



Outbound Pulse 2025

Sales outreach in 2025: what's working, what's not, and what's next

sopro.io



Methodology

This report is based on a survey of **300 senior B2B sales and marketing decision-makers**, evenly split between the UK and US. **Sapio Research**, an independent B2B market research consultancy, conducted the research using a structured online questionnaire in **June 2025**.

All respondents held **decision-making authority in sales or marketing**, with many also in broader leadership roles. To qualify, they had to be **currently or previously involved in sales outreach**. Participants represented a wide range of industries and company sizes, but all worked within **B2B organisations**.

The results carry a **margin of error of 5.7 percentage points at a 95% confidence level**.

This is the first edition of this survey. It complements our [State of Prospecting 2025 report](#), which explores sales outreach from a broader market perspective.

Key findings



1

Outreach is essential and widely used

Outbound remains a core growth driver. 78% of B2B leaders say it's essential to their strategy. It's not an addition to inbound; it's built into how businesses grow.

2

Outreach is fragmented and resource-heavy

Most teams are juggling an average of 3.1 different outreach methods, blending in-house efforts, agencies, tools, and leadership involvement. There's no clear model, and without one, resources get stretched and ownership blurs.

3

Outreach is blocked by a hidden barrier: confidence

Businesses believe in outreach, but many don't trust external providers and lack confidence they will get results. Without that foundation, it's harder to secure buy-in and justify spend.

4

Outreach is no longer just about lead volume

Lead numbers still matter, but they're no longer enough. Buyers want relevance, alignment, and credibility. Today, the strongest outreach complements other brand activities.

5

Outreach is improved by tech, but only when used well

Tech can make outbound smarter if it's applied with care. The best outreach tech doesn't pretend to be human, it makes human outreach sharper. When it supports strategy, it works. When it replaces thought, it fails.

6

Outreach still needs to feel human

People respond to personal, relevant outreach, not automation at scale. Manual outreach methods still earn the highest satisfaction scores.

7

Outreach must align with the wider buyer journey

The best outreach doesn't interrupt. It complements inbound, reflects brand tone, and reaches buyers on their terms. Generic messages don't stand a chance against thoughtful, well-timed contact.

8

Outreach is complex, but the results are worth it

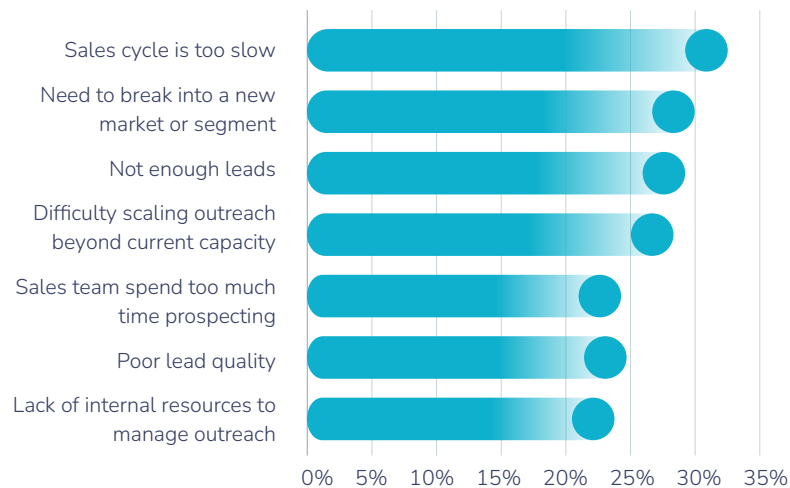
Today's outreach takes a mix of technology, strategy, and sustained effort. But the pay-off is clear. 74% call it "high effort, high reward", and 80% say it builds long-term relationships. It may be hard to master, but when it lands, it drives real growth.

Challenges in 2025

Why outreach is being used

Outreach isn't a side strategy. For many teams, it's the only way to hit their numbers. In our latest survey, we asked what challenges led to investment in sales outreach. Their answers reveal a set of persistent, familiar problems.

What challenges led you to invest in sales outreach?



These issues reflect a broader truth: inbound isn't built to do it all. Outbound is essential when teams need to speed up sales cycles, break into new markets, or increase lead volume. It gives businesses more control over who they reach, when they reach them, and how they shape the conversation. That's why outreach remains a core part of the strategy.

But, as we'll see next, using it effectively is far from simple.

"One of the biggest risks to outreach is going in half-hearted. When teams treat outreach as a bolt on, they under-resource it, and it often fails. Outreach delivers when it's taken seriously.

It needs to be a consistent part of strategy, working alongside your marketing and aligned to your buyers. It's not always easy, but with the right mix of resource, data, and tech, it delivers a reliable stream of leads."

Vic Heyward
Director of Marketing





What's changed in the market

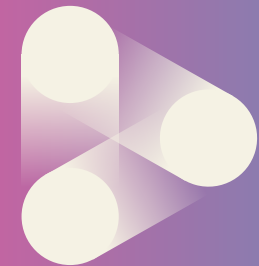
These outreach challenges don't exist in a vacuum. They reflect a broader shift in how B2B buyers behave. We explored this in detail in our [State of Prospecting 2025 report](#).

Buying decisions now involve more stakeholders, take longer, and happen later in the journey. With tighter budgets, buyers are more cautious and selective. Many go silent or stick with the status quo. At the same time, competition has intensified: buyers are considering more options than ever and expect tailored experiences, not just volume.

Add in declining single-channel performance, new deliverability rules, fragmented tech stacks, and data overload, and it's clear: outreach needs to be smarter, sharper, and far more strategic than before.

WATCH:

Changing buyer behaviour



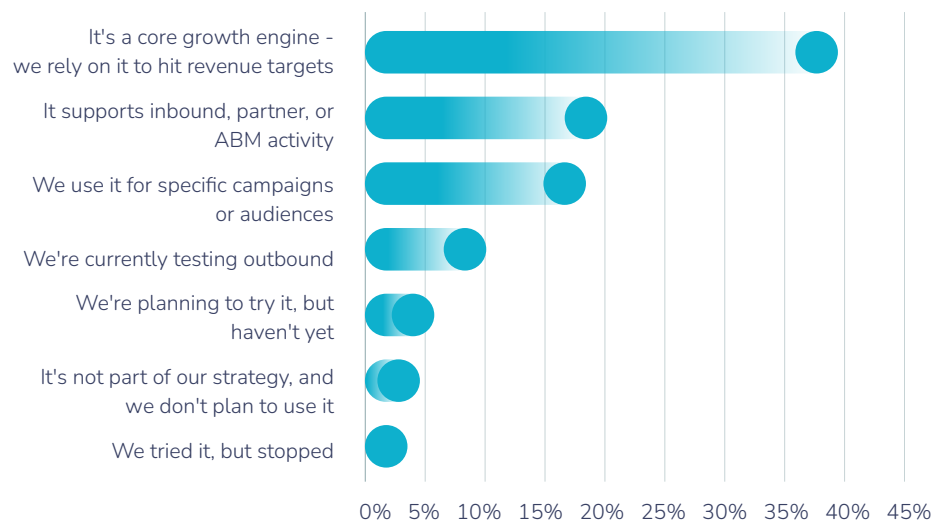
1. Outreach is essential and widely used

Outbound outreach remains a cornerstone of B2B growth. Despite growing challenges, leaders still see it as vital to business performance.

- **78%** say it's essential to their growth strategy
- **80%** believe it can build long-term relationships
- Only **5%** aren't using outbound at all

Outbound isn't a side tactic: 39% are fully committed, calling it a **"core growth engine"** they rely on to **hit revenue targets**.

How does outbound sales outreach fit into your overall go-to-market strategy?



What this tells us

Outbound isn't a fallback, or an add-on. It's a foundational tactic. Despite mixed experiences, businesses believe in its long-term value and role in hitting targets.





“A lot of outreach setups aren’t built. They just happen. And then they develop organically.

One team tries something, another adds a tool, someone changes a process, and suddenly no one’s quite sure who owns what.”

Rob Harlow

Chief Innovation Officer

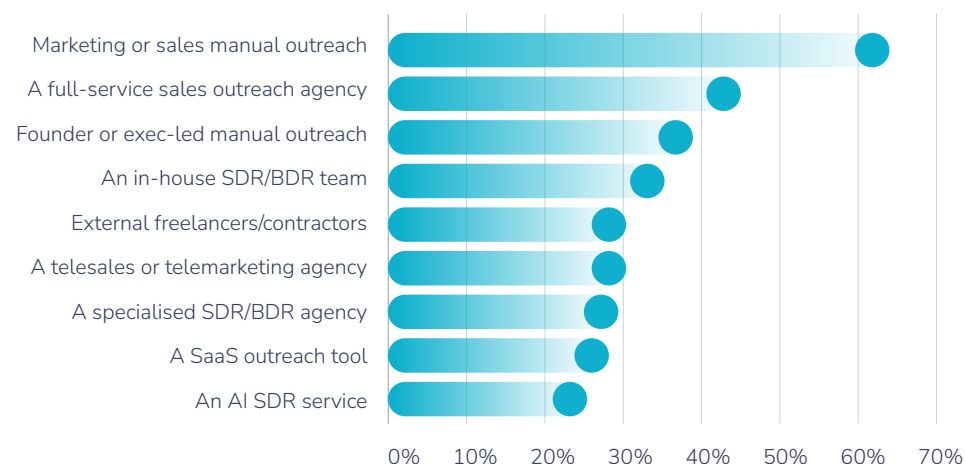
2. Outreach is fragmented and resource-heavy

On average, B2B teams use **3.1 different outreach methods**, often blending manual efforts, in-house teams, and external partners.

The most common approaches are still heavily human-led:

- **62%** use manual outreach run by their sales or marketing teams
- **43%** work with a full-service outreach agency
- **38%** use manual outreach led by their founders or senior execs
- **Just 22%** use AI SDRs and **only 27%** use SaaS tools

Which of the following do you currently use for sales outreach?



What this tells us

There's no standardised model for outreach. Most teams are juggling multiple methods, often with significant resource input and overlapping ownership. As we'll see next, this fragmented setup comes at a cost, impacting outreach success.

3. Outreach is often blocked by a hidden barrier

Despite viewing outreach as essential, companies have a crisis of confidence about the best way to approach it. According to our survey, internal barriers are often the reason outreach stalls.

Confidence is a significant issue:

- 76% say a **lack of trust** in external providers has impacted their investment
- 75% cite a **lack of confidence about the results** that outreach can deliver
- 72% say **unclear ROI** is a barrier

This uncertainty feeds into other, more practical blockers:

- **67%** say they struggle with leadership buy-in
- **75%** cite competing priorities
- **78%** cite budget constraints
- **73%** say they lack internal resources to manage outreach

What this tells us

If confidence is low, it becomes harder to secure buy-in. That leads to tighter budgets, under-resourced teams, and a constant battle for internal priority. That internal friction makes external partnerships harder, too, especially when expectations have moved on.



“Many of these internal barriers support the wider pressures highlighted in our last survey. Tighter budgets, stretched resources, and lack of confidence... all came up in the latest State of Prospecting report.

Six months on, these issues aren’t going away. It’s clear how hard it is to get outbound right in 2025.”

Kit Smith

Content Manager



“The shift we’re seeing, have been seeing for a while actually, is from volume to value. Buyers want fewer but better conversations; they want alignment with their brand. What they don’t want is to add to the noise.”

James McLarnon

Co-Head of Customer
Success



4. Outreach is no longer just about lead volume

Lead volumes still matter. But for today’s B2B buyers, it’s no longer the defining measure of a good outreach partner. Expectations have matured.

	% Important/ extremely important
Quality of leads	88%
Ability to target the right audience	88%
Trustworthiness and credibility	86%
Cost-effectiveness and ROI	85%
Volume of leads	84%
Alignment with brand, messaging and tone	84%
Experience in your industry	83%

What this tells us

Outreach isn’t just a numbers game anymore. Buyers want partners who align with their goals, brand, and audience, and can reflect all three to their audience.

The top factor when choosing an outreach provider isn’t the price. Companies don’t just want results. They want relevance, credibility, and control: a strategic partnership.





Case study: Insureflow



Insureflow needed to raise awareness and generate leads in a competitive industry, with no prior outbound experience. Sopro's focused campaign delivered over 100 leads in three months, prompting plans for a dedicated sales hire and justifying further marketing investment.

"Sopro suggested a hyper-targeted data set; super small but highly focused. It's the total opposite of many lead generation companies that go for a "spray-and-pray" approach. We're sending quality emails and getting quality leads."



Steve Foster
Head of Customer
Success, Insureflow

5. Outreach is improved by tech, but only when used well

B2B leaders are optimistic about the potential of tech to enhance outreach, but wary of how it's being applied. Used well, AI and automation can improve data, targeting, and delivery. But too often, it's being used to mimic humans, and it falls short.

What the data shows:

- **77%** expect AI-powered outreach tools to become more effective
- **82%** believe outreach could be far more effective with better data and tech

At the same time:

- AI SDRs are predicted to be one of the lowest-growth channels
- Users of AI SDRs are the **least satisfied** compared to all other outreach methods

What this tells us

There's a clear distinction between AI that supports humans and AI that tries to replace them. Efficiency matters - but not at the cost of experience. The best outreach tech works behind the scenes, improving inputs, not impersonating people.



"Tech should power and enhance outreach, not replace the people doing it. The trust is gone the moment people sense a robot rather than a person."

The best tech disappears into the background, sharpening targeting, streamlining delivery, and keeping things personal."

Jussi Kuusisto

Product Manager –
AI & Data Science Projects



6. Outreach still needs to feel human

Even as tools evolve, the fundamentals haven't changed: people engage with outreach when it feels personal, timely, and relevant.

Today's outreach often misses the mark:

- **57%** say most outreach feels impersonal and irrelevant
- **70%** think AI will make outreach more efficient, but not more human

But when it's done well, buyers respond.

The outreach methods driven by people see the highest levels of satisfaction.

- Manual outreach methods score highest satisfaction: **80% (marketing/sales), 74% (founder-led)**
- Full-service agencies rate just under manual: **67% satisfaction**

What this tells us

Tech can improve how outreach is delivered. But to build trust, start conversations, and move buyers forward, it still needs a human touch. Automation can scale outreach. It can't replace connection.



Human-led, AI-enhanced outreach at Sopro

Explore how our experts use AI to scale precision, not replace people.

Discover more



Buyers engage with outreach when it feels human and relevant

What gets a response?

- **84%** are more likely to engage if they recognise the sender
- **81%** are more likely to engage if it's tailored to them
- **80%** are more likely to engage if there are relevant case studies or social proof

7. Outreach must align with the wider buyer journey

If outreach is genuine and human, it doesn't feel like an interruption. It should feel like a natural part of the buyer journey.

When considering outreach solutions:

- **76%** say outreach works best when combined with inbound
- **84%** prioritise alignment with their brand and messaging
- **88%** prioritise audience targeting

80% of recipients are more likely to engage with outreach if it's sent on their preferred channel

What this tells us

Buyers want experiences that feel like a coherent, natural extension of their buying journey, across inbound and outbound, channels, and roles. Generic cold emails no longer cut it.

Relevance, timing, brand alignment... all of it matters. But bringing it together takes serious effort. The final section highlights just how complex outreach has become, and why it's still worth doing right.



WATCH:
Multi-channel outreach





Case study: Neighbourhood Watch



The lean team at Neighbourhood Watch needed an outreach partner that could deliver results without stretching internal resources. Sopro's multi-channel campaign generated 207 leads and 5x ROI, securing valuable partnerships within weeks and fuelling their expansion.

"The response was overwhelming in the best way possible. We secured key partnerships, expanding our corporate relationships in ways we hadn't been able to before. It's been incredibly successful."



John Hayward-Cripps
CEO, Neighbourhood Watch

8. Outreach is complex, but the results are worth it

Modern outreach isn't simple. It involves multiple channels, advanced tech, and deep targeting. It involves experienced humans, enhanced by AI. It's complicated. But when it's done well, the reward is clear.

- **74%** describe outreach as “high effort, high reward”
- **80%** believe it can build long-term relationships

What this tells us

There's no shortcut to effective outreach. It takes effort, coordination, and the right balance of people and tech. Many teams are still figuring it out, but they're not walking away. The complexity is real, and so is the reward.



What this means for outreach in 2025

For in-house teams

Outreach works. But doing it well in-house is more complicated than ever.

Many teams rely on manual, leader-led, or marketing-run outreach. In smaller doses, the approach can deliver great results. It's personal, direct, and often leads to high satisfaction. But as activity scales, so do the challenges. Resource limits, fragmented ownership, inconsistent messaging, and unclear results start to surface.

To make outreach work in-house, teams need:

- Clear ownership and structure
- Integrated tech that supports, not complicates
- A strategy that balances scale with personalisation
- Messaging that aligns with brand, audience, and buyer journey

Most importantly, they must treat outreach as an ongoing discipline, not a side project. Without the correct setup and the dedicated resource to run and optimise, it risks becoming noisy, ineffective, or invisible.

For outreach providers

The expectations are higher. Buyers don't just want leads anymore. They want relevance, brand alignment, and confidence in the process, but price isn't the top factor anymore. Trust is.

Providers that succeed will be the ones who:

- Prioritise quality over quantity
- Integrate seamlessly with internal teams
- Use tech to enhance human outreach, not replace it
- Deliver both strategic clarity and day-to-day consistency

Outreach is still one of the most powerful growth levers in B2B. But it's not something you can wing. The question isn't whether outreach works. It's whether you've built the system to make it work.

"44% of our survey panel say they've had more misses than hits when it comes to their outreach, which points to the complexity. But the fact that it's still so widely used also shows how valuable it is when it works. Teams aren't giving up on outreach. They're working hard to get it right."



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Demand Generation Lead

We are **sopro**

And since 2015, we've been busy transforming how companies generate new business.

Our team of 300 global experts combine genuine human insight with in-house tech and live lead generation data to design multi-channel campaigns that help you sell more.

We engage your ideal prospects with personalised outreach, act on buyer intent signals, and connect them with you when they're ready to talk sales.

At Sopro, we're a **B2B lead generation agency** with a difference. We don't just give you logins or a list of leads. Our expert teams work with you to build sustainable campaigns set up for long-term success.



Fully managed, multi-channel outreach

We run your outreach end-to-end: personalised messaging, smart targeting, and campaign optimisation.



Intelligent targeting with real-time insights

We act on live intent signals to reach the right people at the right time, driving better results.



Trusted by 3,179+ businesses

With a decade of experience, our team delivers campaigns that consistently drive growth.

Want to know if Sopro's multi-channel prospecting service can help your business sell more? [Book your discovery call](#)



★★★★★ 4.8



★★★★★ 4.9



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