



THE TRUTH BEHIND SUCCESSFUL SALES CADENCES

THE FOUR ELEMENTS EVERY
SALES REP NEEDS TO MASTER TO
CONTACT PROSPECTS

THE TRUTH BEHIND SUCCESSFUL SALES CADENCES

Overview

Every sales rep is required to build pipeline; it is fundamental to every sales team. The best strategies to build pipeline are constantly debated and terms like sales cadence, sales sequence, and sales follow-up strategy are used to figure out the best way to contact prospective clients. The definition of sales cadence is a sequence of activities to increase contact and qualification rates. Many expert consultants profess to know the best sales cadence strategy, one that proved successful for them or one of their clients, but these conclusions have been subjective, lacking robust data to back them up. After reviewing 479,140 sales activities across 1,456 sales cadences our research has concluded that there is no such thing as a one size fits all cadence – however, there are four areas within a cadence where we have identified best practice principles that should be utilized to maximize a rep’s ability to successfully contact and qualify their prospects. The four areas are:



ATTEMPTS



MEDIA



DURATION



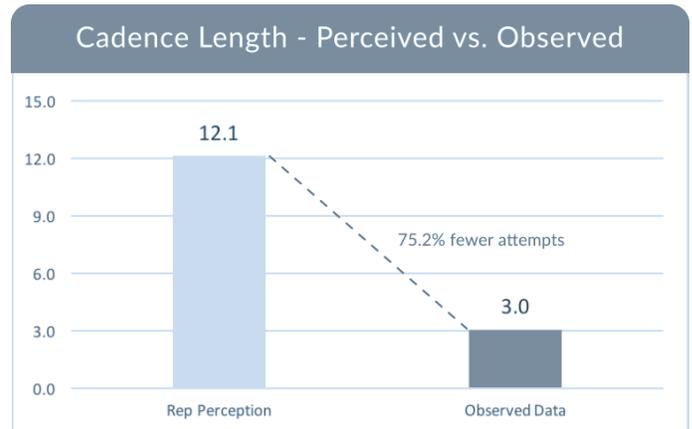
SPACING



ATTEMPTS

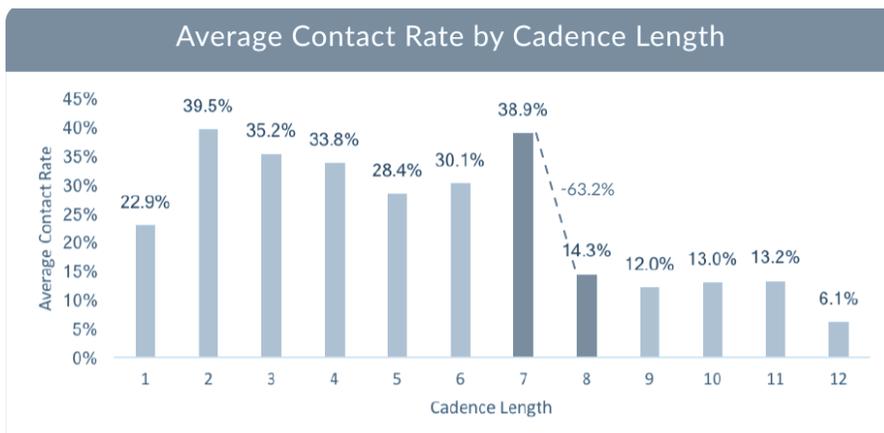
Reps make 75.2% fewer contact attempts than they think they do

In a 2017 survey by XANT, sales reps reported an average of 12.1 phone, email, and voicemail attempts per contact. In contrast, our observational study found that the average cadence included just 3.0 touches of these types. That number means reps use these media 75.2% less frequently than what they thought.



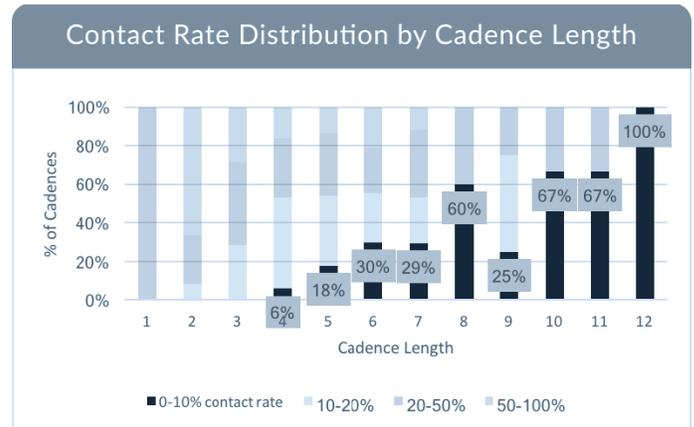
After seven tries, contact rates drop 63.2%

While ideally you would like to contact a prospect in as few attempts as possible, our research gave us insight into when would be the optimal time to call it quits. After seven attempts, contact rates plummeted more than half to just 14%, and stayed low as we analyzed up to 12-step cadences. This analysis shows that the “sweet spot” for cadence length is 2-7 attempts, and any longer or shorter is taking time that could potentially be better spent elsewhere.



At 12 attempts, no cadence was more than 10% successful

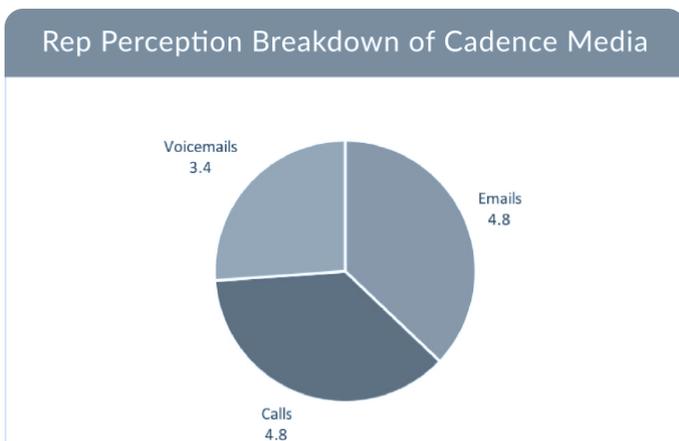
We also found that the portion of cadences yielding a 0-10% contact rate trended upward each time an additional attempt was made. By 8 attempts, this lowest-contact rate category made up 60% of cadences, and by 12 steps all cadences fell into this bucket. This result again points out the sweet spot for cadence length at 2-7 attempts, as well as emphasizes the opportunity cost of extending a cadence past that mark.



MEDIA

The average cadence is believed to consist of 4.8 calls, 4.8 emails, and 3.4 voicemails

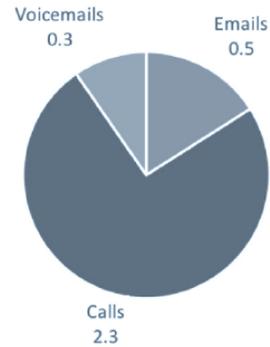
When choosing how to contact a prospect, there are six types of media to choose from: phone, email, voicemail, social, mailers, and text messages (two other methods are under consideration for inclusion in future studies: video and chat). Data availability restricted our study to three of the media types mentioned above: email, phone, and voicemail. In a survey conducted by XANT, sales reps reported an average 4.8 phone calls, 4.8 emails, and 3.4 voicemails.



The average cadence really consists of 2.3 calls, 0.5 emails, and 0.3 voicemails

In our study, we found that, in contrast to the reps' perception, the average cadence consisted of an average 2.3 phone calls, 0.5 emails, and 0.3 voicemails. In addition to the average cadence being much shorter than was believed, as mentioned earlier, the proportion of phone calls to emails and voicemail is significantly higher.

Data-Supported Breakdown of Cadence Media



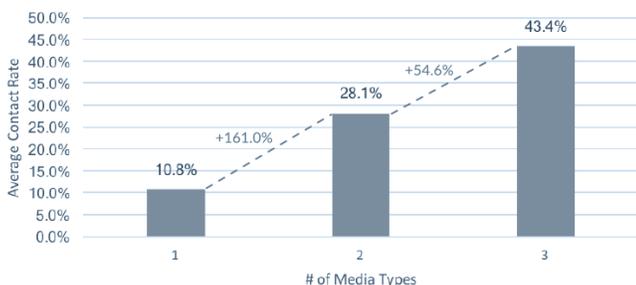
Use of Multiple Channels Increases Contact Rates by 161%

Our results show that prospects are more than three times as likely to respond to cadences that utilize more than one type of contact media, regardless of cadence length. Despite this fact, a startling 29.1% of cadences we analyzed included only phone calls, likely representing a huge number of missed contact opportunities. When reps in our study used two types of media together, the average contact rate rose 161.0%, and when a third media type was added contact rates increased another 54.6%.

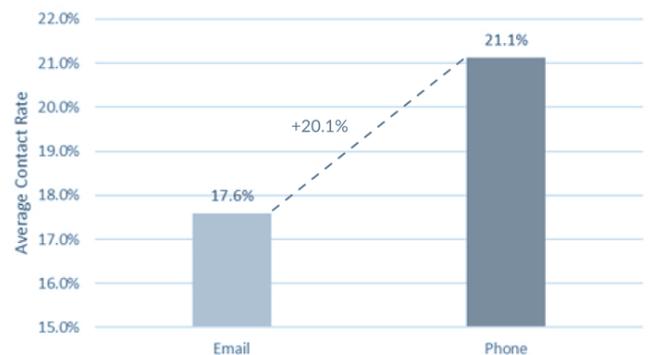
Beginning a cadence with a call is 20.1% more effective than starting with an email

Over three-quarters of cadences began with a call; the rest started with an email. It would seem reps have concluded, as we found, that cadences that begin with a call tend to be more successful than those that begin with an email. When reps in our study began their cadence with an email, they averaged a 17.6% contact rate versus 21.1% when starting with an email. That is a 20.1% increase in contact rate just from beginning with a call instead of an email.

Average Contact Rate by Media Variety

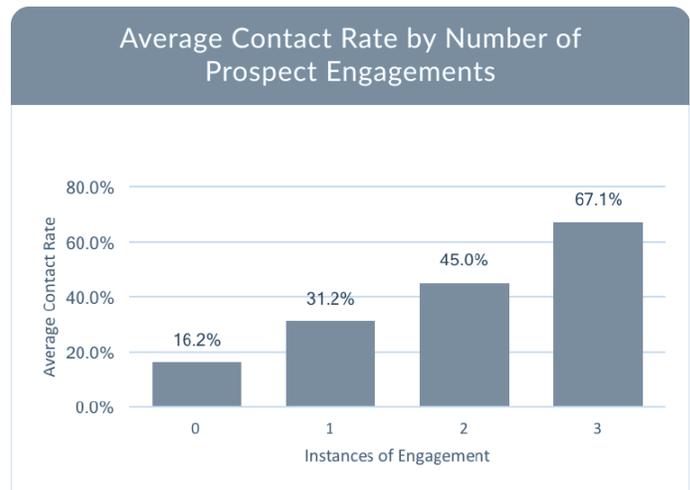


Average Contact Rate by First Touch Type



Email engagement drives an up-to-4x increase in contact rates

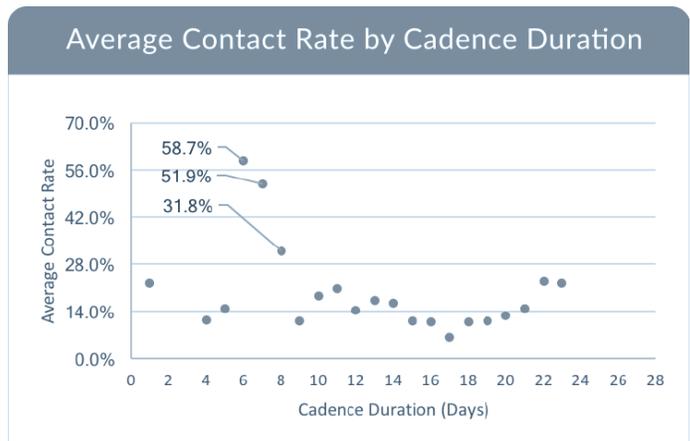
Our findings also confirmed most sales professionals' intuition around engagement: the more the better. As prospects engage more with emails by opening them or clicking on links, they are significantly more likely to be successfully contacted. When zero engagement occurs, the contact rate was 16.2%, but when prospects engaged one, two, and three times during a cadence, that prospect was 31.2%, 45.0%, and 67.1% likely to be successfully contacted.



DURATION

The optimal cadence is 6-8 days long

The amount of time from first attempt to last, called duration, is also a significant factor in contact rates. In a 2017 XANT study, we asked reps about the duration of their cadences. The results show that reps believe the average length of their cadence is 29.3 days. Now, with hard data, we attempted to determine the duration that gives sales leaders the best chance of



making contact. The cadence lengths that yielded the highest successful contact rates were 6-8 days long. Within this range, average contact rates varied from 31.8% to 58.7%. All cadence lengths shorter or longer than this window had significantly lower average contact rates.

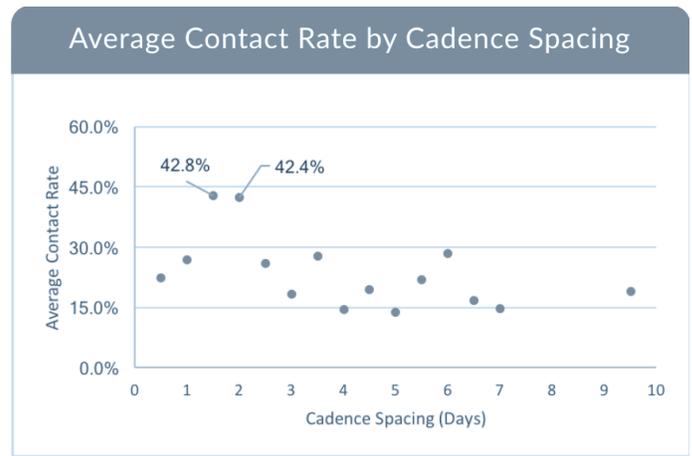


SPACING

The optimal spacing for a cadence is 1 to 2 days

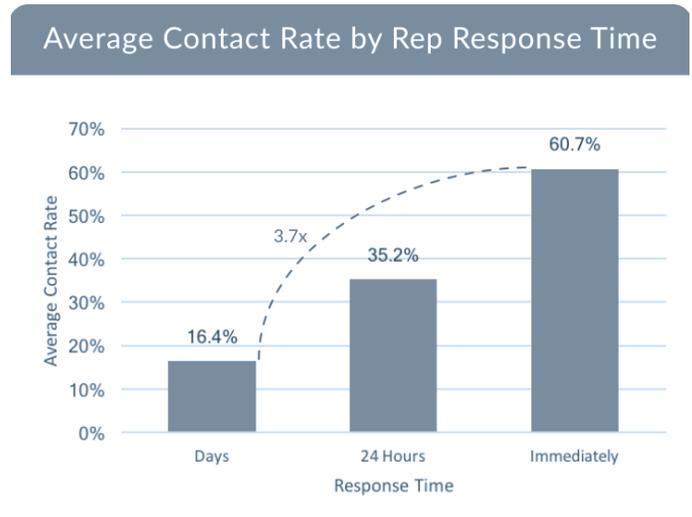
When it comes to prospecting strategy, the spacing of touches matters as much as the number of them. Spacing, the time between touches in a cadence, can be too short or too long – either will decrease contact rates. In a 2017 study, we found that sales reps report an average spacing between each attempt of 2.4 days.

Using hard data, we sought to either confirm or disprove this perception and find the optimal cadence spacing. The data from our research suggest that the ideal spacing is 1-2 days. Average contact rates for this spacing were over 42%.



Responding immediately to engagement increases contact rate by 3x

After a prospect engages with an email by opening it or clicking on a link, the time it takes for a rep to reach out significantly impacts the contact rate of the cadence. In our study, cadences containing an immediate response (<24 hrs) resulted in more than 3x the contact rate compared to cadences where the rep waited more than 24 hours to respond.



THE BIG PICTURE

Now that we have gone over each finding individually, we can compare the most common cadences in our study with the most successful ones, and see how each factor contributes to their success, or lack thereof.

The 10 Most Common Cadences

The most common cadence in the study ended with a successful contact 17.0% of the time and consisted of just one phone call. These ten cadences averaged a 21.9% contact rate, 3.6 attempts, 1.1 types of media, and 94.3 days duration. This implies an average spacing between touches of 28.8 days.

Most Common Cadences	Contact Rate	Attempts	Media	Duration	Spacing
1. Dial	17.0%	1 attempts	1 type	0.8 days	0.8 days
2. Dial, Dial	18.7%	2	1	69.0	34.5
3. Email, Dial	54.3%	2	2	169.4	84.7
4. Dial, Dial, Dial	13.4%	3	1	105.8	35.3
5. Dial, Dial, Dial, Dial	12.5%	4	1	91.8	22.9
6. Dial, Dial, Dial, Dial, Dial	10.1%	5	1	55.4	11.1
7. Dial, Email, Dial	47.5%	3	2	96.9	32.3
8. Email, Dial, Dial	26.7%	3	2	71.8	23.9
9. Dial, Dial, Dial, Dial, Dial, Dial	9.6%	6	1	107.0	17.8
10. Dial, Dial, Dial, Dial, Dial, Dial, Dial	9.5%	7	1	175.5	25.1
Averages	21.9%	3.6 attempts	1.3 types	94.3 days	28.8 days

The 10 Most Successful Cadences

The most successful cadence in the study yielded success 79.4% of the time and consisted of two consecutive calls, leaving a voicemail both times, an email, and a final call. These ten cadences averaged a 72.0% contact rate, 6.7 attempts, 3.0 types of media, and 6.7 days duration. This implies an average spacing between touches of 1.0 days.

Most Successful Cadences	Contact Rate	Attempts	Media	Duration	Spacing
1. Dial, Voicemail, Dial, Voicemail, Email, Dial	79.4%	6 attempts	3 types	6.7 days	1.1 days
2. Dial, Voicemail, Dial, Dial, Dial, Email, Dial	75.6%	7	3	6.3	0.9
3. Dial, Voicemail, Dial, Dial, Voicemail, Email, Dial	74.2%	7	3	7.1	1.0
4. Dial, Dial, Voicemail, Dial, Voicemail, Email, Dial	74.1%	7	3	6.5	0.9
5. Dial, Voicemail, Dial, Voicemail, Dial, Voicemail, Email, Dial	73.0%	8	3	6.9	0.9
6. Dial, Dial, Dial, Dial, Voicemail, Email, Dial	70.6%	7	3	6.9	1.0
7. Dial, Voicemail, Dial, Voicemail, Email, Email, Dial	70.0%	7	3	6.8	1.0
8. Dial, Voicemail, Dial, Voicemail, Dial, Email, Dial	68.0%	7	3	6.7	1.0
9. Dial, Voicemail, Email, Email, Dial	67.8%	5	3	6.6	1.3
10. Dial, Voicemail, Dial, Dial, Email, Dial	67.6%	6	3	6.8	1.1
Averages	72.0%	6.7 attempts	3.0 types	6.7 days	1.0 days

All of the most common cadences were significantly less effective than the most successful ones. This may be due to reps giving up, as the most common cadence by far was a single dial. Since the single dial yielded success only 17.0% of the time, reps who followed this pattern likely left money on the table. The average contact rate of the most common cadences was over 50% lower than that of the most successful cadences. While the common cadences included about half the number of attempts as the most successful ones, each attempt was spaced out 28x as far. This comparison shows that most reps don't know which cadences should be used to most effectively reach their prospects.

SUMMARY

As the inside sales model continues to gain popularity, it is increasingly important to understand how to be effective in reaching out to new prospects. While the debate rages as to specific prescriptions for success, we have identified guiding principles for each of the four aspects of cadence—attempts, media, duration, and spacing. By following these principles, you can most effectively develop the best strategy for your inside sales team, increasing contact rates and building the pipeline that you need to fuel your business.

PLAYBOOKS

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