



# The iCumulus Sales Intelligence Playbook

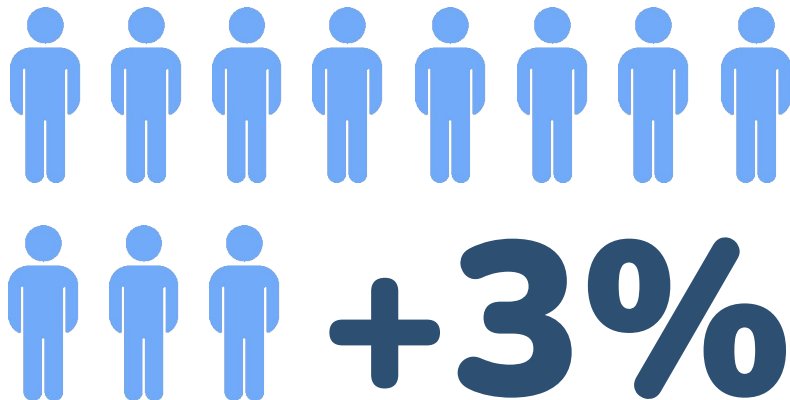
Improve Your Sales Operations  
Through Better Prospect Data & Targeting

# The Evolution of Sales

It's true, sales has come a long way. In fact, sales has gone through immense transformations over the past thirty years. This is due to the technological advancements, but let's not forget the changing customer behaviours and evolving market dynamics.

I recall my first job in London as a Media graduate for Thames TV, when I rang the media buyer for McDonalds, one of my biggest accounts, to let him know that his 30" slot in the 8pm News was preempted. However, I told him that I could replace it if he paid 550 pounds for the same slot. He agreed. At that point, my boss slapped me on the back and said, "You just made us 50 pounds extra in that transaction - welcome to Sales!!!"

I was actually perplexed. That's sales?



I moved back from London to Sydney in 1999, and tried to get out of media. Still, I scored a new job in ad sales at Network 10. I went from selling a preemptable audience on a CPM model to selling 30" slots for \$10 each. This was further agreed upon after a game of golf and a handshake to do the same as last year, plus a 3% raise.

Even then, I recall, where was the measurable audience information to make these decisions? Where was the data?

As years went by and the Internet took over, I shifted to digital as well. My agency, [icumul.us](https://icumul.us), in its 12<sup>th</sup> year now, is a global Sales Enablement company that provides a range of marketing and sales services, including demand generation powered by some of the best sales intelligence in the world.

Like almost every other company in the world, we did have a major pivot, thanks to the COVID pandemic, but here's where that helped:

- ✓ **Amazing offshore multilingual talent from around the world**
- ✓ **The gig economy full of independent contractors and freelancers**
- ✓ **The demise of the mass call centres in Asia**
- ✓ **Ability to work with flexible environments and schedules**
- ✓ **Technological advancements, including AI**
- ✓ **Advances in sales intelligence and data**

All this has helped our standing. We have doubled our headcount in the past 12 months and have increased the number of countries (languages) by the same amount, whilst our client logo count keeps climbing and each client moves to account managers.

However, we always practise what we preach - we develop sales strategies to win our own clients, then we Sell Sales. We do the same for our clients.





# The constant issue with sales challenges

When it comes to sales, companies often face various challenges that can impact their overall business performance. Overcoming them is not easy, as it requires a proactive and adaptable approach by investing in sales training, implementing efficient processes, fostering collaboration, embracing technology, and staying customer-focused.

What are some of the sales struggles companies face:



## 1 Lead Generation:

Generating high-quality leads is a significant challenge for many companies. Identifying and targeting the right audience, reaching out to potential customers, and capturing their interest can be demanding tasks. Without a steady stream of qualified leads, the sales pipeline may suffer, affecting revenue generation.

## 2 Sales Team Performance:

Companies heavily rely on their sales teams to meet revenue targets. However, managing and motivating a sales team can be challenging. Ensuring the team is adequately trained, providing ongoing support, and setting realistic goals are vital for maintaining high performance levels.

## 3 Sales Process Efficiency:

Streamlining the sales process is essential to minimise delays and maximise conversions. However, companies often face challenges such as complex internal processes, inefficient communication channels, or lengthy approval procedures. These bottlenecks can impede the sales team's productivity and hinder overall sales performance.

## 4 Customer Retention:

Retaining existing customers is as important as acquiring new ones. Companies must provide excellent post-sales support, address customer concerns promptly, and build long-term relationships. Failing to retain customers can lead to a higher customer acquisition cost and a loss of potential recurring revenue.

## 5 Alignment between Sales and Marketing:

Lack of alignment between sales and marketing departments can hinder sales efforts. A strong collaboration between these teams is essential to ensure consistent messaging, effective lead nurturing, and seamless handover of leads. Misalignment can result in wasted resources, missed opportunities, and decreased sales effectiveness.

## 6 Technology Adoption:

Companies need to leverage technology to enhance their sales processes. Implementing and integrating sales tools, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, or sales analytics platforms can be challenging. Moreover, training the sales team to effectively use these tools and ensuring their adoption across the organisation can be a hurdle.

# The case for sales intelligence solutions

Whilst on the topic of technological advances, what have we been witnessing over the past few years. In essence, approximately 60% of our discovery meetings are from intent data, and the rest as outcomes of the sales Intelligence process. If that is the case, we recommend a significant shift in your sales strategy to help you improve customer retention and generate new leads.

So, what are the key elements necessary for you to develop an effective sales strategy and generate more qualified leads?





### Smart Research:

Our agency has a dedicated Sales Researcher on staff who will be your partner in searching the right targets and companies and help you differentiate yourself from the competition.

- 1 **Account-Based Marketing:** This marketing strategy allows your company to target a high-value organisation by engaging all the key influencers and decision makers within that account.
- 2 **Buying Committees:** Most companies employ more than just one buyer, but an entire committee made up of decision makers and influencers. Using the right insights to target the right personas requires good searching and listening tactics.
- 3 **Intent data:** Possessing intent data is becoming extremely important to companies, as they are behavioural signals that indicate the intention of individuals and companies to purchase, or at the very least, interested in purchasing in the next 6-12 months.
  - Search + Descriptive keywords: Having the right strategy in place to locate and track search and descriptive keywords is paramount to being able to monitor prospects in their intent to buy a product or not.
  - Website traffic: There's always buyer intent behind your website traffic. Being able to monitor visitors to your website and tracking exactly what they do, e.g. downloading a price comparison datasheet, may be the key to understanding when these prospects are ready to purchase.
  - Competitors website traffic: Similarly, the ability to have a team of experts monitor your competitors' website traffic and understand why prospects are engaging your competitors. Thus, you can swoop in and engage prospective buyers with competitive advertisements and tactics of your own.





### Effective Data:

As an agency, we constantly aim to maximise effectiveness of our lead generation strategies. To do so, we always aim for quality over quantity. This includes a laser-sharp focus on accurate and up-to-date information that complies with government regulations around privacy. What else?

### Contact data that always include:

- Business email - with a 95% deliverability and 30% open rates
- 3-month recency - by regularly analysing and testing our data
- Mobile numbers - key ingredient to smart playbooks, especially during virtual work and COVID-related cases



## Technology:

Imagine having tools and software that capture contact details of your prospects who are showing buyer intent. Consider the amount of time and resources saved by avoiding manual tasks and allowing technologies to do the work for you.

- 1 **Marketing Automation:** Using automation (AI and machine learning) tools to engage prospects and have qualified leads and data come to you. In turn, this will improve revenue, drive retention, and increase loyalty for your business.
- 2 **Lead scoring:** Your system is able to assign points to prospects who spend time browsing your site and have higher click-through rates. This great optimisation technique allows you to focus on the right targets and avoid those less likely to convert.
- 3 **Predictive dialling:** When you have telemarketing tasks, you need a solution that makes sure your agents call as many customers as possible. Using this automatic, AI-powered tool can improve your call centre's operations, improve efficiency and generate more leads.
- 4 **Voice to text transcription:** Marketers are often inundated with information generated from research and content produced throughout all your channels. Being able to automate transcription can significantly improve your marketing team's operations.
- 5 **Sales pitch analysis:** When creating your sales pitch, you can now employ an analysis tool that evaluates your buzzwords and arguments against what your customers and employees are saying. This has the potential to improve your sales pitch and generate more sales closings.

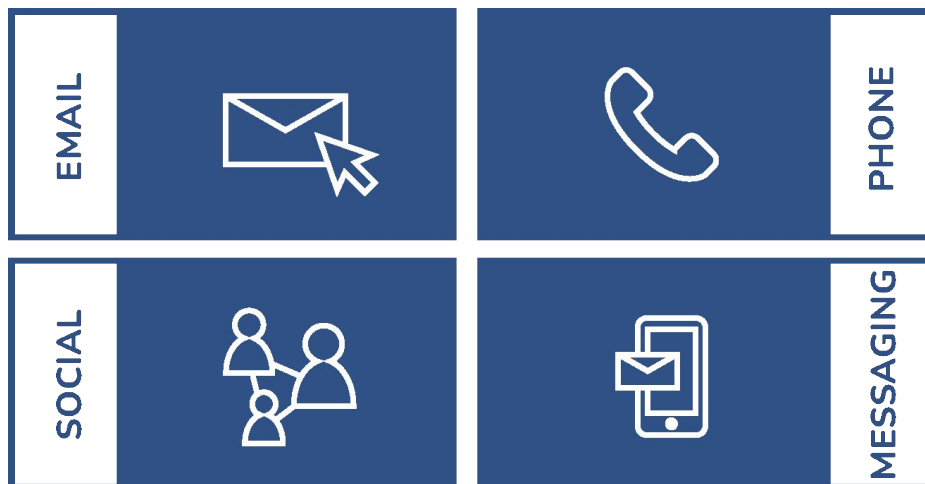


## Smart Execution:

When deciding to launch a marketing campaign, you need to rely on careful planning and smart execution. Making sure of all the moves, sequences, and touch points will eventually lead to more qualified leads and fewer mishaps.

**Playbooks:** Maintaining an all-inclusive playbook that contains all the components of a successful campaign is imperative to success. This includes messages, all different types of communication, practices, and techniques employed to achieve your marketing objectives.

**Reactive sequences:** Many companies use various communication tactics, including talking points and news stories, to effectively increase audience engagement. Having the right sequences and strategies around various channels is key to the success of this practice.



- **Email:** It's very important to design and optimise an email sequence that works consistently and predictably.
- **Phone:** Telemarketing is a very effective way to generate leads, but you must make sure you have the right sequence strategy in place: when to call, how often, what other channels to mix in between, and what to say.
- **Social:** This channel is a wonderful platform for you to tell a story using a series of advertisements at different stages of the customer journey. Having the knowledge to run such a campaign across all social media channels is a different story.
- **Messaging:** Texting is an excellent method for reaching customers, but again, you need to understand best practices and real-life examples in order to properly deploy your own text marketing campaign.



### Smart Humans:

In the end, having the right people is essential to your success. Our agency has smart people who know the ins and outs of marketing strategies, channels, and tools. They are at the service of our clients.



**Experienced:** Our staff is experienced in several marketing channels and projects. However, even in cases where they are not, their marketing skills allow them to excel in new campaigns that aim at the same goal: generate leads and growth for our clients.

**Tech savvy:** Having a dedicated tech team that will resolve any IT problem in seconds and minutes, not hours, is essential to your marketing operations. Our agency invests many resources on our tech-savvy professionals who allow for a seamless experience for all our campaigns.

**Accent neutral:** Having telemarketers who have local accents or none at all dispels any concern to your clients that they are dealing with a foreign company. Instead, have neutral accents that attract prospects and minimise predispositions from prospective customers.

**Flexible work hours:** As we now live in a true global environment, the need for flexible work environments and schedules is important to the health and satisfaction of your staff. Our agency makes sure we allow for this flexible work practice that elevates productivity and reduces turnover.



## Smart meeting:

Incorporating technology and intelligent systems to enhance collaboration, productivity, and efficiency to your meetings will separate you from the rest of the competition.

- 1 **Factor all of the above to produce VERY effective meetings:** By leveraging digital tools and platforms, you can streamline communication, information sharing, and decision-making processes during meetings. At the same time, you can eliminate common challenges associated with traditional meetings, such as disorganised agendas, time wastage, and ineffective communication.
- 2 **Video captions - multilingual:** This can indeed play a significant role in improving meetings, especially when participants speak different languages. The benefits are many: language accessibility, equal participation, and cultural sensitivity are just a few.
- 3 **Meeting summary tools:** This can also greatly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of meetings. Benefits include increased collaboration, accountability, and transparency amongst your staff.
  - Summary: Being able to capture important information that captures the main points of a meeting will help you save time and improve compliance.
  - Tasks / Next steps: These tools also have the potential to improve next steps and tasks within the organisation. From task assignments and tracking to documentation and progress monitoring, meeting summary software significantly enhances efficiency and minimises manual tasks.

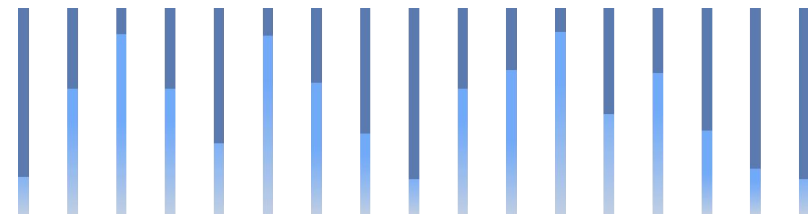
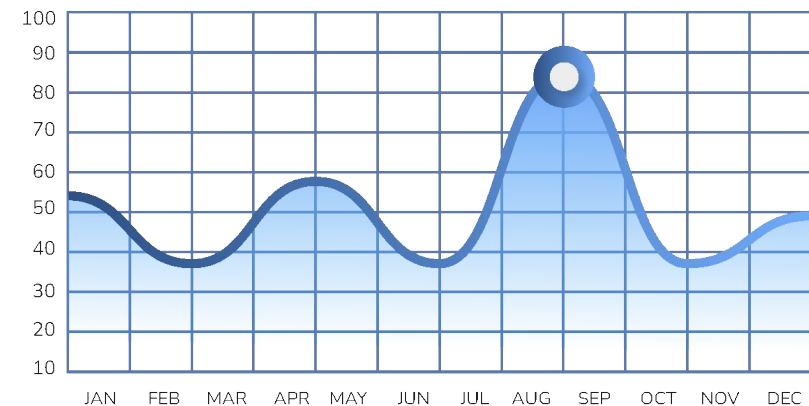
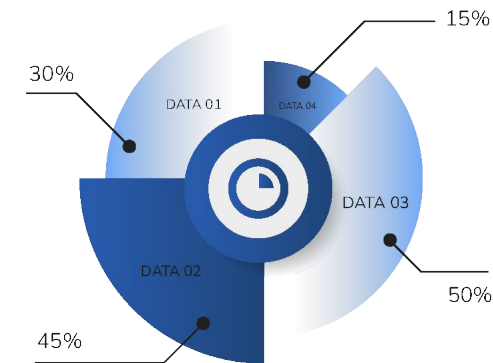




## Smart Reporting:

We can leverage smart reporting to gain valuable insights, measure performance, and make data-driven decisions for your business.

- 1 **Realtime data:** Smart reporting tools offer real-time data visualisation capabilities, help marketers quickly grasp the performance trends, spot outliers, and identify key areas of success or improvement.
- 2 **Call listening:** Listening to your team's calls allows you to adjust some tactics and optimise procedures to ensure successful outcomes of future conversations.
- 3 **Email response monitoring:** For any company, tracking and analysing the performance of email responses sent by your teams is imperative if you want to understand your team's customer engagement, conversion rates, and overall performance.
- 4 **KPI dashboards:** Through smart reporting, we enable you to set specific goals and track key performance indicators (KPIs) in real-time on easy-to-understand charts, graphs, and dashboards. Your team can monitor progress towards targets and make informed adjustments to campaigns or tactics, ensuring that marketing efforts stay focused and aligned with overall business objectives.
- 5 **Pipeline management:** This is crucial for effective marketing operations, as it helps your company improve lead management and resource allocation, and in turn, enhances revenue forecasting and planning.
- 6 **Predictive forecasting:** Finally, smart reporting tools incorporate forecasting and predictive analytics capabilities, providing projections and predictions for future performance. You can leverage these forecasts to optimise budget allocation, plan resource allocation, and make data-driven decisions to achieve marketing goals.



As we practise all of the above, let us know what resonated with you. We would be happy to share our experiences and show you how we can help you achieve your marketing goals.



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