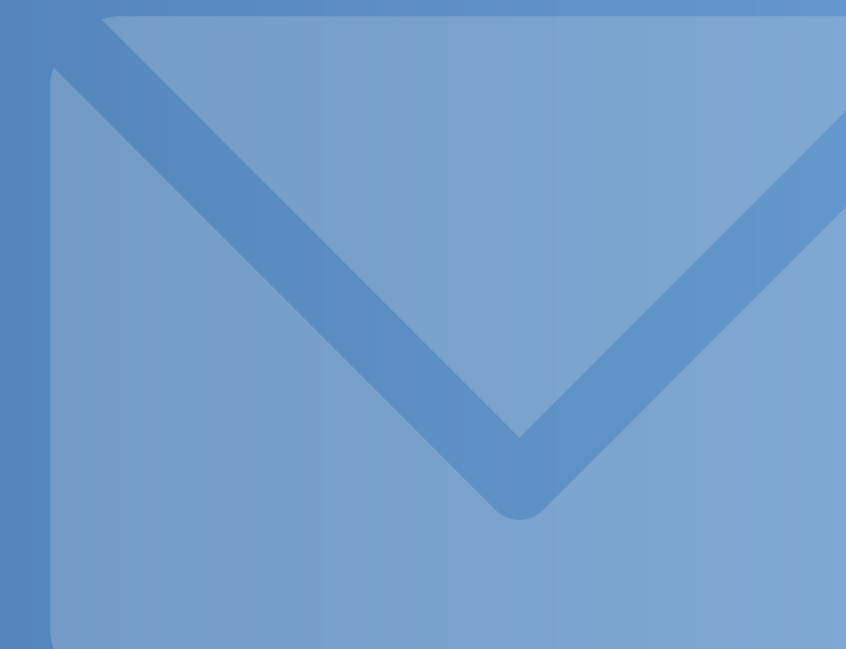




CALL OR EMAIL?

HOW DO YOU OPEN YOUR SALES CADENCE?



? FROM A SIMPLE QUESTION TO COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Intro from AJ Alonzo

I asked a simple question to the wonderful Sales Hacker Community - do you start your cadence with an email? Or with a call?

Well, the community delivered.

I got a TON of responses. People weren't just answering the question, they were giving reasons WHY. Good reasons.

And overall, the answer was..."it depends."

Kind of a letdown, but it's the top answer for good reason. People have their preferences, they have data, they have the ability to test...but not every environment is the same. Not every product is the same. Not all prospects are the same.

The answer "it depends" really reflects the fact that there is no hard and true answer to a question like this. BUT the explanations as to why people pick one over the other are illuminating. There's a lot to be learned in the comments here.

Understanding why someone chooses to call first instead of email (or vice versa) can help someone better understand their own position. Am I in a similar space as this person? Should I follow their advice or take the opposite?

SALES DEVELOPMENT

12

Email or Call first?

by AJ Alonzo

Click to view the discussion and join Sales Hacker!

464 56

I see reps go back and forth and forth and back on this - do you start a sequence with an email or a call?

I'm drawn to the idea of a call first. I always get more info out of a call vs. an email, and if they don't pick up I can reference a follow-up email in the voicemail I leave.

BUT

I know a lot of reps like to send an email first so they have something to reference on the follow-up call/VM. Makes breaking the ice a bit easier.

Interested to hear what everyone thinks!

AJ Alonzo
@ajalonzo

Which Do You Prefer?

Would you rather start a sales sequence by picking up the phone or sending off an email?

Maybe something else like a LinkedIn message, personalized video, or invite to a marketing event?

Whatever it might be, there's no right answer. It depends on the product/service you sell, the industries you prospect, and the people you talk with on a daily basis.

But if you're looking for some good reasons to pick one or the other, we've got you covered. Check out some of the community answers below!

Call First

- 01** Devin Harrigan
- 02** Seb Robin
- 03** Baily Brogden
- 04** Dan Frost
- 05** Joseph Timbers
- 06** Bill Gluth
- 07** Shawn St. Peter

Email First

- 08** Stephanie Lippincott
- 09** Alex Moffitt
- 10** Sander Buitelaar
- 11** Jonathan George
- 12** Craig Henehan

It Depends...

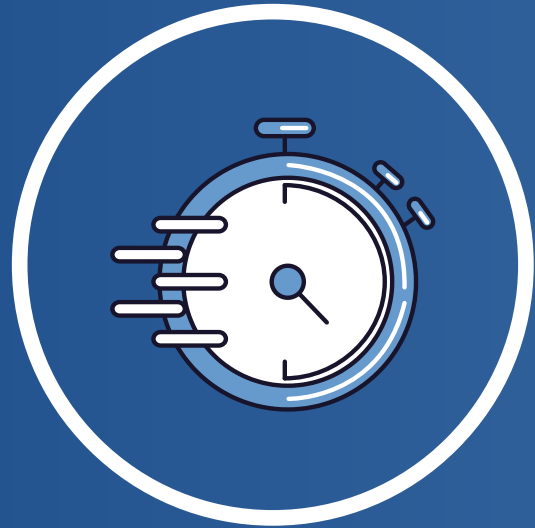
- 13** Trish Bertuzzi
- 14** Alex Smith
- 15** Richard Harris
- 16** Dan Phelps
- 17** Inge Boonen

A Monster Answer

- 18-19** Ben LaRue

CALL FIRST

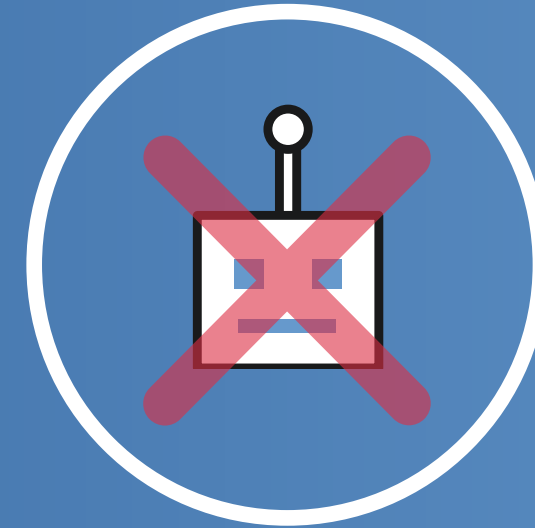
A few reasons...



MORE
IMMEDIATE
THAN EMAIL



YOU CAN
GLEAN MORE
INFORMATION



ADDS A
HUMAN
TOUCH



Devin Harrigan

Enterprise AE
@ DeepCrawl

Control The Conversation



A phone call gives **you** control of the conversation rather than reacting to an email. The other benefit I'd add is objection handling. It's much easier (if fully prepared) to overcome objections **because you're still in control**. It prevents the back and forth email exchange and the chance the person never replies to your response to their objection.



Seb Robin

Sales Trainer & Coach

You'll Have to Call Anyways...



I think that if you have done your homework (and found a trigger event or challenge to overcome), it's probably a good idea to pick up the phone and try to have a first chat rather than send an email, which is most likely to disappear in the corner of an inbox, which means you'll have to call anyway. Save yourself some time (and the reference to an email your callee won't even remember he received!); just call!

It might sound more appropriate to send an email (as a warning?) because prospects are not busy but indebted with work and deadlines (and sales calls!) but that's only the case if you've got nothing valuable to talk about, isn't it? Prepare your call well; consider a challenge you 'know' your callee is facing, and focus on discovering whether this challenge needs solved quickly. If there's a challenge to overcome, your callee will give you time.



Baily Brogden

ISR @ Outreach

Save Yourself Some Time



Always call first, in my opinion.

There's always the possibility that you could get them on the first call and save yourself time from manually creating the first email!



Dan Frost

FrostyTheSalesman

Start With 'Other' - Then Call



My sequences all start with 'other.'

View the LinkedIn profile (social trigger 1), apply the 5x5 method (spend no more than five minutes finding at least five things you can mention, reference, editorialize, etc) and click follow (social trigger 2) before making the next touch which recently has been....

Call first! When leaving the message I will tell them they don't have to call me back because there is an email coming but if they prefer phone, my number is...



Joseph Timbers

Director, Business Development
@ QGenda

Phone Map & Get Personal



Call first and don't try and connect with your main decision-maker.

Discover as much information from each contact as possible so that you can email the DM a personalized compelling story based on the dynamics you've learned from individuals within the company - ideally, where your product/solution fits in and the value you can bring based on the pain you've uncovered.

Name dropping references and having a clear understanding of how they currently operate will set the tone and future call connections. Happy hunting!



Bill Gluth

Call First, But Don't Cut Your Sequence Short

Innovative Growth Guidance for
Small Businesses



If you have your ideal client insight, have your core messaging clear, and focused on why the lead/contact needs to talk to you, I can see a call, email, direct mail, call (did you get my letter/card/what have you) sequence working.

The funny thing is – multiple touches wins the day – most salespeople stop at 2 contact attempts but statistically, sales are made on contacts 8 – 12 so the problem is clear.

Touches that educate, add value, and advance the knowledge of the contact so they have a reason to call can win the day in direct outreach campaigns. My vote is in for calling first (human touch), email second with multiple value-added touches ongoing would be a strong outreach program.



Shawn St. Peter

Sales Account Manager
@ PPC Industries

Call, Then Use Email to Generate a Conversation



So I always call first – the goal is to have a live conversation and then set up a more formal meeting. But I usually do not leave a message the first few times I call.

If after calling a few times, I do not get through, I will then send a short e-mail. But the main thing I am putting in my e-mail is that I will give them a call at a specific time and from my specific phone number. This leads to a lot more times actually getting a contact.

Putting your phone number in the base of the e-mail will make it easy for the prospect to recognize it when you call and will lead to more times that call being picked up. If I do not get through to them on this call, I leave a well planned VM and then follow up with a more detailed e-mail.

EMAIL FIRST

A few reasons...



SAVES TIME
THROUGH
AUTOMATION



MORE EASILY
REFERENCE
WEB CONTENT



BETTER TRACK
BRAND
ENGAGEMENT



Stephanie Lippincott

Marketing Coordinator
@ AWKNG

Use Email As A Foundation



I do all of my prospecting via email first. I then build off of my lists for engagement and do calls and use LinkedIn to connect and engage.



Alex Moffitt

Product Specialist
@ Autodesk

Generate Responses While You Sleep



I think part of it depends on what you sell. I'm currently in a more transactional environment, so we have an email that goes out automatically when someone downloads a trial, followed by a call later that day.

Many times that email will generate responses before I even start for the day (it goes out at around 6am), so I can farm those email replies for efficient opp-creation. I'll then call and leave a voicemail referencing the email (and asking for a reply to that email instead of a callback) to convert the rest.



Sander Buitelaar

Marketing Campaign Coordinator
@ tray.io

Where Did The Prospect Come From?



It depends on the context of what triggered the sequence (demo? webinar? ebook?), but I'd say to generally lead with email first and then follow up with a call + VM.



Jonathan George

Business Development Manager
@ Eigen Technologies

Think Of Email Like MQL Generation



Currently, we have been emailing first but before having a scheduled call task we treat the email engagement like an MQL.

What I mean by that is if a lead engages with that first email (either an open or a click on attached content) we use triggers to ensure a rep calls within a tight time window (ideally under 30 mins) to increase the conversion to a booked meeting.



Craig Henehan

Sr. Enterprise AE @ Clyde

Use Email To Reference Content



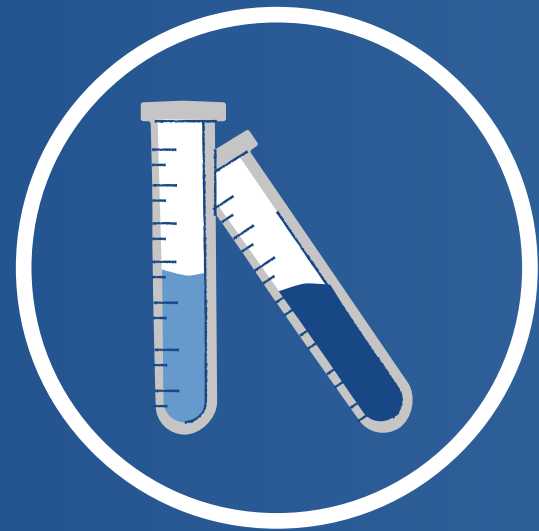
Some great advice already on this thread, and as pointed out, really can depend on the scenario and/or target.

I like to start with an email in which I'll try to reference a LI post that the person either wrote or participated in...showing you're interested and also have a POV.

After this, I can make reference to this in a call and/or voicemail.

IT DEPENDS...

A few reasons...



TRY BOTH FOR
TESTING
PURPOSES



THINK ABOUT
YOUR END
GOAL



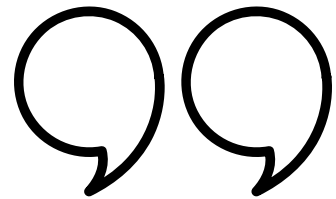
YOU HAVE TO
EVOLVE WITH
THE TRENDS



Trish Bertuzzi

Founder & CEO
@ The Bridge Group

Reference Value, Not Activity



I think the answer is it depends. Referencing an email that is sent first and does not serve up great content is just referencing an activity. Referencing an email that does provide great content/value and then leaving a voicemail that says " I hope you found the white paper useful. Would love to chat and see what else you might be interested in" - that makes more sense to me. PS - soft closes are mandatory in this selling climate flip side of the coin.

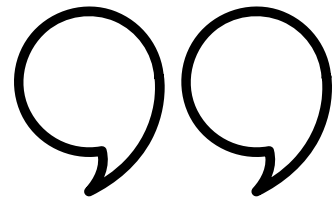
The double-tap starting with voice mail. The voice mail has to be super specific and well-articulated. Then, rather than leave a phone number, you can say "No need to call me back. Sending you my contact info via email shortly and you can respond there". These are just scenarios but you get where I am going.



Alex Smith

AE @ Docebo

Have Your End Goal In Mind



I love this conversation. I think a lot of it depends on the type of sale you're doing. Is it a sale to book an appointment and more of a transactional ask or is it a more drawn-out complex sale you're initiating?

If it's a transactional ask, email first isn't really necessary. You're just trying to find someone who is feeling an untenable situation and you're bringing them unique value about them and their problems quickly. Then phone first makes sense. But I don't have a problem with phone, followed up by a personal email and maybe back to phone. Referring back at each point to something personal and valuable to them.



Richard Harris

Founder

@ The Harris Consulting Group

ABT - Always Be Testing



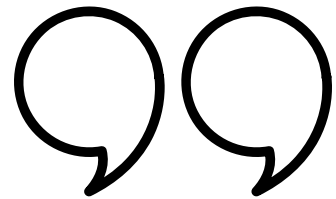
The only answer to this is an A/B test. Every market is different. Especially in a WFH environment.



Dan Phelps

SVP, Healthcare
@ ServingIntel

Test & Iterate - Nothing Works 100% Of The Time



Call, text, (if you have cell), email, Facebook, LinkedIn... Assume the prospect has all methods of communication/notifications on a single device (ie. cell phone) that is attached to their palm. When you do a double/triple play, i.e. "blow up their phone" you increase your chances of getting their attention right now. Wash, rinse, A/B test, repeat until you figure out what works for the day/week/month. Be sensitive to the political, financial, environmental conditions that might be influencing the prospect as well.

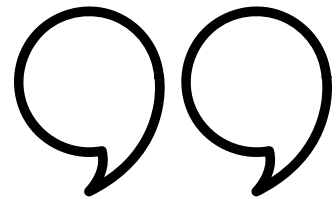
Content shared in each touch is critically important as well. Think of it like bass fishing. Bass are very sensitive to different baits in different seasons of the year; and at different depths. When you enter a fishing hole, you might have to change your bait two or three times before you figure out what the bass are hitting. You also have to vary the depth of your bait. Bottom line, there is no silver bullet, one-size-fits-all approach with cadence and method used. You have to be like a bass fisherman: patient, experimental, diligent, crafty and smart.



Inge Boonen

Enterprise Sales Manager
@ Nimdzi Insights

COVID Has Forced A Switch



Until COVID-19 I was always a proponent of a call first, and then an email, exactly for the reasons you describe.

Now that many people work from home, I can't necessarily find their phone numbers, so I am using a mix of email and LinkedIn. What happened is that my reluctance to call has kicked in hard. But I do get decent responses with this combo as well.

A MONSTER ANSWER



**FOCUS ON
CONSISTENCY**



**ARE YOU
SOLVING A
PROBLEM?**



**DON'T BOX
YOURSELF IN**



Benjamin LaRue

Sr. AE @ SCW

Don't Box Yourself In - Remain Consistent



AJ, really great question and something that if you can stay consistent with one approach versus the other, I'd bet you'd see quite an impressive result. My team has.

The Back and forth and forth and back (depending on how often) isn't always a good idea. TRUST me. I'm not saying don't A/B test or try different approaches but you have to consider the facts. As you know being a BDR or SDR is tough enough as it is, and as you allude to you ALWAYS get more out of a call or LVM referencing an email, over sending a cold email first.

Open rates, click rates, and reply rates are 3-4x higher for me and my team when we call first, LVM (the most likely outcome on the first call) pointing to an email.

Although you're right many reps like to send emails first to "help break the ice", or to "reference" but honestly is that an effective approach? And does it help the prospect or buyer solve their problem? Does it break through the noise or add to it?

i.e. *"Hey [prospect name], This is [rep name] with [rep company] the reason for my call today is to see if you got my email I sent over?" Or "Hey [prospect name], This is [rep name] with [rep company] I sent over an email explaining what we do..." or the higher likelihood you catch a VM "Hey [prospect name], I wanted to let you know I sent over an email [insert value prop]..."*

In other words, approaches like that, although they might feel "more comfortable" in reality could do more harm than good. What if you send the cold email, they open – you call and connect and you only get your name and company out before the prospect says "saw your email, don't need it.... click". You box your self in! You never gave yourself a fighting chance.

Our approach, and in my experience, calling first and LVM pointing to an email has been by far the most effective.

Goes a little something like; First Outreach 1: Call [LVM] / Email 1, Rings to the voicemail of the Director of IT: *"Hey [prospect], you're probably all set, but I have an unconventional idea that might [insert value prop]. No need to call me back, I'll shoot you an email. This is [Rep]." Email 1 sent while the VM is being left "[Prospects Name], I just left you a voicemail on your [office line or mobile], I look forward to chatting with you! I reached out [insert day/time] about [insert value prop/attention grabber] This probably isn't a fit right now, but would it be a ridiculous idea for you to see how other Director of IT's are [insert value prop]? Talk soon."*

Little longer winded of an answer than you were probably expecting but figured I'd share as much as I could! #pursuealways

CLOSING NOTES

There you have it - 18 opinions on how you should start your cadence. Whether you choose to send an email or make a phone call, you should have the insight you need to make the right choice for your situation. And if you want to know how we structure our cadences, feel free to [contact us](#) for a conversation!

Thank You!

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GET IN TOUCH WITH
MARKETING

AJ Alonzo
Director of Marketing
aj.alonzo@demanddrive.com
(508) 283-5354

