

Evaluation of the performance of B2B prospecting campaigns: multi-channel analysis and strategic recommendations

Performance Evaluation of B2B Prospecting Campaigns: Multichannel Analysis and Strategic Recommendations.

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Abstract:

This article explores the measurement of the performance of commercial prospecting campaigns by analyzing the effectiveness of different channels, including phoning, mailing, and social selling. Through field studies and documentary research, we evaluated the impact of these channels on prospect conversion and the achievement of commercial objectives. The use of relevant KPIs allowed for the quantification and analysis of campaign performance, revealing results below initial forecasts but highlighting clear areas for improvement. Recommendations are made to optimize future prospecting campaigns, including

diversifying channels and improving the quality of customer databases.

Keywords: Commercial prospecting, performance measurement, Key Performance Indicators (KPI), phoning, mailing, social selling, prospect conversion, prospecting strategy.

Résumé:

Cet article explore la mesure de la performance des campagnes de prospection commerciale en analysant l'efficacité des différents canaux utilisés, notamment le phoning, le mailing et le social selling. À travers une étude de terrain et une recherche documentaire, nous avons évalué l'impact de ces canaux sur la conversion des prospects et l'atteinte des objectifs commerciaux. L'utilisation de KPI pertinents a permis de quantifier et d'analyser les performances de la campagne, révélant des résultats en deçà des prévisions initiales mais montrant des pistes d'amélioration claires. Des recommandations sont proposées pour optimiser les futures campagnes de prospection, notamment en diversifiant les canaux et en améliorant la qualité des bases de données clients.

Mots-clés : Prospection commerciale, mesure de performance, Key Performance Indicators (KPI), phoning, mailing, social selling, conversion des prospects, stratégie de prospection.

1- Introduction

In an increasingly competitive business environment, measuring the performance of prospecting campaigns has become a priority for companies seeking to maximize their return on investment. An effective prospecting campaign goes beyond the simple generation of leads, transforming these prospects into customers and thus contributing to the overall growth of the company. However, evaluating the effectiveness of these campaigns requires the use of appropriate performance indicators (KPIs) to ensure accurate analysis of results.

This article focuses on analyzing the performance of a B2B prospecting campaign through the use of various channels such as phoning, mailing and social selling. Based on a field study and literature search, we examined the impact of these channels on lead conversion and business goals. The objective is to propose an analytical framework to improve the effectiveness of future prospecting campaigns and identify areas for improvement.

However, despite the increasing use of multi-channel prospecting strategies, there is a lack of academic insight into their relative effectiveness in the Algerian B2B context.

The research question guiding this study is therefore: **Which communication channel—phoning, mailing, or social selling—proves most effective in enhancing lead conversion within B2B prospecting campaigns in Algeria?**

To answer this question, we adopted a multi-method approach, combining documentary research, field study, and semi-structured interviews. Our objective is to build strategic recommendations based on a detailed performance analysis of each channel.

This leads to the formulation of the following hypotheses:

H1: Phoning is more effective than mailing and social selling in terms of lead conversion.

H2: Mailing generates higher engagement (open and click rates) than social selling.

H3: Social selling has lower performance indicators due to limited audience interaction.

2- Part 1: Literature review

2.1- Commercial Prospecting – General

Commercial prospecting is defined as all actions aimed at promoting directly or indirectly products, services or the image of a company¹. According to Kotler and Dubois, a company looking for sustainable growth must devote significant efforts to acquiring new customers.² Commercial prospecting, which is essential for the survival of businesses, pursues several objectives:

- Turn prospects into customers.
- Increase sales and brand awareness.
- Search for new business opportunities.
- Promote a new product or service.
- Build customer loyalty.

A prospect is a potential customer whose needs correspond to the products or services offered by the company. There are several types

¹ PICCIO (C), Droit pour non-juriste : la communication, éditions Dunod, 2010, P227

² KOTLER (P), DUBOIS (B), *Marketing Management*, 10^{ème} Edition, PubliUnion, 2000

of prospects depending on their degree of proximity to the company¹
:

- Cold prospect (lead): Shows interest, but does not intend to buy in the short term.
- Lukewarm prospect (qualified lead): Seems interested and could buy soon.
- Hot prospect (qualified lead +): Has already been in contact with the company and shows an interest in a specific product or service.

There are two main prospecting strategies:²

1. Active or direct prospecting (Push): This method consists of defining a target, choosing communication channels, and organizing a proactive approach, often more expensive but effective.
2. Passive or indirect prospecting (Pull): Prospects come to the company by themselves, especially through trade shows or online referencing.

Prospecting channels may include:

- Physical prospecting: It is carried out at events such as trade fairs or by field visits in B2B.³
- Telephone prospecting: Phoning allows you to directly contact prospects to convince them to get an appointment or to finalize a sale.⁴

¹ <https://infonet.fr/le> 29/05/2023 at 11:46

² MAURIN (P), Les clés pour vendre de façon rentable, éditions AFNOR 2017

³ <https://www.agencesw.com/le> 16/04/2023 to 14:52

⁴ <https://corporama.fr/> on 16/04/2023 at 14:59

- Digital prospecting:¹ Use of digital tools (websites, social networks, emailing) to attract and convert prospects.

2.2- Implementation of a Commercial Prospecting Campaign

A prospecting campaign follows several key steps²:

1. Definition of objectives: Set according to the SMART method, these objectives must be clear, measurable, achievable, realistic and defined over time.
2. Development of a customer file: The customer relationship management (CRM) allows to ensure a follow-up of prospects and optimize interactions.
3. Choice of prospecting channels³ : Different channels can be used depending on the type of prospects and available resources (telephone, email, social selling, trade shows).
4. Prospecting actions: The adaptation of the message according to the channel is crucial. It is also essential to personalize the message and use a tracking tool such as a CRM.
5. Analysis and measurement of results: Evaluation of campaign performance is required to adjust strategies. Relevant KPIs are defined in advance to quantify the results.⁴

¹ FAIVRE (D), FETIQUE (R), LENDREVIE (A) : Le web marketing, Edition Dunod, Paris, 2011, P83

² STEFFENS (Guillaume), Les objectifs SMART, éditions 50Minutes, 2015, P17

³ HALLIGAN (B), « Inbound Marketing », Editions Business Book Summaries, 2014

⁴ MOULLIER (R), « prospection commerciale » 3^{ème} édition, éditions Eyrolles, Paris 2009, P227

Campaign performance is primarily measured by the conversion rate of leads to customers. The feedback obtained allows us to adjust targeting, messages and methods for future campaigns.

2.3- Business Performance

The term performance comes from the Latin word *performare*, which means to give a global form to something. In commercial terms, performance refers to the efficiency with which a company achieves its objectives.¹ According to different authors:

- The performance of a responsibility centre is defined by efficiency and productivity in achieving the objectives accepted by the centre.
- According to Meier, a company's performance is its ability to increase competitiveness, profitability and influence in its environment.
- For Mottis et al., performance is based on a balance between cost and value. Any action improving this couple is considered as a performance.

Performance is often confused with three other concepts² :

- Effectiveness: Achieving the objectives set, focusing on short-term quantified results. This is the relationship between results achieved and objectives set.
 - Formula: Effectiveness = Results achieved / Objectives set.
- Efficiency: Achieving results with a minimum of resources, by approaching the notion of productivity.

¹ MEIER (O), « Dico du manager », édition DUNOD, Paris, 2009, P.155

² BENITO, COMBES et FILLEAU : « Gestion de la relation commerciale », Edition Dunod, Paris, 2006, p.142

- Formula: Efficiency = Results achieved/ Means implemented.
- Effectiveness: Goes beyond mere results by assessing whether the actions undertaken correspond to initial expectations and the satisfaction obtained.

2.4- The determining factors of Commercial Performance

Business performance is a key indicator of success for a company. According to Kotler and Keller¹, it is measured by the effectiveness of marketing strategies in acquiring and retaining profitable customers as well as increasing their long-term value.

For Calori, business performance is intrinsically linked to customer satisfaction. It aims to achieve specific business objectives, such as acquiring new customers and retaining existing ones.²The determinants of business performance include:

- The quality of products or services: It must meet the expectations of customers to ensure their satisfaction and loyalty.
- The financial capacity of trading partners: Ensure that resellers or distributors are creditworthy to reduce financial risks.
- Production capacity: The company must be able to meet market demand effectively.

¹ KOTLER (P), KELLER (K), “marketing management” 15^{ème} edition, Editions Pearson, 2015

² SOGBOSSI BOSSO (B), « perception de la notion de performance par les dirigeants des pme en Afrique », Revue des sciences de gestion, N°241, 2010 p.119

- Diversity of supply: Offering a range of varied products or services to better meet the needs of customers.

2.5- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

To assess business performance, it is crucial to rely on relevant indicators. These KPIs measure the gaps between objectives and results, and enable informed decision-making. An indicator must be:

- Relevant, in relation to the objectives.
- Reliable, based on solid data.
- Comparable, allowing developments to be monitored over time.
- Measurable, with quantifiable data.

KPIs can be grouped into two categories¹ :

1. Quantitative indicators : They measure achievements in numerical terms, such as sales volume, turnover, net profit, or return on investment (ROI).
2. Qualitative indicators : They assess the quality of customer interactions, such as brand image, customer satisfaction, or innovation capacity.

Examples of KPIs by Prospection Channel:

- **Mailing² :**
 - Conversion rate: Percentage of leads who took action after receiving an email.
 - Bounce rate: Emails not delivered, reflecting the quality of the database.
 - Open rate: Percentage of emails opened.

¹ VOYER (P), Tableaux de bord de gestion et indicateurs de performance, 2e Edition, Presse de l'université d'Québec, 2006, P61

² FOURNOT (V) Emailing 2^{ème} éditions, éditions maxima 2014 p44

- Responsiveness rate: Clicks on links included in the email.
- Unsubscription rate: Number of prospects who have requested to no longer receive communications.
- **Phoning¹** :
 - Contact rate: Percentage of calls that resulted in a meaningful conversation.
 - Referral rate: Proportion of interested prospects among initial contacts.
 - Conversion rate: Ratio between converted leads and the total number of contacts.
- **Social Selling²** :
 - Number of unique visitors : Visits to a site or page on social networks.
 - Conversion rate: Proportion of interactions that result in an action (purchase, appointment).
 - Engagement rate : Interactions (likes, shares, comments) on posts.

Companies must organize these indicators in a structured way and monitor their evolution using dashboards. These visual tools allow you to compare performance and adjust trading strategies accordingly.

3- Part II: Practical Case Study

This section presents a field study conducted at IMMAR Research & Consultancy, which specializes in marketing studies, audience measurement and media monitoring. The project analysed is the prospecting campaign for the study Day After Recall, **which**

¹ BALZEAU (D), « Commercial », éditions Vuibert, 2014, p44

² RIET (V) Lean Smarketing : An Introduction to the Integration of Marketing and Sales , Editions die keure 2017 p8

measures media audience during the month of Ramadan in Algeria.

3.1- Presentation of IMMAR Research & Consultancy

Founded in 1999, IMMAR is a company based in Paris, working in marketing studies, media and strategic consulting. It operates in several sectors and countries through different entities. Since 2005, IMMAR has been conducting the Day After Recall Ramadan 360° study in Algeria, providing advertisers, agencies and media with indicators on audience behaviour during Ramadan, a period characterized by atypical media consumption patterns.¹

The main objectives of this campaign were commercial: to sell the study, convert prospects into customers and increase IMMAR's market awareness.

Table N°1: Technical details of the study

Universe of references	Sample	Sampling method	Administration of questionnaires	Scope of the study
More than 32 million men & women aged 15 and over, living in urban and rural areas	Sample of 4,000 individuals representative of the population, spread over 10 days, interviewed on consumption media of the day before	Quota method by: Gender Age CSP Region environment	Interview CATI (by phone) on listening the day before	15 towns: Algiers, Tizi Ouzou, Médéa, Djelfa, Annaba, Constantine, Sétif, Batna, Oran, Tlemcen, Tiaret, Mascara, Ouargla, Biskra & Béchar

Source: internal document

¹ <https://www.immar-intl.com/qui-sommes-nous/> le 18/05/2023 à 19 :58

The sample includes 650 B2B prospects selected from IMMAR's CRM system, covering sectors such as media, household appliances, services, and telecommunications. While the database is internally validated, we acknowledge a selection bias toward sectors already familiar with audience measurement, which may limit generalizability.

Although limited to 4 in-depth interviews, the qualitative part targeted key decision-makers directly involved in the campaign. Sample representativeness was guided by role relevance rather than statistical representativeness, which is a limitation.

We included control variables such as sector type, company size, and prior exposure to IMMAR services in our analysis to reduce confounding effects.

3.2- Methodology

In order to carry out the prospecting campaign, a multi-channel strategy was implemented, using the following channels:

- Mailing via the Mailjet tool to distribute technical and commercial offers.
- Phoning to track leads and confirm receipt of offers.
- Social Selling via LinkedIn, to publish promotional content and engage the IMMAR subscriber community.

The prospect database, hosted in a CRM (Hubspot)¹, made it possible to structure and track prospecting actions.

¹ <https://blog.hubspot.fr/marketing/fichier-csv> le 23/05/2023 à 12:49

For our research, we used the semi-structured interview technique, which was considered to be the most appropriate way of guiding discussion with prepared questions. The interviews focused on two main axes: commercial prospecting and measuring commercial performance within IMMAR. We selected four individuals relevant to our study, based on their Day After Recall related positions. Interviews were conducted with 4 people who hold the following positions: Business Development & Media Analytics Director, DGA Data Science & Data Marketing, Media Manager and Sales Prospecting Officer. The responses were analyzed and interpreted individually, then synthesized. To reinforce this synthesis, we created a wordcloud via the R programming language, offering a visual representation of the most frequent words in the answers.

Campaign stages:

1. Sending the offer by email to all targeted prospects.
2. Phone calls to confirm receipt of the email and generate interest.
3. Reactivation of prospects by email and phone based on the answers obtained.
4. Publication of an organic post on LinkedIn to generate traffic to the technical-commercial offer.

Table N°2: Marketing campaign plan for the Day After Recall study

Met hod Foll owe d Canal		<i>Mailing</i>	<i>Phoning</i>	<i>Social network LinkedIn</i>
D A T E	05/03/2023	First mailing containing the technical and commercial offer to all relevant prospects.	Telephone calls to all relevant prospects to confirm receipt of the offer.	
	12/03/2023	First reminder mailing to all prospects who have not returned.	Telephone follow-up to prospects who have not returned.	Organic LinkedIn post containing a link directing network users to the technical and commercial offer.
	21/03/2023	Second reminder mailing to prospects who seem interested (<i>Leads</i>)	Call-back to all prospects who seem interested. (<i>Leads</i>)	

Source: developed by us based on internal documents

Campaign results were then measured using different channel-specific KPIs (Key Performance Indicators).

3.3- Main findings and analysis

Canal Phoning :

- Contact rate: 17% (111 prospects contacted out of 650). This rate, although modest, reflects a suitable segmentation of prospects, including sectors such as media, household appliances, services and telecommunications.
- Escalation rate: 10.81% (12 interested prospects out of 111 calls). The main reasons for the low return include budget constraints or a lack of interest in audience measurement studies.
- Conversion rate: 9%. 10 leads were converted into customers, mainly through telephone reminders.

Canal Mailing :

- Open rate : 43% (822 emails opened on 1907 sent). This rate reflects the quality of the mailing addresses and the attractive content of the offer.
- Click-through rate : 22% (428 clicks out of 1,907 emails sent). This percentage reflects the interest of prospects, but it is still below expectations.
- Bounce rate (hard bounce) : 6% (116 emails not delivered). Ce faible taux reflète la bonne qualité de la base de données utilisée.

Canal Social Selling (LinkedIn) :

- Number of impressions: 468 impressions in three days, which is relatively small compared to the 3,600 subscribers on IMMAR's LinkedIn page.
- Click-through rate: 4.27% (20 clicks out of 468 impressions) This rate shows limited engagement,

suggesting that publications could be optimized in terms of format and content.

- Engagement rate: 12.82% (values of interactions versus impressions), indicating moderate community interest.

In addition to descriptive KPIs, we conducted inferential statistical analyses using SPSS. A Chi-square test was performed to assess the significance between channel type and conversion outcome ($p < 0.05$).

Furthermore, we used a logistic regression model to test the influence of channel (phoning, mailing, social selling) on the likelihood of conversion, controlling for sector and engagement level. The model confirms that phoning significantly increases the probability of conversion compared to other channels.

3.4- Data analysis and visualization

The results of this campaign were analyzed and visualized using Excel software, which created an interactive dashboard. This dashboard presents the KPIs of the different prospecting channels and provides an overview of the overall performance of the campaign.

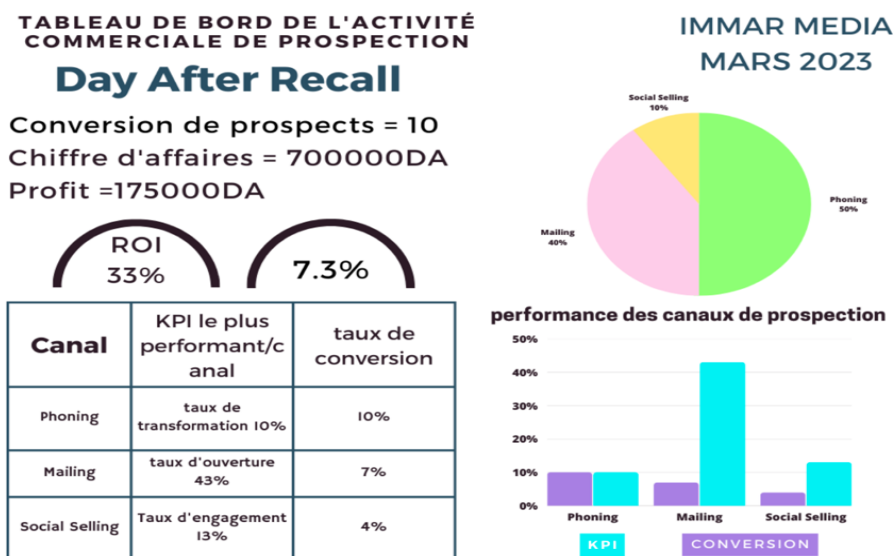
Analyses reveal that:

- The consumer and media sectors were most receptive to the offer, confirming IMMAR's reputation in these areas.
- The mailing generated a high open rate, but a relatively moderate click rate, indicating an interest in the offer but a lack of conversion.

- Phoning, while not a digital channel, has been more effective in generating conversions than mailing or social selling.
- The LinkedIn channel generated few interactions, highlighting the need to improve content strategy to maximize engagement.

The results of this study show that the multi-channel prospecting campaign was generally satisfactory, although below initial expectations. Phoning proved to be the most effective channel for converting leads into customers, while mailing and social selling generated interest but did not achieve the same level of efficiency.

Diagram 1: Commercial prospecting activity dashboard for the Day After Recall study.



Source: developed by us from an internal document

4- General Conclusion and Recommendations

This study demonstrated the importance of measuring the performance of marketing campaigns to maximize lead conversions and improve business outcomes. IMMAR Research & Consultancy's campaign for the Day After Recall study achieved significant awareness and lead conversion targets, even though results were below initial expectations.

The evaluation of different prospecting channels showed that:

- Phoning remained the most effective tool to engage and convert prospects into customers.
- The mailing generated a high opening rate, but presented moderate results in terms of clicks and conversions.
- Social selling, especially on LinkedIn, has received few interactions, suggesting a need for optimization of the content strategy.

However, when compared to industry benchmarks (e.g., HubSpot and Salesforce reports), IMMAR's phoning conversion rate aligns with the average for B2B services (around 8–10%), while social selling lags behind expectations.

These insights corroborate findings from Kotler & Keller (2015) and Halligan (2014), who emphasize the continued importance of direct interactions in high-value B2B decision-making processes.

To improve the performance of future prospecting campaigns, we make the following recommendations:

1. Regularly measure campaign performance: It is essential to closely monitor KPIs at every stage of the campaign to react

- quickly to potential deviations and adjust strategies in real time.
2. Strengthen the content strategy for social selling: The use of social networks, including LinkedIn, must be optimized through a better use of visual formats, hashtags and sponsored campaigns to increase engagement and conversions.
 3. Diversify prospecting channels: In addition to the current tools, it would be appropriate to explore other channels such as direct prospecting at events or partnerships with influencers in the sector to improve the visibility of the offer.
 4. Improve the quality of the customer database: Campaign performance depends largely on the reliability of customer data. It is therefore crucial to regularly check and update the information contained in the CRM database to minimize bounce rates and maximize conversions.
 5. Implement a complete and interactive CRM: A powerful CRM, with advanced tracking and lead management features, would allow better segmentation of leads and real-time tracking of prospecting actions.
 6. Develop the company's image on social networks: A more active and consistent presence on social platforms would strengthen IMMAR's reputation and attract new prospects. This includes the regular creation of informative and engaging content.
 7. Valuing studies and data on the Algerian market: Better communicating the importance of studies and data to potential customers can increase interest in services such as Day After Recall, by emphasizing the strategic contribution they offer.

These recommendations aim to optimize the results of prospecting campaigns, especially in the B2B sector, where converting leads into customers is essential for business growth. The combination of an enhanced multi-channel approach and optimized customer data

management should enable IMMAR to achieve its business objectives more effectively in the future.

Data Availability Statement:

The datasets used and analyzed during the current study are not publicly available due to confidentiality agreements with IMMAR Research & Consultancy. However, aggregated results or partial anonymized data may be shared by the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Limitations:

- The study is based on a single company (IMMAR) and may not fully reflect other sectors or countries.
- The qualitative sample is small (n=4), though purposive.
- Selection bias exists due to IMMAR's existing network, limiting representativeness.
- The time frame was short, limiting long-term impact tracking.
- KPIs, though based on industry practice, were not independently validated by a third party.

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