

## ***Nine compelling reasons why outsourcing telesales makes business sense***

From banks to insurance underwriters, telesales stands out as one of the most successful sales channels in the insurance industry. The 2014 Reinsurance Group of America (RGA) SA Bancassurance survey shows that call centres are one of the key channels for bancassurance distribution and the majority of banks rely on outsourced call centres to handle their insurance telesales.

Even in the age of digital marketing, telesales stands second only to in-person contact for success rate in closing a sale. But this is true only when managed by experienced telemarketers with a singular focus on sales, backed by advanced technology and proven processes that support selling in a compliant and ethical manner.

“Many marketers underestimate that generating sales via telephone is massively draining on human, technical and financial resources. When it comes to justifying the capital expenditure on setting up an in-house call centre, versus outsourcing to a specialist telesales operation, there are many compelling reasons why outsourcing will deliver a better return on investment and significantly higher quality sales,” says Albert Thyse, Head of Sales at O’Keeffe & Swartz.

Here are nine compelling reasons why an outsourced specialist telesales provider is the best sales decision you’ll make:

1. **Speed to market** – chances are you need sales quickly to make forecast. Building up a professional telesales operation takes years of learning, refinement, management skills development and investment in training, recruitment, compliance and technology. A specialist provider has this in place, so the focus is immediately on driving your sales.
2. **Specialisation** - It’s near impossible to excel at something that is not core to your business. An outsourced telesales provider is a specialist in telesales, which results in greater efficiency and higher productivity. These benefits culminate in delivering better sales results for your campaign.
3. **Human resources** – by far the most expensive, demanding and perpetual of call centre overheads. O’Keeffe & Swartz receives on average 1500 CVs every month, of which about 100 suitable candidates make it into sales training. Post the training, only about 50% of the sales trainees end up making sales calls. It’s an industry with high staff turnover so ongoing recruitment and training are imperative.
4. **Compliance, ethics and consumer protection** – Given the raft of privacy, consumer protection and FAIS legislation, compliance is an important consideration in insurance telesales. Compliance incurs hefty demands on processes, technology and human capital resources, and should be approached as a non-negotiable discipline within the business.
5. **Technology** – is constantly evolving, so it can be difficult to keep track of the latest innovations in the market. If your call centre is using outdated or badly managed technology that results in hang-ups and irritated customers, you’re doing significant damage to your brand, customer relationships, and without a doubt your sales results.

6. **Data and analytics** – Telesales is a heavily process driven strategy backed by deep data insights that determine whether the right products and benefits are being pitched to the right client, at the right time, with the right propensity to buy, with the best sales pitch. This is driven by data and analytics and the ability to decipher and apply what the data is telling you into your sales processes. Interpreting this data into actions requires experienced management skills and expertise to ensure success.
7. **The art of the Sales Script** – Telesales scripts must be well researched, professionally written, structured, and tested to identify weak areas, closed questioning and suitability to the target audience being contacted. Getting to the most appropriate script takes time and constant refinement to ensure that you don't end up burning through databases and demotivating your sales teams with calls that go nowhere.
8. **Flexibility** - You may need to double the number of agents for a promotional period while a month later volumes need to reduce. This level of flexibility is virtually impossible to manage in an in-house operation. By making use of an outsourced provider, you have access to experienced and well-trained sales consultants when you need them. They are likely to have experience on similar campaigns that they have previously dialled, or even campaigns handled for your business. This knowledge and skills base is immediately available to ensure greater campaign success when you need it.
9. **Cost** – this has three dimensions: time, expertise and money. You may think that you're 'selling products', but what you're really doing is buying yourself an enormous amount of time and management skill. An outsourced provider also has the benefit of multiple clients to amortise the hard costs such as HR, telephony and technology costs that are onerous in a call centre. When you start adding up all the dimensions of cost in a call centre, you'll be hard pressed to justify this for a process that is not core to your business.

“Telesales is one discipline where working with outsourced professionals with proven techniques who thrive in performance-driven environments, supported by technology, data, systems and methodologies, is critical to achieving an effective investment to revenue ratio,” concludes Albert.