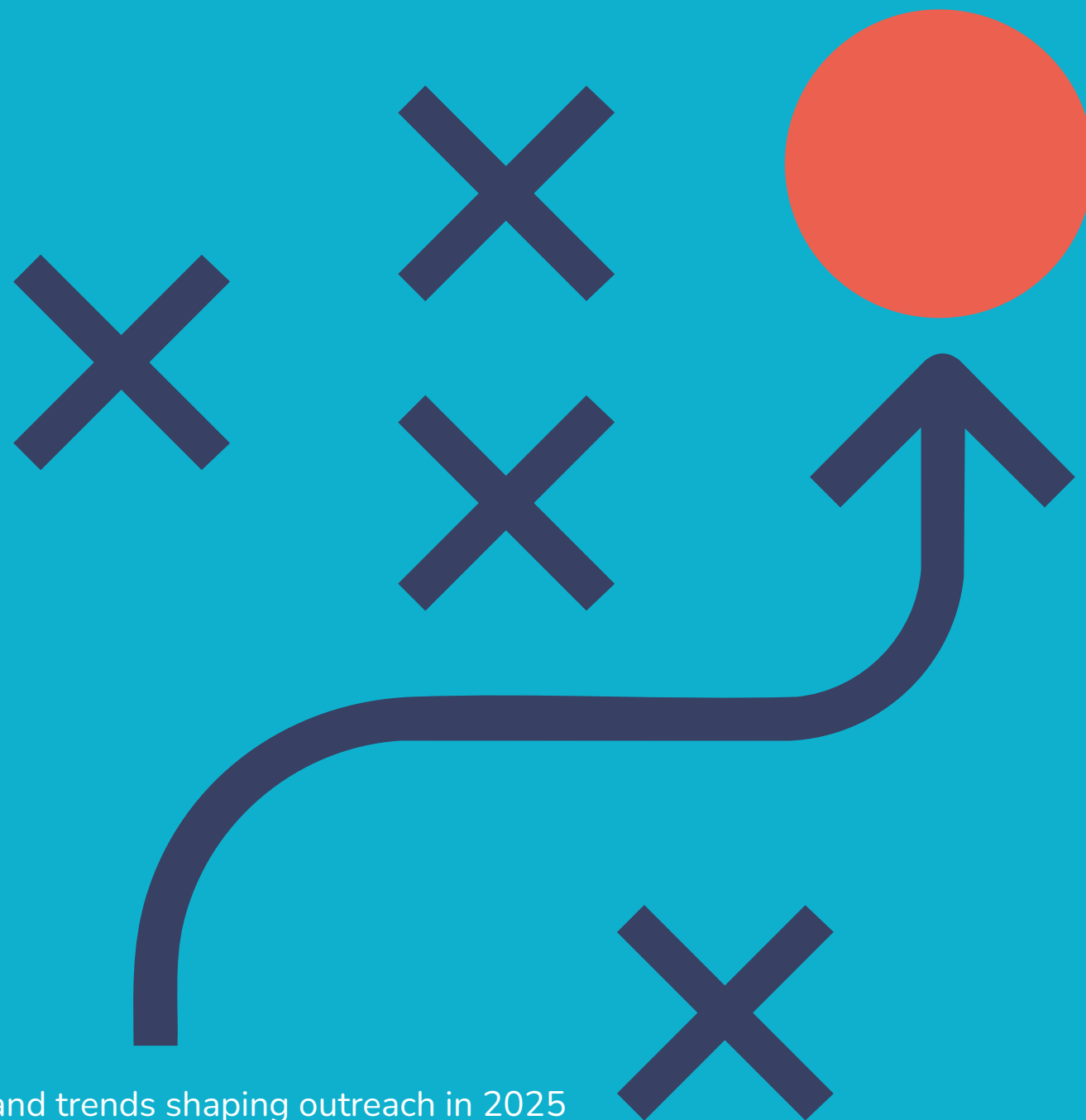# The State of Prospecting 2025

Packed with the insights, data, and trends shaping outreach in 2025

Your ultimate guide to prospecting in 2025. With insights from 404 senior B2B decision-makers, data from 97.9 million emails and 21.6 million multi-channel touchpoints, and innovative strategies from leading outreach experts.

Contents

Foreword

Welcome to the fourth edition of the State of Prospecting report—the definitive guide to prospecting in 2025. Packed with insights, data, and trends shaping outreach in 2025, this is the must-read report for staying ahead in B2B sales.

It's fair to say the B2B landscape is evolving at an extraordinary pace. New technologies and changing buyer behaviours are reshaping how sales teams operate. Navigating these shifts in 2024 has been no small task.

This year's report is based on a survey of over 400 B2B senior decision-makers and billions of data points across a decade of prospecting campaigns. We've taken a deeper dive into the challenges, revealing a more complex buyer journey than ever. At the same time, the pressure to deliver measurable results has reached new heights.

Against this backdrop, yesterday's tactics fall short. Over the last decade, Sopro has evolved significantly to meet these shifting buyer expectations. Simple campaigns that worked a decade ago have given way to sophisticated, multi-channel go-to-market strategies that combine relevance, personalisation, and timing to engage prospects with precision and purpose.

Ryan Welmans

CEO and co-founder

Rob Harlow

Chief Innovation Officer and co-founder

Advances in tech, data, AI, and buyer intent have all been transformational. Complex tech stacks have become the norm.

Some have responded by ramping up outreach volume. In their hands, technology feels impersonal, and prospecting is reduced to a numbers game. But technology is just a tool—its impact depends entirely on how it's used.

In 2025, the most successful strategies pair the latest developments with a genuine understanding of what drives buyers. At the heart of our approach is a commitment to keeping people central to prospecting. When used thoughtfully, technology enhances connections, creating better experiences for buyers, and stronger results for sellers.

Whether you're refining existing strategies or jumping into prospecting for the first time, this report lays out a roadmap to navigating the challenges and opportunities of modern B2B sales.

Enjoy the report—and the journey ahead.

Key findings

1 Buyer journeys are more complex

Longer sales cycles, larger buying committees, and fiercer competition mean businesses must adapt their strategies to align with today's buyer journeys.

2 Engage the entire decision-making unit

Larger buying committees require targeting more stakeholders per account, increasing the chances of sparking internal conversations and closing deals.

3 Multi-channel prospecting is now essential

Declining single-channel effectiveness means businesses must meet buyers where they're most receptive, demanding smarter tech stack management.

4 Personalisation, timing, and relevance drive results

Buyers expect tailored, well-timed outreach that is relevant to them and resonates with their specific needs.

5 Balance short-term wins with long-term strategy

Long-term marketing keeps your brand top-of-mind, prospecting engages in-market buyers, and intent signals reveal when they're ready to act.

KEY STATS

DECISION MAKERS

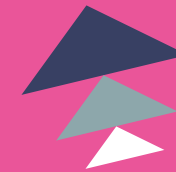On average, there are **4.14** stakeholders in the decision making process

7% of businesses involve 10+ stakeholders in purchase decisions

TAKING ACTION

88% of B2B buyers want to hear from vendors when researching their options

73% said prospecting is essential to their new business strategy

SALES CHALLENGES

A third of businesses report the sales process **TAKING LONNNNNGER**

zZzZZ A third of businesses experience leads going silent

45% of B2B vendors say they faced increased competition

65% of B2B businesses said buyers have tighter budgets

MULTI-CHANNEL

75% say results are better when multiple prospecting channels are combined
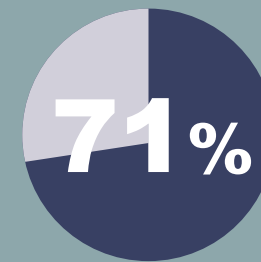
71% say prospecting complements inbound marketing channels well

£$€ Multi-channel campaigns achieved a **31%** lower cost per lead than single channel outreach.
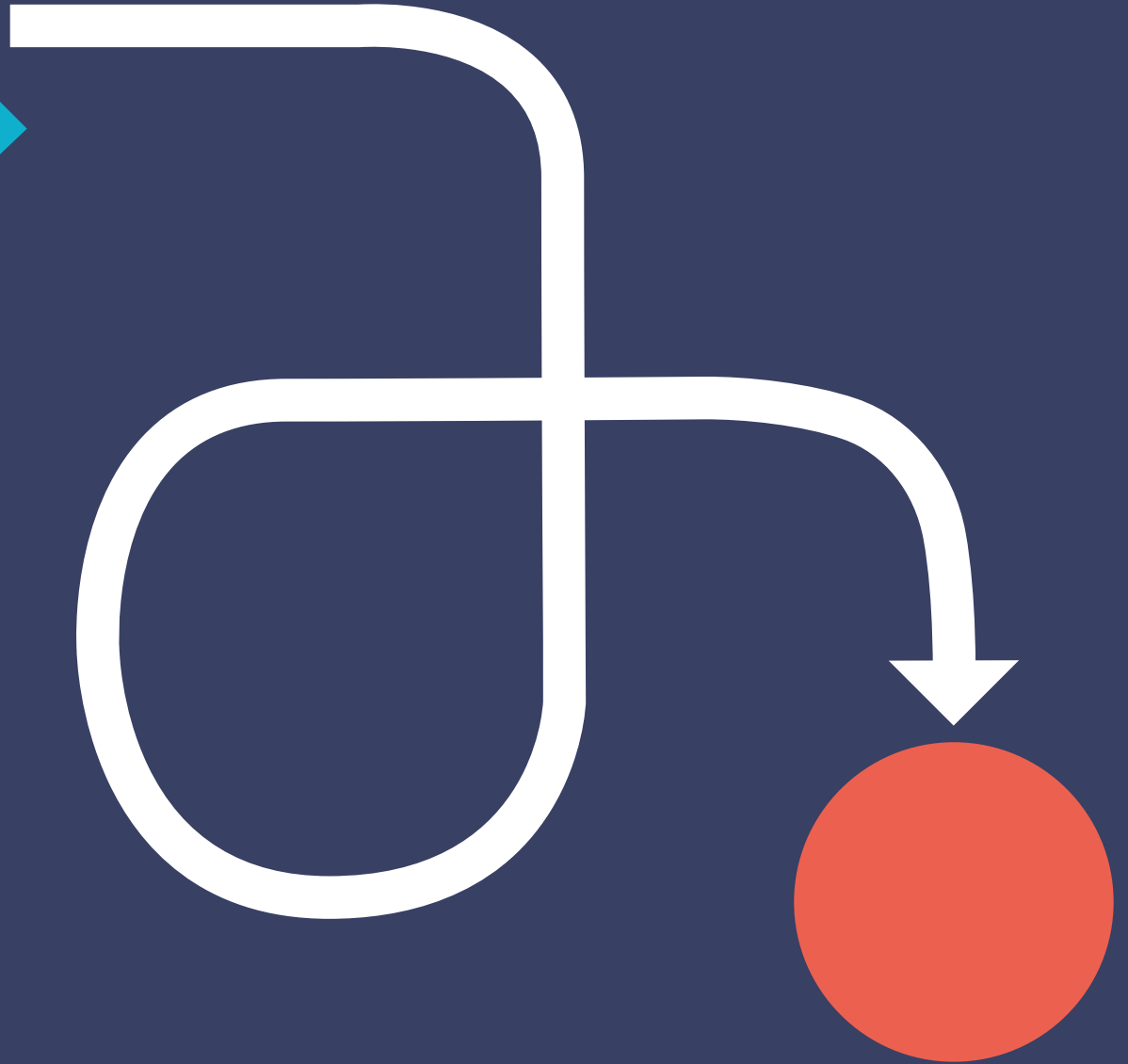
Part One.

Navigating the B2B landscape

2024 brought economic pressures, longer sales cycles, and increasingly complex buying processes. With tighter budgets and more decision-makers involved, businesses face a tougher path to conversion. This section explores the challenges shaping B2B strategies and sets the stage for how outbound prospecting can drive results in this evolving landscape.

Economic landscape in 2024

The global economy faced significant challenges in 2024. High inflation drove a focus on cost management, while elevated interest rates reduced borrowing and limited growth opportunities. Slow GDP growth further contributed to a cautious investment environment.

Though these pressures eased somewhat towards the end of the year, businesses operated within this landscape for much of 2024. The challenges of the broader economy had a direct impact on the dynamics of the B2B business environment.

Sales challenges in 2024

These broader challenges directly shaped the sales and marketing landscape, with reduced budgets increasing pressure on buyers. To get a better picture of the real-world challenges driven by the economy, we surveyed 404 senior B2B sales and marketing decision-makers and uncovered ten common challenges businesses are facing heading into 2025.

How is your business performing relative to targets?
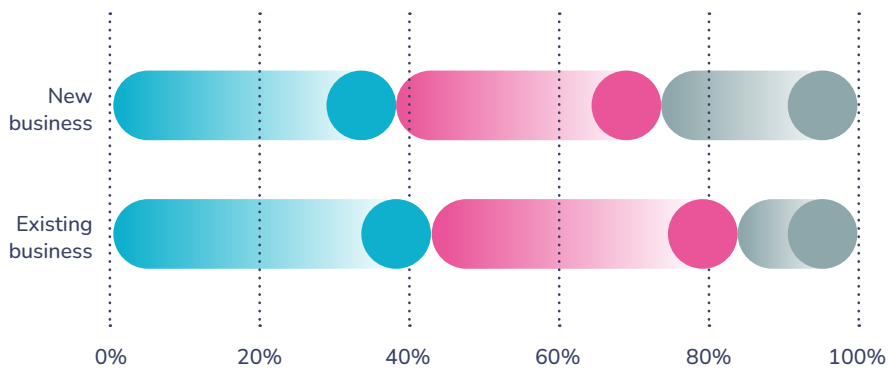
The B2B sales landscape in focus

The challenges facing B2B businesses in 2024 highlight one undeniable truth: sales cycles are longer and more complex, with more buyers who are harder to reach and increasingly selective. Meanwhile, traditional outreach methods are losing effectiveness, and the growing complexity of GTM strategies and tech stacks demands smarter, more targeted approaches.
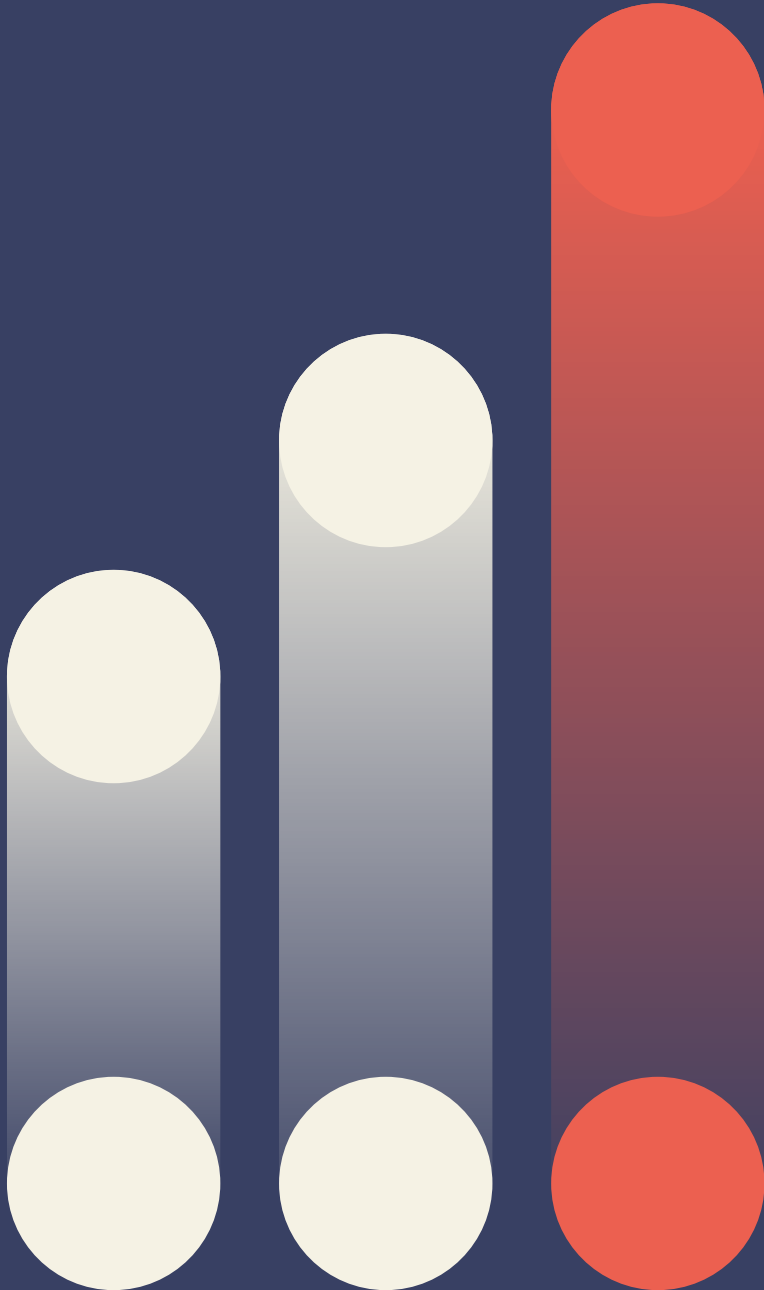
Effective business development today demands a lot. Brand building and sales activation must be balanced, tech stacks streamlined, smarter data use for personalised outreach, and multi-channel strategies that engage the right stakeholders at the right time.

Read on for more detail on each of the ten challenges businesses faced in 2024.

Which of these sales challenges have you experienced this year?	
Buyers have tighter budgets	65%
Increased competition	45%
Longer time taken before a decision	35%
Leads go silent without explanation	32%
Buyers expect sales to do more work/a more personalised experience	29%

| What are the main marketing challenges your company has faced this year?	
Generating enough leads	45%
Lead quality	42%
Justifying spend on brand building over sales activation	28%

1. Complex B2B buying processes

B2B buying processes are becoming increasingly complex, with more stakeholders involved in decision-making. **Over one in five businesses now have six or more people in their decision-making unit** (DMU). The number of businesses with over six buyers has almost tripled in two years, and **7% of DMUs involve 10+ stakeholders**.

At the same time, buyers are harder to reach. They research independently, engaging with vendors only late in the process. In fact, **29% of businesses say buyers now expect vendors to do more work, including offering more personalised experiences**. Together, these factors make it critical for businesses to refine their strategies to connect with key decision-makers earlier and more effectively.

People involved in the decision-making process

4.2
4.1
4
3.9
3.8
3.7
3.6
3.5
3.4
3.3
3.2

Average buyers

● 2023   ● 2024   ● 2025
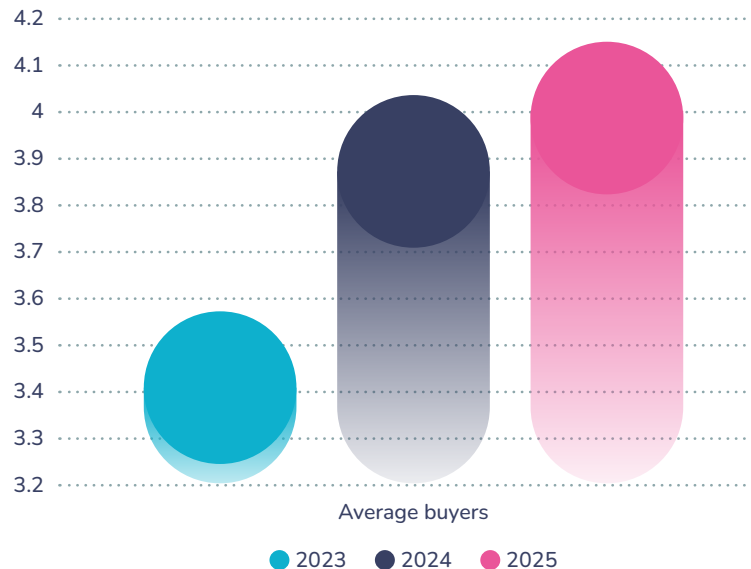
2. Longer sales cycles

Increased buyers and more complex processes have led to extended B2B sales cycles, making it difficult to close deals promptly.

One report suggests that the average decision time in 2024 increased by 8.3% compared to 2023.

- **Over a third of businesses say prospects are taking longer to make a purchasing decision**

3. Increasing buyer selectivity

Buyers have tighter budgets, so are more discerning. With more voices in the conversations and less budget available, buyers are negotiating more and going silent, either through picking a competitor or sticking with the status quo.

- **65% of B2B businesses said buyers have tighter budgets in 2024**
- **A third of businesses faced the challenge of leads going silent without an explanation**

4. Increased competition

The B2B landscape has grown increasingly competitive. One study of 3,500 B2B buyers revealed that the number of brands buyers consider before making a purchase **has grown 62%** since 2021.

The same study examined the factors that buyers find most important in the buying experience. They discovered that the gap between the brand that wins a deal and the second-placed brand has narrowed by 78% over that time. Not only are there more runners in the race, but they've got faster.

In our survey, 45% of B2B vendors say they faced increased competition in 2024
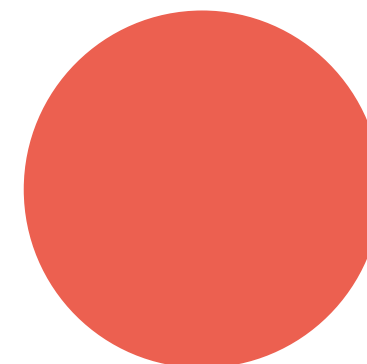
5. Balancing long vs short-term tactics

With all this competition, how do you stand out? Partly, it's being visible across multiple channels. But at any one time, 95% of your buyers aren't in-market. Ensuring your brand is top of mind when they do enter the market is paramount.

The third most common marketing challenge reflects this. **28% of B2B marketers said justifying spend on brand building over sales activation was one of their main challenges this year**.

One study reveals B2B marketers now view raising brand awareness as the most important aspect of their future strategy.
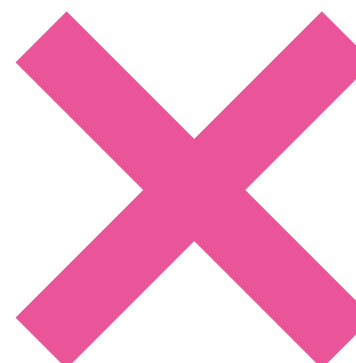
6. Email deliverability challenges

In response to high-volume, scattergun tactics that prioritised quantity over quality, major Email Service Providers like Google, Microsoft, and Yahoo **introduced technical updates** in 2024, significantly impacting business email deliverability.

These anti-spam measures made high-quality, targeted outreach more essential than ever.

GUIDE:
The power of subdomains:
Enhancing email delivery

7. Decreasing effectiveness of single-channel outreach

Standing out is harder than ever. With the growth of self-service outreach platforms and AI-enabled mass email blasts, businesses struggle to capture prospects' attention in a sea of competing but often generic messages.

However, many businesses still rely on single-channel outreach, typically email.

Inboxes are saturated—the volume of business emails has been growing for years, with **one estimate** placing it at 193.5 million emails sent and received every day.

Consequently, **email-only campaign lead rates have reduced by 29% year-on-year**.

"Balancing brand building and sales activation is one of the toughest calls for B2B marketers. It's easy to focus on short-term wins, especially in a competitive market. But long-term brand awareness keeps you strong over time; it ensures you're in the running when buyers are ready to act. The best strategies do both: they create visibility now while setting up tomorrow's pipeline."

Vic Heyward

Director of Marketing, Sopro

8. Complicated GTM tech stacks

As single-channel outreach has had its day, the tech stack required to manage multi-channel outreach is growing increasingly complicated. You can easily find any number of LinkedIn posts boasting about a GTM tech stack with 60 tools in ten different categories.

A 2024 report indicates that the average organisation has 269 SaaS platforms in their stack, and marketing teams account for a significant proportion. It's no wonder 60% of B2B marketers say their stack is **"more complex than a black hole"**.

9. Data management

B2B businesses often have access to more data than ever, but many struggle to effectively use it to inform their outreach and personalise their approach.

One study asked what the biggest hurdle was in delivering a better multi-channel experience. The most common response was *"being unable to fully leverage our current data."*

10. Difficulties with ROI and attribution

Tighter budgets for sales teams intensify the need for clear ROI measurement - but the challenge increases with more channels and complex buyer journeys. **A quarter of all marketing teams say proving ROI was one of their main challenges in 2024**.

Tackling the sales challenges of 2025

In this challenging economic and competitive landscape, where are companies focusing their budgets to drive results?

Our survey reveals that 62% of businesses have increased their marketing investment over the past year—more than in any other area. This suggests a growing recognition of the need for better tools to navigate the complexity of modern B2B sales cycles.

Which external products or services has your company increased investment in over the past 12 months?
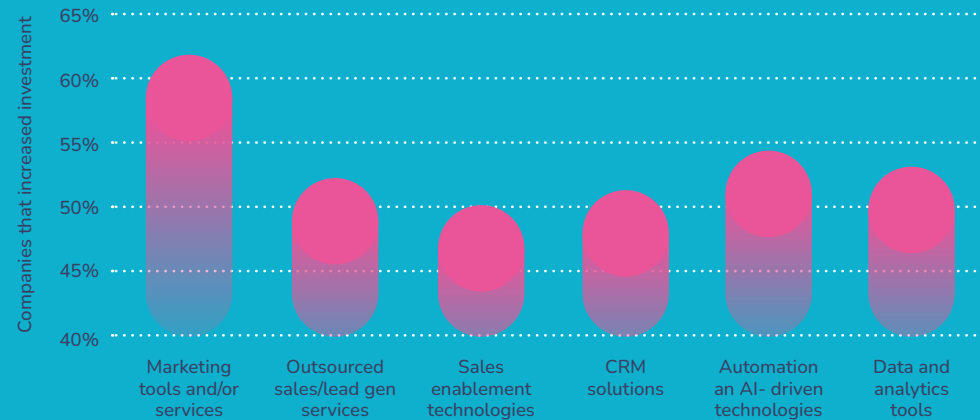
Building brand awareness also appears to be gaining momentum, even though many marketing teams face difficulties justifying the spend in today's tight budget climate.

28% of B2B marketers said justifying spend on brand building over sales activation was one of their main challenges this year.

Outsourced sales and lead generation services were only the fourth highest area for investment. Yet **McKinsey research** shows that 69% of winning companies will increase investment in sales operations, compared to 36% of laggards.

Despite the focus on marketing, prospecting remains a cornerstone of business development in 2025. Our findings show that:

- **81% of B2B companies engage in some form of prospecting**
- **70% of B2B companies regard prospecting as an essential part of their new business strategy.**

Buyers themselves validate this approach. The State of Prospecting survey reveals that:

- **80% of B2B buyers want to hear from vendors when researching and evaluating their options.**

But what's the best way to reach these buyers?

While declining email-only effectiveness might suggest that buyers are less receptive to the channel, the data says otherwise. Email remains the most preferred method for the third consecutive year. However, buyers increasingly expect outreach through a mix of channels:

- **B2B buyers pick an average of 2.5 channels when asked how they prefer to be contacted**
- **75% of B2B vendors say results are better when multiple prospecting channels are combined**
- **71% of B2B businesses say prospecting complements inbound marketing channels well**

This shift emphasises the value of a multi-channel strategy - one that integrates proactive outreach, personalisation, and multiple touchpoints to meet buyers wherever they are in their journey.

As a buyer, what is your preferred way of hearing from sellers?

Channel	Percentage
Email	73%
Telephone	49%
Social Media	28%
In-person event	38%
Post/direct mail	17%
Conferences/Webinars	22%
Word of mouth	20%
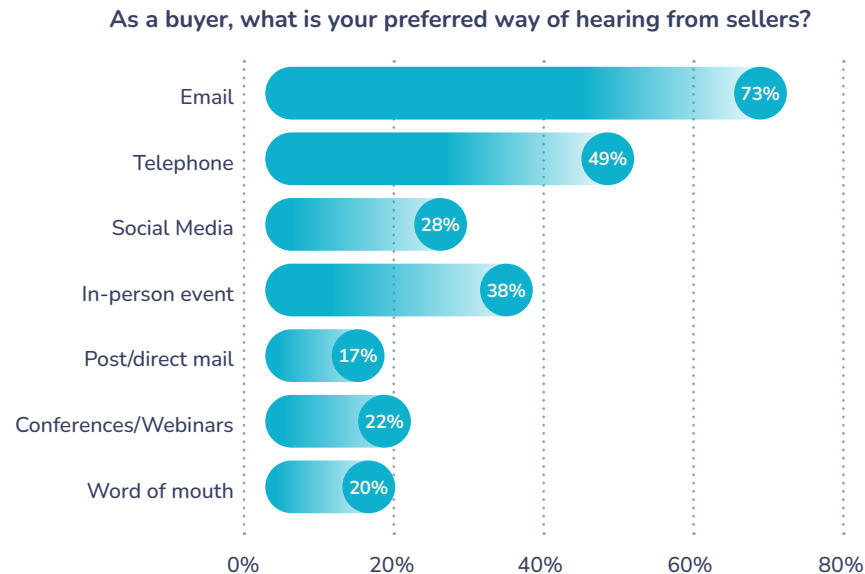
Building awareness and taking action

So how can prospecting help companies meet these challenges?

For our answer, we need to divert via the concept of **the 95:5 rule**.

It was first introduced in 2021, thanks to research from Ehrenberg-Bass: The Institute for Marketing Science. It revealed that up to 95% of B2B buyers are not actively seeking to purchase at any given time.

Brand building is essential for these buyers. They won't engage in the sales process until they're ready, but when they are, your brand needs to be top of mind. This is why successful marketing isn't just about closing the deal today.

Long-term brand-building creates familiarity, trust, and mental availability so that when buyers move into the market, your business is already in the running. **Dentsu's Superpower Index** confirms this: 78% of B2B buyers say trust in a brand is a top priority, and 74% are more likely to consider a brand they already know.

But while brand building lays the foundation, outbound prospecting is the active, targeted counterpart that gets you in front of the right people at the right time. It bridges the gap between awareness and action, connecting with both the 5% of in-market buyers and those transitioning into it.

In this report, we're focusing on outbound prospecting—it's our speciality and a critical tactic in tackling sales challenges. After all, it is called The State of Prospecting—what else were you expecting us to focus on? Rest assured, we know that outbound is just one piece of the puzzle, but it's a vital one, and we're here to help you master it.

Part Two.

Building a data-driven prospecting playbook

In this section, we delve into the data, strategies, and emerging trends shaping the art of B2B prospecting in 2024. Armed with insights from millions of campaigns and cutting-edge methodologies, we'll reveal what works, what doesn't, and how to refine your approach for maximum impact. Whether it's nailing your ideal customer profile, leveraging multi-channel strategies, or capturing buyer intent, this chapter is your go-to guide for elevating your prospecting game.
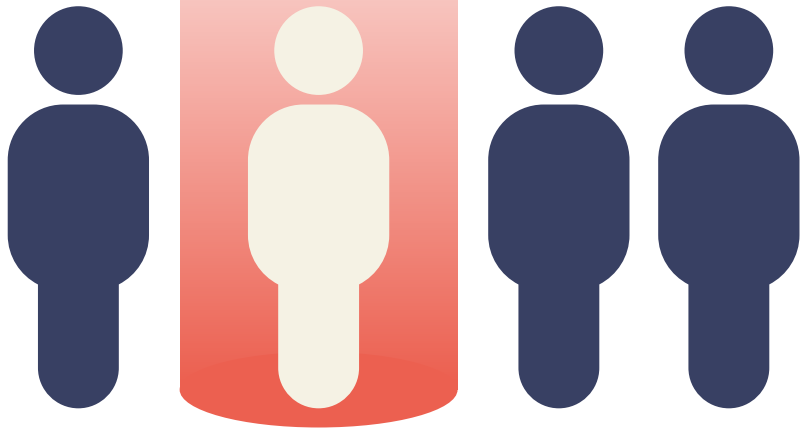
Finding your audience

Watch the video

Everything starts with defining your audience, building a list of companies and prospects, and collating their contact information.

Step one: Your ICP

With inbound marketing, you can get by without a fully defined ICP. Relevant content will mostly reach the right audience. Sure, a clear ICP improves results, but inbound can still make a mark without it.

With outbound, there's no room for guesswork. By actively reaching out, you must know exactly who you're targeting and why you can help them. Partly, that's a **GDPR requirement**. But crucially, a solid ICP is essential for reaching the right people and making your outreach resonate.

Smarter targeting for better results

A well-defined ICP focuses your outreach on those who are most likely to convert. This prioritisation ensures your outreach is more effective, with advanced targeting tools and AI layering in additional insights to improve segmentation and precision.

Reducing the risks of irrelevance

Irrelevant outreach isn't just ineffective; it's harmful. Sending to the wrong audience risks spam complaints, hurts email deliverability, and damages your reputation.

Enhanced personalisation

Your ICP provides insights that can speak directly to prospects' needs and pain points. Tools like AI can layer in additional data, enabling tailored messaging that resonates deeply.

Team alignment for consistency

A shared ICP ensures marketing and sales work in harmony. If your marketing team builds awareness, and your sales team actively prospects that same audience, customer experience—and results—will improve.

GUIDE:
How to create a B2B ideal customer profile
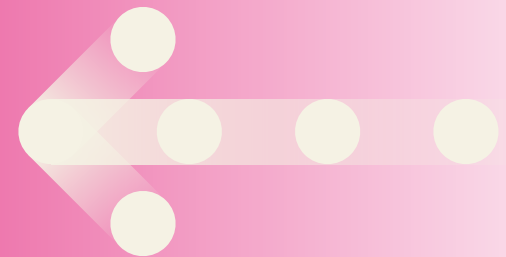
Step two: Finding decision-makers

Your ICP will identify the companies you'll target. Within those companies are the people you'll need to speak to—the decision-makers who influence the buying process.

With larger decision-making units (DMUs) increasingly common, it's essential to connect with multiple stakeholders to boost awareness, relevance, and your chances of being included in their buying process.

Once reserved for big enterprises, account-based marketing (ABM) is now accessible to all.

Instead of developing a list of individual target accounts, modern ABM uses data, filters, and advanced targeting to identify all the accounts that could possibly buy from you, and the buyers within them.

"Helping clients define their ICP is one of the most important steps in onboarding. It's not just about identifying the right companies—it's about finding the relevant decision-makers involved in the buying process. A well-defined ICP sets the foundation for every campaign, ensuring you target the most relevant prospects and maximise engagement from the start."

Lawrence Dean

Senior Customer Success Manager, Sopro

Step three: Choosing your data source

Building a prospect list is foundational to effective outreach. Where you source your data will impact accuracy, targeting options, reliability, and more.

How does your company identify prospects and source contact details	
We use internal databases	65%
We use LinkedIn or other social media platforms	53%
We gather contact information from event registrations or trade shows	38%
We use a prospecting platform that provides contact details	32%
We rely on referrals and word of mouth	30%
We purchase contact lists from third-party vendors	25%
We use an agency/freelancer that has its own database	24%

Internal databases can be a solid starting point, but they often primarily consist of contacts already in your network—missing out on one of the key advantages of prospecting: engaging with entirely new prospects.

- **B2B businesses say the top advantage of prospecting is identifying prospects outside their network**

- **75% say prospecting is a good channel for developing new markets**

Adding new contacts and maintaining their accuracy is also highly resource-intensive.

Social platforms like LinkedIn provide direct access to prospects, but single-channel outreach rarely delivers the needed results and is typically resource-heavy.

Third-party vendors offer large lists that can boost volume but have significant risks, including outdated data, poor targeting, and compliance concerns.

Prospecting platforms with their own databases deliver solid targeting options. However, success depends on having the in-house expertise to refine lists, set filters, and manage campaigns effectively. Smaller agencies often use these platforms.

Larger agencies (Hello Sopro!) go further by creating, managing, and maintaining their own databases. This requires significant tech and expertise but offers unparalleled control, accuracy, and results.

//Getting the Market

Getting the Market needed to expand beyond their local network while staying focused on existing clients. Sopro's tailored multi-channel outreach delivered 218 leads across Europe and APAC.

"We wanted to expand beyond our existing network but needed to focus on serving our current clients. Sopro was the perfect fit."

Frans Swarttouw,
Founder, Getting the Market

Step four: Building a list

List building should combine fresh data, precision targeting, and compliance to create high-performing campaigns.

Multi-source integration: Pull from diverse sources such as website crawls, public sources, social media, and specialist partners to ensure comprehensive coverage.

Real-time updates: Keep lists accurate and aligned with your ICP through ongoing updates, reducing the impact of data decay.

AI-enhanced: Leverage AI to summarise company information and generate unique data points unavailable elsewhere, enhancing your targeting capabilities.

Scalable personalisation: Use AI analysis to create detailed data points for each prospect, enabling tailored messaging at scale.

Targeted segmentation: Go beyond broad markets by narrowing in on segments based on factors like department growth, technology adoption, recent funding, or buyer intent signals.

Compliance first: Maintain alignment with GDPR and other regulations through rigorous data sourcing and verification processes.

Map your market

Building a complex tech stack

Running a successful multi-channel outreach strategy often demands a sophisticated tech stack, involving tools for email marketing, CRM, data enrichment, LinkedIn automation, intent monitoring, website tracking, and analytics. These tools must integrate seamlessly to manage prospecting, automate outreach, and track engagement effectively.

However, combining 12 or more tools into a cohesive system is no small feat. Each tool requires setup, integration, and maintenance to ensure real-time data exchange and smooth workflows. Learning curves, subscription costs, and the need to stay compliant with data privacy regulations further compound complexity.

For smaller teams, managing this can be overwhelming, while larger businesses risk inefficiencies as resources are diverted to troubleshooting instead of execution.

"Managing a multi-channel tech stack can be a real headache... so many tools need to talk to each other. For some, it's almost a badge of honour to have a really complicated setup, but the truth is, it often slows teams down. At Sopro, we take all that hassle away. We bring the tools and expertise together, so businesses can stay focused on what really matters."

Rob Harlow
Chief Innovation Officer

Multi-channel and buyer intent

With all these challenges, and armed with the 95:5 rule, multi-channel outreach is the most reliable route to leads, sales and growth.

Sopro clients running multi-channel campaigns have recently seen a 31% uplift in leads compared to single-channel.

However, the increased complexity of multi-channel campaigns can make them challenging to run. Luckily, your friendly sales engagement service is here to outline everything you need to know about running your own prospecting campaigns.

What does a successful outbound marketing strategy cover in this landscape?

Optimise outreach for the 5%: Stand out in the crowded fight for the attention of active buyers.

Build your brand for the 95%: Create consistent touchpoints that keep your business top-of-mind for the future.

Leverage intent for the hidden 30%: Identify and engage the hidden 30% transitioning from out-of-market to in-market, serving them timely, relevant messages that elevate your brand in their consideration.

Build your brand for the 95%

How do you engage buyers who are out-of-market and won't be ready to buy for months or even years? The key is recognising that you can't force a purchase. These buyers won't act until they're ready. Instead, your goal is to make sure your brand is top-of-mind when they do move into the market.

This is part of the balance between **long-term brand-building** and **short-term sales activation**. While outbound is traditionally focused on immediate sales, it can support brand-building by creating consistent, meaningful touchpoints with decision-makers.

81% of buyers say a consistent brand presence across multiple channels greatly enhances their perception of the brand. These direct messages within target accounts expand your brand's visibility beyond potentially inconsistent inbound coverage.

71% of B2B businesses agree that prospecting complements inbound marketing channels well

Strategies for success:

- **Multi-channel:** This doesn't just help activate the 5%. Target your audience with active touchpoints like email and LinkedIn and passive tactics such as display ads to keep your brand visible.
- **Consider your cadence:** Avoid data burnout and brand fatigue by giving prospects in the 95% a break from active outreach after completing a touchpoint sequence. Stay on their radar with inbound touchpoints, then re-engage later with a fresh campaign.

Optimise outreach for the 5%

Single-channel prospecting is no longer enough. The accessibility of outreach tools and AI has created a flood of messages, making it harder to cut through the noise and connect with active buyers.

Multi-channel strategies help businesses stand out. Buyers are increasingly expecting to be contacted on multiple channels, so combine precision targeting with tailored messaging to effectively engage active buyers.

Sopro clients running multi-channel campaigns have recently seen a 31% uplift in leads compared to single-channel campaigns.

Strategies for success:

- **Expand touchpoints:** Use a mix of email, LinkedIn, social ads, and other channels to increase visibility and engagement.
- **Target smarter:** Prioritise reaching the right decision-makers with advanced data insights.
- **Deliver relevance:** Craft highly personalised, impactful messaging that resonates with prospects and sets you apart.

75% of B2B vendors say results are better when multiple prospecting channels are combined.

Leverage buyer intent

People naturally transition from non-buyer to buyer as their needs evolve. As this moment approaches, they start researching options. At this point, they're interested but not quite ready to act.

This group, potentially as much as 30% of your total addressable market (TAM), is engaged enough to explore but not yet prepared to book a sales pitch. By recognising these early signs of interest, you can deliver timely, relevant outreach to create high-value touchpoints, engaging them when they're actively considering their options.

Strategies for success:

- **Capture intent signals:** Monitor multiple intent types and act quickly with real-time notifications for follow-up calls or personalised outreach.
- **Identify anonymous interest:** Use tools that reveal anonymous website visitors and connect with decision-makers outside of your current campaign audience.

AWARDS
INTELLIGENCE

Awards Intelligence, a consultancy specialising in securing awards and honours, partnered with Sopro to target their ideal clients and streamline sales. Sopro's campaigns delivered over 7,000 leads, driving international growth and a 10x ROI.

"Sopro have become a vital part of our marketing. They truly understand our company's DNA and have proven to deliver quality leads that we convert month after month."

April Sankey,
Operations Director,
Awards Intelligence

Email

While multi-channel reaches more of your audience and drives better results, email remains the foundation of B2B outreach.

73% of B2B buyers prefer to hear from vendors via email, making it the most commonly preferred outreach channel.

75% of B2B businesses say email prospecting returns "good to excellent" ROI, with only 3% seeing negative ROI

Email deliverability

The email deliverability landscape saw significant changes this year, driven by tighter anti-spam measures from major Email Service Providers. These updates target high-volume, low-quality email practices, making it harder for generic outreach to reach inboxes. In our email prospecting tests, established domains (at least a year old) saw response rates improved by 73% and lead rates improved by 62%.

The **latest best practice** focuses on building and maintaining domain reputation through consistent, high-quality outreach. Sustainable deliverability now depends on using established domains and avoiding tactics that rely on volume over precision.

For businesses, this means smaller, targeted campaigns that prioritise value and relevance—ensuring your emails not only reach inboxes but are well-received by the right audience.

GUIDE:

Everything you need to know about email deliverability
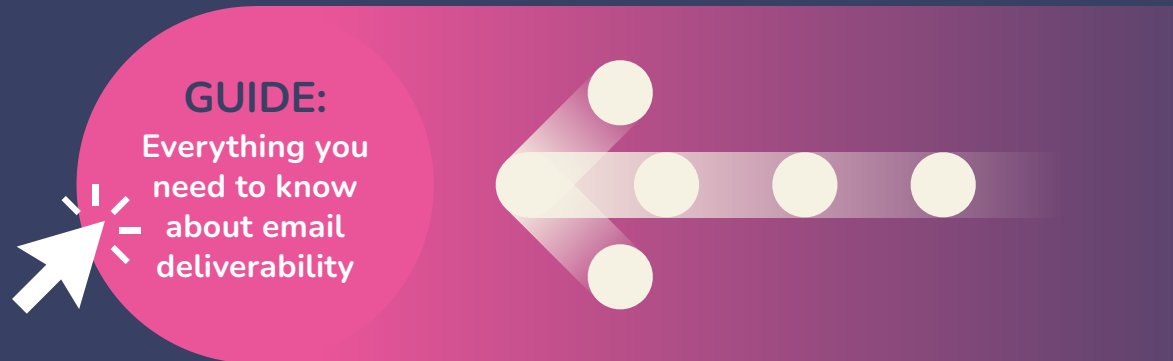
Open rates

Recent updates to privacy settings, including Apple's Mail Privacy Protection, mask recipient activity by preloading email content and hiding IP addresses. This results in artificially inflated open rates that no longer reflect genuine recipient engagement. These changes are forcing a shift away from open rates as a reliable performance metric for email campaigns.

GUIDE:
The end of email open rates:
Why it's time to move on

Subject lines

Despite open rates reducing the clarity of what works, subject lines are still a vital area of email outreach to master.

We asked 400 B2B buyers which type of subject lines they were more likely to open.

Type of subject line	More likely to open
Personalised with my name or company name	66%
An offer	62%
A question	56%
Topical/trend/current affairs	56%
Humorous	51%
Time-sensitive/urgent	44%
Intriguing/mystery/clickbait	43%
Shocking/alarmist	29%

PRO TIP:
Be careful before adding offers to all your emails: it will make them more likely to be flagged by spam filters.

Email prospecting benchmarks

Beyond individual campaign strategies, it's useful to look at the bigger picture—how different industries, roles, and regions respond to prospecting efforts. This benchmarking data provides key insights to refine your targeting and engagement.

Most prospected industries

Industry	% of 2024 emails	Change from 2023
Financial Services	13.7%	-
Construction	9.5%	-
Retail	6.2%	-
Insurance	4.3%	-
Real Estate	4.0%	-
Hospitality	3.7%	↑
Telecommunications	3.7%	↓
IT and Services	3.0%	NEW
Banking	3.0%	-
Higher Education	2.4%	NEW

The top five industries that receive the most prospecting emails have remained the same since last year. Together these ten industries account for 53.5% of all emails sent this year, up from 51.6% last year.

Top lead rates by industry

The top industries by lead rate are a diverse mix of sectors, each with its unique challenges.

Industry	Lead %
Machinery	2.95%
Sports	2.40%
Mechanical or Industrial Engineering	2.26%
Nonprofit Organization Management	2.26%
Environmental Services	2.25%
Furniture	2.24%
Government Administration	2.13%
Education Management	2.06%
Chemicals	2.05%
Food Production	2.01%

Industries like Machinery, Chemicals, and Food Production thrive on efficiency, innovation, and compliance.

Nonprofits, Government, and Education, on the other hand, are all about engaging stakeholders and making the most of limited resources.

Then there are sectors like Sports and Environmental Services, where creative problem-solving and sustainability take centre stage. This mix of industries in the top ten shows just how much potential there is for tailored outreach that speaks directly to each sector's unique challenges and priorities.

Company size

Lead rate by company size
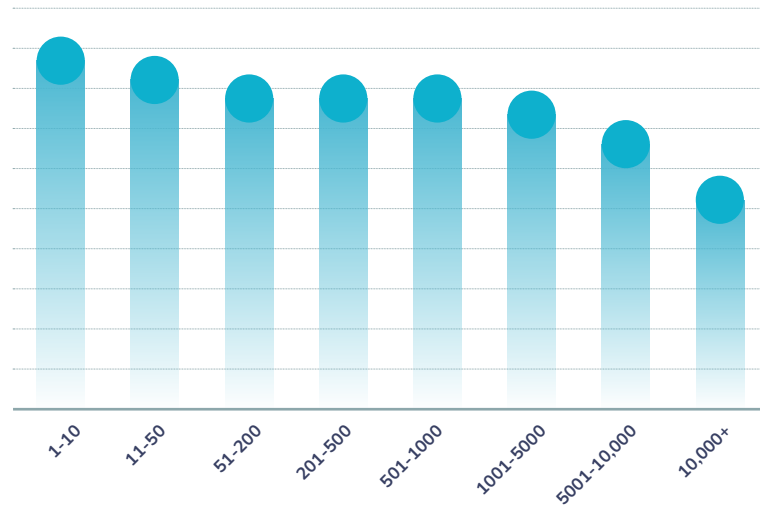
Probably one of the simpler graphs to analyse: the bigger a company gets, the lower the lead rate.

But it's probably safe to assume that as the company gets bigger, so does the size of the potential deal. Don't give up on the big fish yet!

Top lead rates by job title

Job title	Lead rate
Continuous Improvement Manager	5.9%
Chief Procurement Officer	5.3%
HSE Manager	5.1%
PR Manager	4.9%
Head of Property	4.7%
Head of Facilities	4.6%
Marketing Communication Manager	4.6%
Director & Owner	4.5%
Customer Care Manager	4.4%
Group Operations Manager	4.4%

These job titles typically belong to leaders responsible for operations, strategy, and customer or stakeholder management. These roles are directly involved in optimising processes, managing resources, and ensuring stakeholder satisfaction. They often have cross-departmental influence and are pivotal in driving business improvements, making them key targets for prospecting efforts.

Lead rates by name

While prospecting based on names isn't a strategy we recommend, an analysis of 10.8 million emails sent to nearly 3 million prospects (covering 885 unique names) revealed significant variations in lead rates.

First name	Lead rate	First name	Lead rate
Antonio	2.45%	Erin	0.67%
Johan	2.23%	Brandon	0.69%
Carlos	2.15%	Todd	0.74%
Deborah	2.13%	Lauren	0.82%
Paula	2.13%	Christine	0.84%

Email Antonio rather than Erin, and you are 2.7 times more likely to receive a positive response. Only names with at least 2,500 individual recipients were included in the analysis.

The best time to send

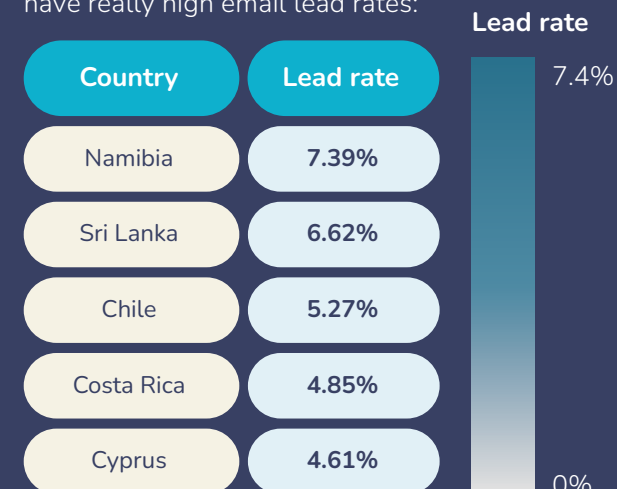|	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri
8	1.83%	1.81%	1.88%	1.93%	1.86%
9	2.54%	2.46%	2.52%	2.60%	2.58%
10	3.43%	3.34%	3.37%	3.44%	3.46%
11	3.88%	3.73%	3.83%	3.96%	3.90%
12	3.45%	3.38%	3.41%	3.46%	3.43%
13	2.93%	2.76%	2.70%	2.83%	2.64%
14	1.97%	1.95%	1.96%	1.93%	1.82%
15	1.62%	1.53%	1.61%	1.61%	1.54%
16	1.57%	1.49%	1.56%	1.61%	1.59%
17	1.88%	1.89%	1.86%	1.92%	1.87%
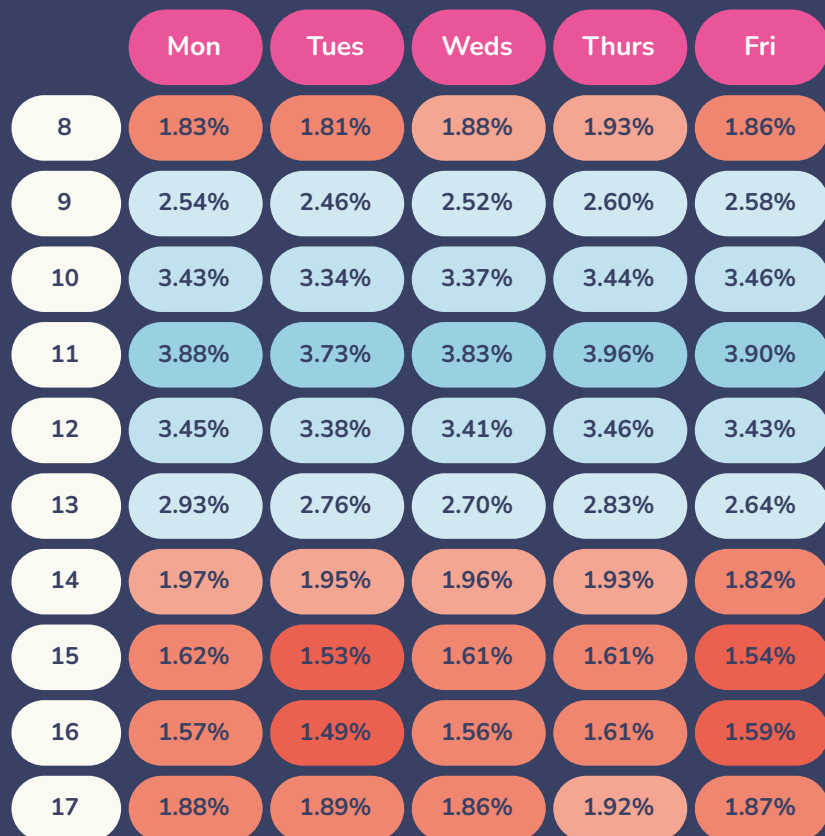
1. Peak lead rates: Late mornings are the peak time to send, with the highest lead rate observed at 11 am on Thursdays (3.96%).

2. Post-lunch slump: Lead rates significantly drop after 2 pm, with the lowest performance observed between 3 pm and 5 pm.

3. Early bird: While early morning emails (before 9 am) see lower lead rates than late morning, they still outperform mid-to-late afternoon emails, making them a secondary option.
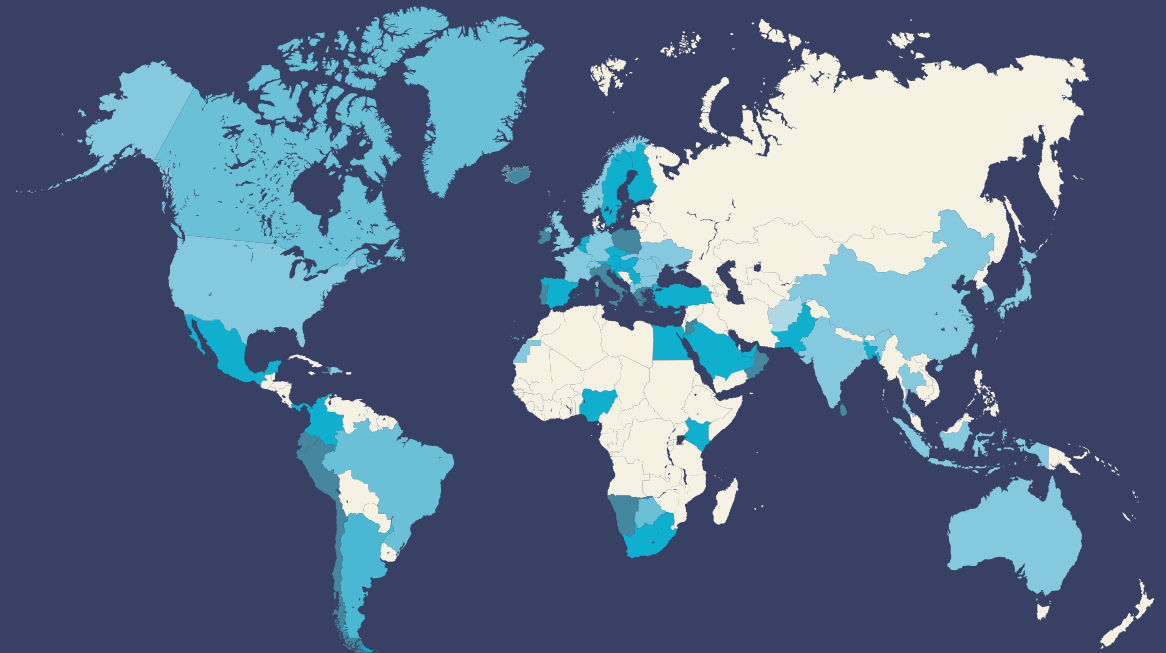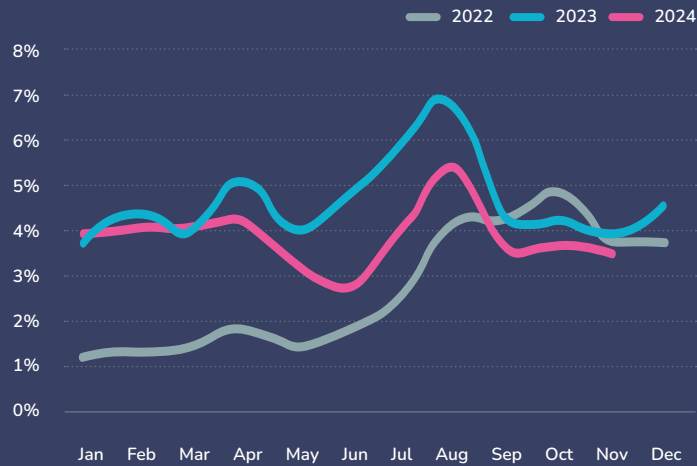
While there's quite a bit of variety in the lead rates for different countries, the top five countries have really high email lead rates:

Country	Lead rate
Namibia	7.39%
Sri Lanka	6.62%
Chile	5.27%
Costa Rica	4.85%
Cyprus	4.61%

Lead rate

7.4%

0%

Out of office replies

Percentage of out of office replies

Legend: 2022, 2023, 2024

Y-axis: 8%, 7%, 6%, 5%, 4%, 3%, 2%, 1%, 0%
X-axis: Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec

In today's world of hybrid and remote work and flexible work patterns, out-of-office trends have shifted.

August remains the clear peak for annual leave, with December also seeing fairly high out-of-office replies. This trend held steady in 2023 and 2024. In contrast, 2022 saw a unique pattern, with pandemic-delayed leave being taken later in the year.

But should you avoid outreach during these high-leave periods? Not at all. Out-of-office replies are an opportunity, providing a clear return date for follow-up. Note their return date, give them a couple of days to catch up, and then re-engage. With this strategy, your prospecting efforts stay effective, even during holiday-heavy months

ondevice
Brand Lift Measurement

On Device Research partnered with Sopro to establish a reliable lead flow and streamline their sales process. Sopro's targeted campaigns delivered an average of 34 monthly leads, ensuring a steady stream of opportunities.

"Sopro has helped us close deals right from the UK to Singapore. One piece of work alone paid for the service in its entirety— Sopro has more than paid for itself!"

Lisa Miles, Marketing Manager, On Device

Content and messaging

The content of your emails plays a pivotal role in engaging prospects and driving responses. While personalisation has traditionally relied on templates and dynamic fields, AI is now revolutionising how we craft and scale tailored messaging.

At Sopro, we've analysed insights from over 97.9 million emails to uncover what resonates—and what doesn't. While AI is shaping the future, these lessons from the past help guide our approach, ensuring outreach stays impactful.

Below, we break down the key tones and themes that drive success in prospecting emails and offer practical tips for elevating your messaging.

Note: this isn't about adding specific words to your emails—there are too many variables for us to say that one word will improve lead rates. Instead, these insights highlight themes to guide your messaging (or prompts) for more effective outreach.

Messaging tones and themes	Impact on lead rate
Prior contact - called, your colleague, referred, spoke, spoken	+50%
Assurance - approved, accredited, trusted, certified, verified	+22%
Explaining - therefore, which means, to clarify, because, that means	+18%
Collaboration - joint, collaboration, consultation, cooperation, together, partnership, alliance	+15%
Optimistic - inspiration, optimistic, opportunity, hoping, hope, future, imagine	+14%
Empathy - listen, care, respect, supporting, encourage	+12%
Social proof - awards, accredited, reviews, trusted, endorsements, testimonial, trust, expert	+7%
All about me - my, myself, I, I'm, I'll, I've, personally, mine, me	+7%
Manners - please, finds you well, thanks, thank you, many thanks, hope all is well, weather	+6%
Exclusivity - rare, premier, exclusive, unique, bespoke, elite	+4%
Urgency - closing, now, deadline, limited, pressing	+1%
Value - benefit, gain, value, boost, valuable, advantage, profitable	-7%
Results focus - efficiency, turnover, profitability, boost, guaranteed, valuable, ROI, returns, advantage, performance, yield	-14%
Solutions - resolve, solution, correct, fix, remedy, eliminate, overcome	-19%
Pain points - obstacle, issue, challenge, struggle, burden, pain point	-24%
Action - immediate, launch, fast, act, execute, start	-27%

Choosing the right tone: what works and why?

Crafting an effective prospecting email is as much about tone as it is about content. By analysing the performance of different word groups, we can uncover key insights into which approaches resonate with prospects - and which could push them away. Below, we break down the findings and offer practical guidance for writing emails that convert.

What works well?

Prior contact +50%

Why it works: Referencing prior interactions, such as a conversation or referral, builds trust and establishes relevance. It signals that the email is tailored and that the sender has done their homework.

How to use it: Be honest. Don't claim prior contact if it hasn't happened–it's a quick way to erode credibility.

Assurance +22%

Why it works: Cold outreach is inherently challenging because the recipient doesn't know you. Words that convey trustworthiness and credibility help build confidence, addressing any hesitation they may feel about engaging with a stranger.

How to use it: Subtly incorporate reassurance into your descriptions, e.g., "trusted by industry leaders" or "proven, reliable results."

Collaboration +15%

Why it works: Phrases that highlight working together foster a sense of partnership, which appeals to decision-makers seeking supportive, long-term solutions rather than transactional engagements.

How to use it: Position your offer as a mutual effort. For example, "We can partner to streamline your sales pipeline and drive measurable growth."

Optimistic +14%

Why it works: A positive tone creates an emotional connection and builds excitement about possibilities. It positions you as a forward-thinking, confident partner.

How to use it: Start your email with a hopeful or aspirational tone, e.g., "Imagine what's possible with a tailored approach to outreach."

Empathy +12%

Why it works: Understanding a prospect's challenges and goals makes the email feel personal and relatable. It shows you value their needs and are invested in their success.

How to use it: Acknowledge their struggles and frame your solution as a way to support their objectives, e.g., "We understand how complex [challenge] can be and are here to help."

What to avoid?

Action words — -27%

Why they fail: Words that emphasise urgency or immediate results can come across as overly pushy or unrealistic. Prospects may feel sales pressure or view the promises as an exaggeration, which can undermine trust.

How to use it instead: Use collaborative and empathetic language that focuses on building a relationship and solving their challenges together.

Pain points — -24%

Why they fail: Highlighting pain points is essential for connecting with prospects, but overly generic or vague references feel impersonal. They can suggest a lack of research or understanding.

How to use it instead: Tailor your messaging to specific buyer personas or industries, demonstrating that you understand their unique struggles.

Buzzwords and jargon — -20%

Why they fail: Overused business phrases can make your email feel insincere and robotic. Prospects value genuine, human communication over abstract jargon.

How to use it instead: Write conversationally, focusing on clear, relatable language that resonates with the recipient.

Solutions — -19%

Why they fail: Jumping straight into solutions without first addressing the recipient's unique challenges can feel presumptive and irrelevant. It may also suggest you're using a one-size-fits-all approach.

How to use it instead: Frame your solution as the natural next step after acknowledging their challenges and building trust.

Results focus — -14%

Why they fail: While results are important, overemphasising ROI or performance metrics can make your email feel transactional or overly sales-driven. It may also feel detached from their specific goals.

How to use it instead: Balance results-driven language with empathy and collaboration, focusing on how your solution aligns with their priorities rather than solely pushing numbers.

The 2025 golden rules of writing prospecting emails

3 Be specific and relatable

Avoid generic statements. Tailor your email to the recipient's unique role, industry, or challenges to show that you understand their world and care about their specific goals.

4 Keep it short and scannable

150-200 words with short, easy-to-read paragraphs is the sweet spot. Busy prospects won't read long blocks of text, so get to the point quickly and leave them wanting to know more.

5 Make the value obvious

Every prospect asks, "What's in it for me?" Clearly explain how you can solve their problems, save them time, or help them achieve their goals. Frame your value in terms of their needs, not just your offering.

6 Focus on trust-building

Use language that reassures and builds confidence, like referencing credibility, results, or prior successes. Start building trust right away to set the tone for a strong relationship.

1 Write like you talk

Your email should feel natural and conversational, as if you're speaking to the recipient in person. Keep it friendly, professional, and concise—something you could say face-to-face without overthinking.

2 Clarity is key

Simple, clear language always wins. Replace jargon, buzzwords, and business-speak with straightforward, human messaging. Your email should make sense instantly, without any need for decoding.

7 Collaborate, don't push

Position your outreach as the start of a conversation. Avoid pushy language or premature promises. Instead, invite the prospect to explore how you could work together to achieve their goals.

8 Optimism drives engagement

Open with a positive, forward-thinking tone that inspires confidence. Help prospects visualise opportunities for growth and success rather than focusing too much on their current struggles.

9 One clear call to action

Make it easy for the prospect to take the next step with one clear action, such as booking a call. Don't confuse them with multiple CTAs or vague directions—keep it simple and direct.

10 Empathy over self-promotion

Focus on the prospect, not yourself. Minimise "I" and "we" statements, and instead show genuine understanding of their challenges. Make it about their success, not your pitch.

mj flood
Technology

M.J. Flood Technology partnered with Sopro to execute a strategic go-to-market approach for a new product launch. Sopro's multichannel campaigns generated over 700 high-quality leads and enabled the sales team to focus on closing deals while accelerating market entry.

"We had some very good results from our first campaign, so decided to run four more... all of which have been very successful! We plan to do more."

*Kevin Rooney, Head of Marketing, M.J. Flood Technology*

AI content:
The Sopro way.

AI-driven content has revolutionised email outreach, but not all approaches are created equal. Simply relying on a large language model (LLM) to draft your emails often leads to generic, uninspired messaging—the kind flooding inboxes and failing to engage.

Sopro's approach includes everything our team has learned about prospecting emails, combined with data and personalisation that even the best writers couldn't achieve.

We've built a multi-layered AI engine trained on over 80 million outreach emails, drawing on a decade of prospecting expertise. This engine incorporates a complex set of rules and best practices, leveraging extensive data about each sender, as well as the recipient's company, role, and previous correspondence. Crucially, it ensures every email aligns with the sender's unique tone of voice.

The result? Truly personalised, unique emails for every recipient that feel authentic, engage prospects and drive meaningful connections.
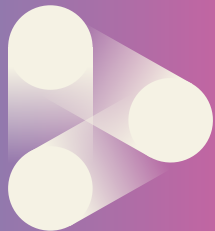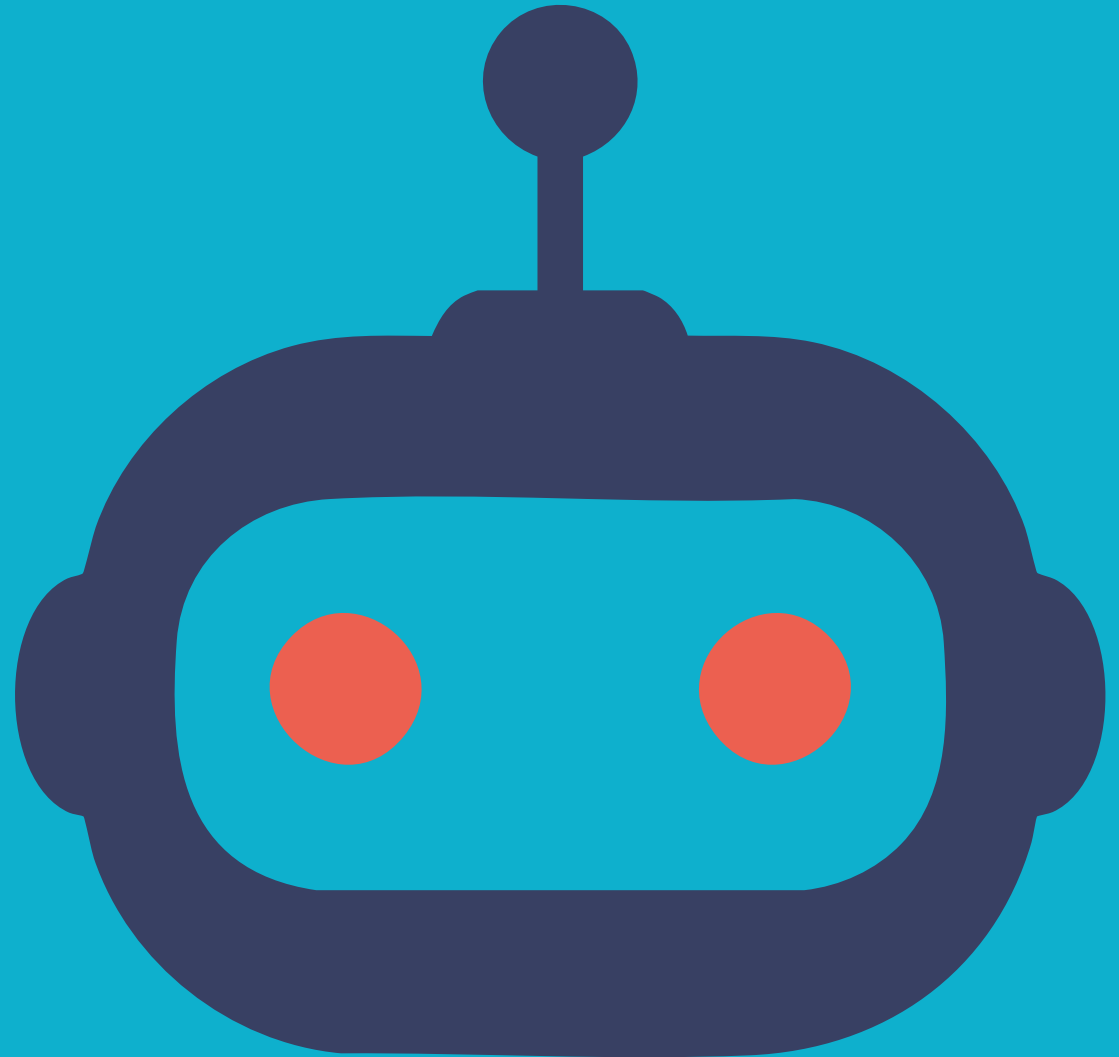
WATCH
B2B prospecting:
How AI is transforming prospecting in 2024

Part Three.

Converting interest to revenue

As businesses adapt to evolving buyer behaviours, sales teams face mounting pressures. Longer sales cycles, larger buyer committees, and fragmented attribution models demand a more strategic approach to turning interest into revenue. This section explores how sales teams can navigate these challenges and seize opportunities for success in 2025.

Increased pressures on sales teams

The economic realities of 2024 created a challenging landscape for sales teams. To stand out and succeed, businesses must align their sales approach with an improved prospecting experience, providing a tailored and timely journey for all stakeholders involved in a purchase.

Key challenges include:

Longer buying times: Buyers take longer to make decisions and are often influenced by more stakeholders.

Informed buyers: Prospects are self-educating and expect personalised, relevant messaging tailored to their needs.

Attribution complexity: Additionally, many leads don't convert directly. It is increasingly difficult to know which touchpoints and channels have influenced buyers.

Adapting to evolving buyer behaviours

Key lessons for sales teams, from interest to intent to lead to sale.

From interest to intent.

Buyers research before they commit

10-20% of leads from Sopro client campaigns visit the vendor website before they convert.

While this feels somewhat obvious—of course prospects research you—it's a clear reminder that buyers often do their homework before deciding to engage.

Takeaway: Your website is a key part of your demand generation machine—a lot of activity will drive people there. So, of course, make sure the content is fully optimised. But now, your website can also track intent signals, deliver personalised content, and offer live chat to engage prospects in real-time.

Side note: they'll also be researching elsewhere, so don't forget social media profiles, online review platforms, and even employee LinkedIn profiles. These touchpoints collectively shape the perception of your business and influence decisions.

Buyer intent: the need for speed

Of the leads that visit the vendor website, 40% convert within 30 days and 25% within seven days.

These prospects are actively researching their options, with a short window between the visit and the conversion.

Takeaway: Website visits are often the final step in a prospect's research process. This data shows they're ready to act, which makes speed essential.

Tracking intent signals and reaching out while they're evaluating options maximises your chances of converting them. Intent notifications can give you an edge, but only if you act on them and respond immediately. Act quickly—these are your hottest leads.

The hidden value of long-term prospects

Another 40% convert more than six months after their website visit.

These leads don't revisit your site but instead recall your brand when they're ready to evaluate solutions and take action.

Takeaway: Some prospects have much longer lead cycles. Their initial research plants the seed, and your prospecting ensures they remember you. Track intent signals, re-engage them when appropriate, and don't be afraid to add them back into your campaigns after six months or more to align with their next buying cycle.

More long term value

Of these indirect leads, 50% convert more than 90 days after the initial email.

Takeaway: While some convert quickly, we again see that long lead times are common. Again, this underlines the importance of tracking and nurturing prospects even if they don't engage immediately. Patience can yield substantial results over time.

From intent to opportunity

Campaign attribution doesn't tell the full story

For every 100 positive responses in a Sopro campaign, an additional 50 leads convert through other channels from the same companies targeted

While this feels somewhat obvious—of course prospects research you—it's a clear reminder that buyers often do their homework before deciding to engage.

Takeaway: Traditional attribution is dying. In a content-saturated world, with perhaps hundreds of touchpoints, it's increasingly difficult to confidently say which actions were caused by which activity. Companies in Sopro's client campaigns regularly convert through other channels during or shortly after being actively engaged by Sopro. Did the Sopro campaign impact that? More than likely. Did it cause it? Impossible to say.

Engaging the buyer committee

All the indirect leads in the data sample we analysed came from prospects who weren't part of the initial campaign outreach.

For companies with 500-1,000 employees where Sopro generated a lead, we email an average of 11.4 people per company.

Takeaway: This highlights the importance of engaging every decision-maker. While it's impossible to always reach the whole committee, this multi-contact approach significantly boosts your chances of influencing key stakeholders and sparking internal conversations.

From opportunity to close

Selling to the buyer committee

Large buyer committees shape the entire sales process. If you only engage one person, you're relying on them to sell your solution internally. This single prospect becomes a gatekeeper to the other stakeholders.

It's no surprise that 78% of sales reps struggle to connect with stakeholders beyond their champion, so 82% of reps have to rely on them to drive sales internally.

Takeaway: To close deals effectively, you must engage the entire DMU. Digital sales rooms (DSRs) can be a game changer, offering a centralised hub where all stakeholders can access tailored, up-to-date content. By fostering collaboration and equipping your champion with the tools they need, you ensure your message resonates with the whole buying group.

Improve the sales experience

68% of sales reps say their buyers can't independently access essential sales and marketing materials.

Takeaway: Incorporating Digital Sales Rooms into your sales process enhances the buying experience and gives the buyer better access to relevant content for all buyers in the decision.

The complexity of buying processes means leads need to be nurtured more than ever. DSRs offer a centralised hub for rich content, ensuring all stakeholders can access relevant materials.

Delivering content that drives decisions

77% of sales reps are frustrated by outdated sales and marketing assets.

Takeaway: Buyers today are self-directed and expect easy access to relevant content. DSRs help with this, providing access to up-to-date, tailored resources that speak to the concerns of specific personas and ensure they make informed decisions.

Opportunities in 2025

It's fair to say that 2024 tested the resilience of B2B sales and marketing teams. The economic pressures laid the groundwork for tight budgets and long sales cycles. Despite this, there's cause for optimism as we move into 2025. Signs of economic recovery—falling inflation, stabilising interest rates, and steady GDP growth—hint at a more favourable business environment.

Combined with evolving tech and fresh strategies, these shifts present new opportunities to stand out, connect with buyers, and drive growth.

ABM adoption

Larger DMUs and more complex buying processes make targeting multiple stakeholders essential. Advances in data analytics and AI have democratised ABM, enabling companies of all sizes to precisely identify decision-makers across organisations.

Multi-channel strategies

Synchronising outreach across multiple channels—email, LinkedIn, display ads, and more—is now critical for performance. Businesses that effectively orchestrate multi-channel campaigns will stand out from the noise.

A balanced approach

The 95:5 rule reveals that the majority of buyers aren't actively in-market at any given time. Investing in long-term strategies keeps your business top-of-mind, amplifying the effectiveness of short-term sales activation to capture opportunities when buyers are ready to act.

Personalised experiences

AI is transforming B2B outreach, from providing data on companies and industries to crafting hyper-relevant messaging. Companies that use AI effectively will deliver a more impactful experience, gaining a competitive edge over one-size-fits-all methods.

Act on real-time insights

Intent signals provide critical data about where buyers are in their journey. By acting quickly on these signals, businesses can deliver relevant engagement at exactly the right moment.

Elevate the buyer experience

The buying journey doesn't end with a strong pitch—it's just beginning. Buyers expect a seamless, personalised experience tailored to their industry and challenges. Tools like Digital Sales Rooms can streamline content sharing, foster collaboration, and provide decision-makers with the insights they need to make confident choices.
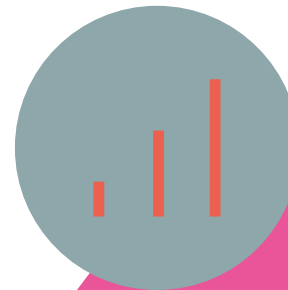
Success in 2025 will depend on the ability to act on a deep understanding of what today's buyers need. From crafting smarter ICPs to targeting entire DMUs and leveraging intent data with AI, these strategies empower businesses to not only keep up but lead the charge in a shifting B2B landscape.

The takeaway? Meet your buyers on their terms. Engage them with relevance, personalise their experience, and act at the right time with meaningful, impactful outreach. The companies that master these tactics won't just survive-they'll thrive.

We're Sopro

And we've transformed the way businesses drive new business since 2015.

Our team of experts harness proprietary technology and best-in-class data to craft multi-channel campaigns that empower our clients to sell more.

We don't just offer a service; we live by it. For the first four years, we used nothing but our own outreach to grow. Even today, 60% of our new business still comes directly from our prospecting campaigns. It's proof that what we do works. With a global presence of 300 experts, we'll source your ideal prospects, engage them with personalised outreach, and connect them to you when they're ready to talk.

At Sopro, we don't just deliver leads. We create demand generation machines tailored to fuel your growth.

Fully managed service
Leave prospecting to the experts. Your dedicated team run and optimise your campaigns.

Set up in three weeks
Get a new source of leads in as little as three weeks, synced to your CRM.

Intent-based multi-channel outreach
An intelligent and timely mix of personalised messaging connects with your ideal clients.

600+ clients
Over 600 businesses currently trust Sopro to deliver a reliable sales pipeline.

Want to know if Sopro's multi-channel prospecting service can help your business sell more? **Book your discovery call**

G2 ★★★★★ 4.8

Capterra ★★★★★ 4.9

★ Trustpilot ★★★★★ 4.6

GetApp ★★★★★ 4.9

Software Advice. ★★★★★ 4.9

Appendix:

The data in this report is sourced from Sopro client prospecting campaigns. From 2016 - 2024, all client data totals **97.97 million** outreach emails and **3,628,213** multi-channel data points, including phone numbers sourced, LinkedIn InMails sent, gifts sent, and companies identified via IP match. We also included paid social ads with **18,031,826** impressions on Meta's Facebook and Instagram.

Full list of industries analysed

Accounting
Airlines/Aviation
Apparel & Fashion
Architecture & Planning
Automation
Banking
Biotechnology
Broadcast Media
Building Materials
Business Supplies and Equipment
Commercial Real Estate
Computer & Network Security
Computer Games
Computer Software
Construction
Consumer Goods Electrical/ Electronic
Cosmetics Entertainment
Defence & Space
Design
E-learning
Environmental Services

Events Services
Facilities Services
Financial Services
Food & Beverages
Food Production
Furniture
Government Administration
Health, Wellness and Fitness
Higher Education
Hospital & Health Care
Hospitality
Human Resources
Industrial
Information Services
Insurance Information
Internet
Investment Banking
Investment Management
Law Practice
Legal Services
Leisure, Travel & Tourism

Logistics and Supply Chain
Luxury Goods & Jewellery
Machinery Mechanical or Industrial Engineering
Management
Management Consulting
Management Education
Manufacturing
Marketing and Advertising
Market Research
Media Production
Medical Devices
Mining & Metals
Nonprofit Organization
Oil & Energy
Online Media
Packaging and Containers
Pharmaceuticals
Printing
Professional Training & Coaching
Public Relations and

Communications
Publishing
Real Estate
Renewables & Environment
Research Civil Engineering
Restaurants Chemicals
Retail
Security and Investigations
Sports
Staffing and Recruiting Consumer Electronics
Technology and Services
Telecommunications
Transportation/Trucking/ Railroad
Utilities
Venture Capital & Private Equity
Wholesale Automotive
Wine and Spirits

The State of
Prospecting 2025

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