenes. Sales reps are free to concentrate on selling and closing. Marketing remains focused on generating qualified leads. When a prospect is ready to talk on the phone, the AI agent makes the hand-off.



With the support of an AI SMS agent, sales teams focus on talking to qualified prospects. They no longer need to engage in tedious tasks like dialing and following up. Meanwhile, marketing can rest easy. Every single prospect receives thorough outreach and follow-up attempts. AI conversation agents help campaigns receive their full ROI.

AI  
conversation  
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# Aktify: Turn Leads Into Inbound Calls



## AKTIFY

Aktify is a prospect activation platform. It combines SMS, sophisticated AI, machine learning, and natural language processing to activate leads. Teams using Aktify can focus on selling and closing deals instead of chasing down leads.



## Activating Prospects with Goodwill

Gifting is part of Aktify's prospect activation process. Offering a reward accelerates a response. Aktify's machine learning models absorb a prospect's interests, needs, and communication patterns. Deep learning pattern recognition enables the AI to offer a meaningful gift such as concert tickets, merchandise, or gift cards. When Aktify offers something of interest to a prospect, it generates an 82% response rate.


## Generating Inbound Calls

One of Aktify's main objectives is to initiate inbound phone calls. The AI-driven texting platform conducts many outreach attempts and nurtures the stalled leads. Aktify's conversation agent connects activated prospects with the sales team. Reps do not alter their methods to receive these leads. They simply receive the phone calls as new inbound leads. The math is simple. More calls, more conversations, more sales.

## Aktify Conversation AI Benefits

- Automatically contact, engage, and nurture leads through two-way SMS messages
- Leverage goodwill to increase response rates
- Focus on prospects with actual interest and buying intent
- Automate the follow-up sales process
- Receive activated prospects as inbound calls
- Activate prospects at scale

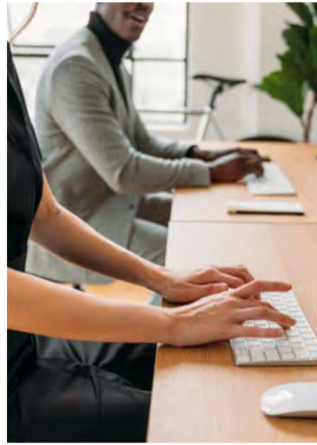




“Aktify extracts value out of leads that have fallen through the cracks. Their campaign consistently generates economical customer acquisitions for us.”

- Sales Leader

**#1 Home Security  
Company in the U.S.**



## Learn More

To learn how Aktify activates prospects,  
call **1-855-925-8439** or email [info@aktify.com](mailto:info@aktify.com)

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## Endnotes

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- <sup>5</sup> "Conversational Advertising." MobileSquared. June 2010.
- <sup>6</sup> "Mobile Web Growth: 1 in 5 Internet Users Don't Use a Computer." GoMO News. 14 Dec 2010.