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THE LEAD RESPONSE MANAGEMENT STUDY

THE LEAD RESPONSE MANAGEMENT STUDY OVERVIEW

Similar to the Kellogg Lead Response Management Survey, but with far more precise data, this study set out to fill the knowledge gap that exists between marketing and sales, where companies are using intuition and experience to manage lead response timing rather than science.

To begin the study, we engaged with Professor Oldroyd again, who was now a Faculty Fellow at MIT. The study was designed to identify what day of week, time of day and time from creation to call back a web-generated lead for optimal contact and qualification rates. This study did not address close ratios.

We used the data from the [InsideSales.com system](#) (critical to this purpose because it generates and stores quantitative call data linked directly with qualitative lead process and flow information).

We examined 3 years of data across six companies that generate and response to web leads, from over fifteen thousand leads and over one hundred thousand call attempts.

We focused on one question for this study:

When should companies call web-generated leads for optimal contact and qualification ratios?

To standardize the meaning of the results, we used the following definitions and terms:

STUDY TERMS & DEFINITIONS	
FOUR DATA POINTS IN THE LEAD LIFE CYCLE	DATA DEFINITIONS
LEAD CREATED TIME —the date and time that a web-form was filled out and submitted by a lead.	CALL/DIAL —a call or dial is the physical action of a sales or lead generation calling a lead.
FIRST DIAL ATTEMPT TIME —the first date and time that a sales or lead qualification representative attempts to call or dial a web lead.	CONTACT —for the purposes of this study, a contact is defined as a call that connects with a live person and lasts a defined number of seconds. ¹
FIRST CONTACT TIME —the first date and time that a sales or lead qualification representative makes a successful contact.	QUALIFY —a qualification is a stage in the lead nurturing process where that lead is willing to enter the sales process—in some cases this means that a lead sets an appointment with a sales representative to begin the sales process. ²
FIRST QUALIFICATION TIME —the date and time that a lead becomes qualified	

1. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS STUDY, THIS TIME WAS DIFFERENT FOR EACH COMPANY'S DATA RANGING FROM 2 MINUTES TO 6 MINUTES, BUT CORRESPONDING TO THE DEFINED LENGTH OF A CONTACT WITH THE LEAD RESPONDENT.
2. EACH COMPANY INVOLVED IN THE STUDY HAD THEIR OWN WAY TO INDICATE A QUALIFIED LEAD. THE ANALYSIS OF THE DATA TOOK THIS INTO ACCOUNT.

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LRM Study Summary

The behavioural study revealed when sales representatives had success around calling web-generated leads. To find these facts, we looked at leads that were captured through a web form, and attempted or called at least one time. Summarized below are some of the more interesting findings related to speed and timing when responding to web-generated leads:

1. **Wednesdays** and **Thursdays** are the best days to **call** in order to contact (by **49.7%** over the worst day) and **qualify** (by **24.9%** over the worst day) leads. **Thursday** is the best day to contact a lead in order to qualify that lead (by **19.1%** better than the worst day).
2. **4 to 6pm** is the best time to call to make **contact** with a lead (by **114%** over the worst time block). **8-9am** and **4-5pm** are the best times to call to **qualify** a lead (by **164%** better 1-2pm, the worst time of the day). **4-5pm** is the best time to contact a lead to **qualify** over 11-12am by **109%**).
3. The odds of calling to contact a lead decrease by over **10 times** in the 1st hour. The odds of calling to **qualify** a lead decrease by over **6 times** in the 1st hour. After **20 hours** every additional dial your salespeople make actually hurts your ability to make contact to qualify a lead.
4. The odds of contacting a lead if called in **5 minutes** versus **30 minutes** drop **100 times**. The odds of qualifying a lead if called in **5 minutes** versus **30 minutes** drop **21 times**.

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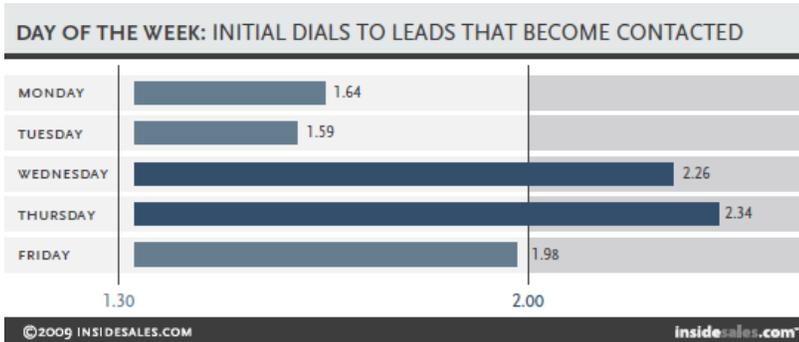
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LRM Study Details

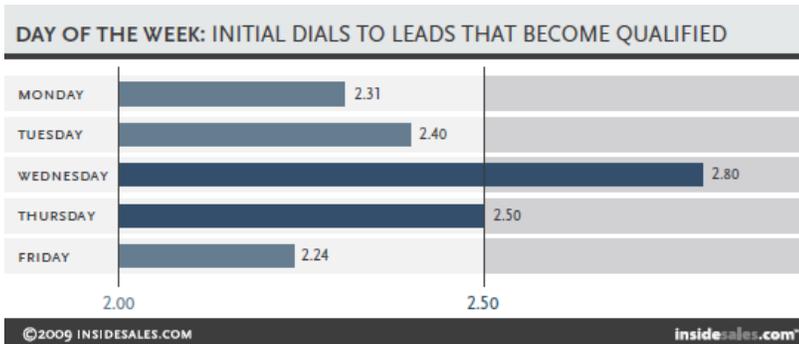
I. DAY OF WEEK:

Our first question was to see if there is a best day of the week to call to get the best contact and qualification ratios.

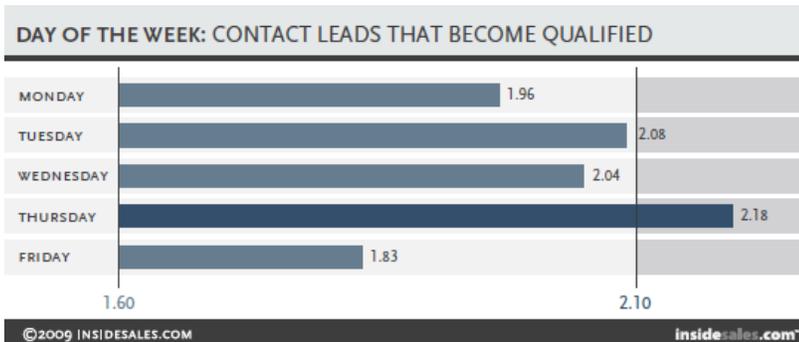
1. **Wednesdays and Thursdays** are the best days to call to make **contact** with a lead. In fact, **Thursday is a 49.7% better day** to call than the worst day, Tuesday.



2. **Wednesdays and Thursdays** are also the best days to call to **qualify** leads. **Wednesday** was the top day and was **24.9% better** than the worst day, which was Friday.



3. **Thursday** is the best day to contact a lead in order to **qualify** that lead. It is **19.1% better** than Friday, which is the worst day.



Does this mean that people don't make commitments (qualify) just before leaving for a weekend?

Perhaps.

Note that Monday was consistently poor for every category.

But notice that Friday wasn't bad to make contact, just poor in qualifying.

Notice the effect of time of day ranged from a low of **19.1%** to a high of **49.7%**, these are significant numbers.

How many other strategies show a **50% greater chance of contacting a lead**, merely by contacting on one day versus another?

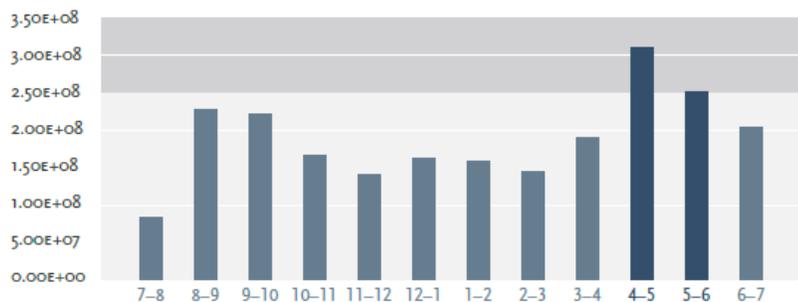
II. TIME OF DAY:

Our next question was to see if there is a better time of day to call to get optimal contact and qualification ratios. We used the same definition of terms for call (attempt), contact, and qualify.

Here is what we found:

1. **4 to 6pm** is the best time to call to make **contact** with a lead. It is **114% better** than calling at 11 to 12am, right before lunch. (We did not feel 7-8am was a standard work hour.)

TIME OF DAY: INITIAL DIALS TO LEADS THAT BECAME CONTACTED

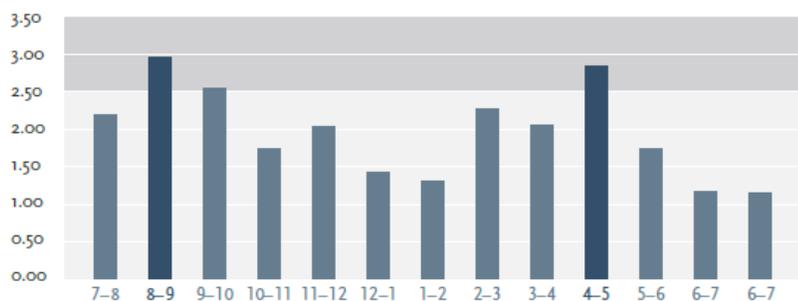


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2. **8-9am** and **4-5pm** are the best times to call to **qualify** a lead. 8-9am is **164% better** than calling at 1-2pm, right after lunch. That's a big difference! (After 6pm is not a standard work hour.)

TIME OF DAY: INITIAL DIALS TO LEADS THAT BECAME QUALIFIED

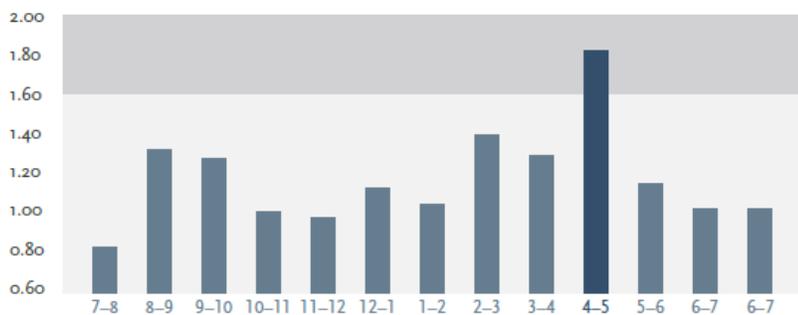


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3. **4-5 pm** is the best time to contact a lead to **qualify** that lead. 4-5pm is **109% better** than 11-12am. (We consider that 7-8am and after 6pm are not standard work hours.)

TIME OF DAY: CONTACTED LEADS THAT BECAME QUALIFIED



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Does this mean that maybe people don't want to commit or qualify before going to lunch?

Perhaps.

Is it helpful to know that you have a **164% higher chance of qualifying** a lead based on when

you call it?

• **Response Time Analysis by Hours:**

Day of week and time of day were found to be statistically significant variables in contacting and qualifying leads, but the significance of data we analyzed around response time dwarfed them both.

We started our analysis by measuring response times by hours and found an incredible drop in the odds of contacting and qualifying leads if you wait to begin calling for just 1 hour.

1. The odds of calling to **contact** a lead decrease by over **10 times** in the first hour.

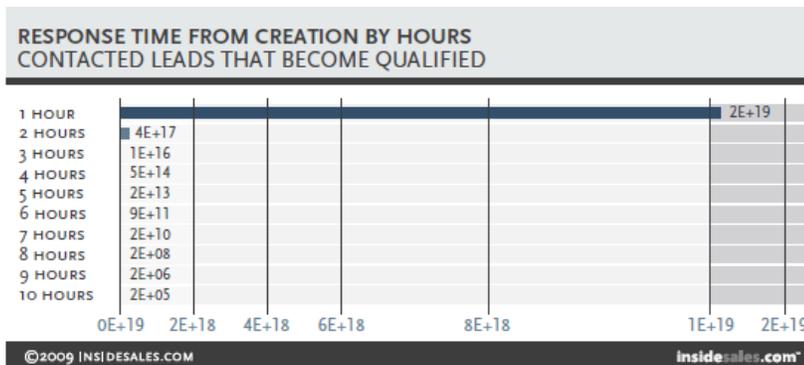


2. The odds of calling to **qualify** a lead decreases by over **6 times** in the first hour.



This is very interesting, but more interesting, and something we weren't expecting, was a statistically significant effect Dr. Oldroyd found in the data that shows that:

After 20 hours every additional dial your salespeople make actually hurts your ability to make contact to **qualify** a lead.



What does that suggest?

Do additional call attempts after 20 hours actually turn people off to the point they actually hurt your chances of doing business? Can you warm them up again with different forms of media other than the phone?

We don't know. But EVERYONE calls leads after 20 hours. Do they know that every additional call actually hurts them? Should your sales reps just stop calling after 20 hours? Ideally, if you had enough leads, and could make enough attempts to make contact in 20 hours, yes.

Is this realistic? It probably is not.

But as a general trend this data is EXTREMELY significant to salespeople.

We are looking into this more.

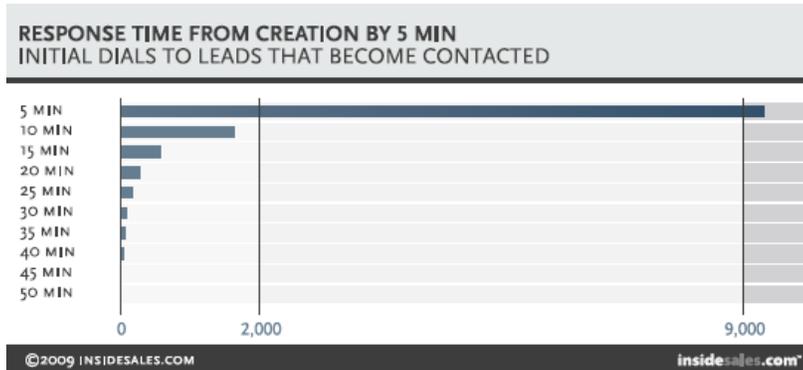
III. RESPONSE TIME ANALYSIS BY 5 MINUTE INCREMENTS:

We figured if the first 20 hours sliced up by hours was important, we should look more precisely at the first 3 hours sliced up by 5 minute segments.

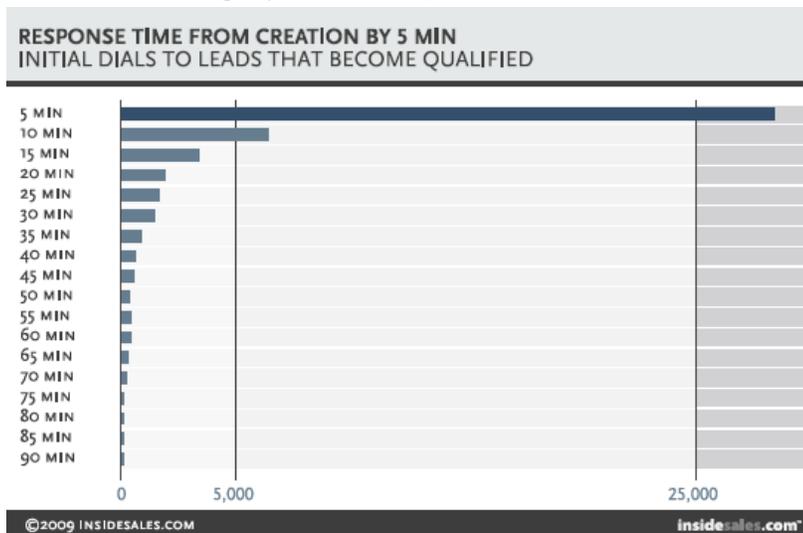
What are the results?

It is even more eye-opening: begin calling for just 1 hour 1/2

1. The odds of calling to contact a lead **decrease by over 10 times** in the first hour.



2. The odds of qualifying a lead in 5 minutes versus 30 minutes **drop 21 times**. And from 5 minutes to 10 minutes the dial to qualify odds **decrease 4 times**.



How significant is a **100x** increase in contact ratios on the value of leads?

How much effect does a **21x** increase in qualification have on the overall sales revenue of a company?

How many companies understand the importance of this strategy?

For illustration we decided to test some of these principles first hand. We have a heavy concentration of use of our lead response management solutions by customers from the mortgage and insurance industries so we started calling several of the top lead providers in these two industries and signed up to get quotes on mortgages and insurance.

Lead providers typically sell these leads to varying numbers of lead customers, in these examples we assume the leads were given to anywhere from 4 to 7 customers based on how many called us back.

We recorded what happened.

Our president signed up with the top lead provider to get quotes on his mortgage.

1. He received a total of 7 calls.
2. The first one called in only 30 minutes.
3. The last one called on the lead 3 days later.

Does that last one who called realize that the odds of qualifying this lead are **several thousand times less**

than if they had called in five minutes?

Our Sales Manager and several of our sales reps filled out web-based health insurance questionnaires with several of the top lead providers we partner with in the insurance industry:

1. Our Sales Manager filled his lead out at 4pm, (the optimal time for someone to reach him according to our data.) He didn't get a single call that day. He got his first of 5 calls at noon the next day (almost the worst time to call), and the last one two days later.
2. One rep filled his lead form out with another top lead provider at 8:30am (the second best time for someone to call), and had his first call in 1 minute, his second in 3 minutes, his 3rd in an hour and 45 minutes.
3. Another rep also at 8:30am, and he got one call in 2 minutes, and 2 more calls the next day.
4. Another rep filled theirs out at 10am and got the first call in 2 hours and never noticed any additional calls.

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