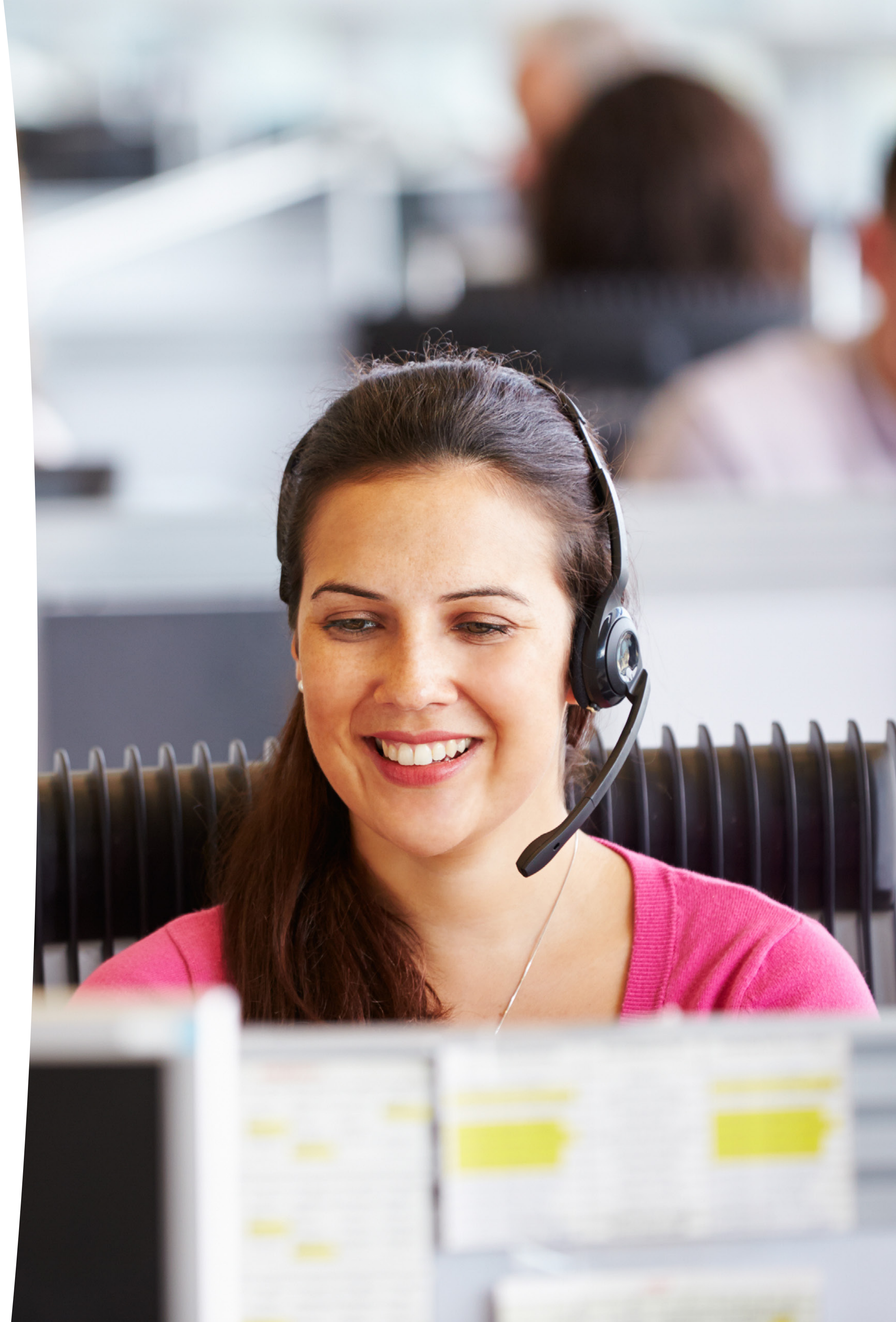
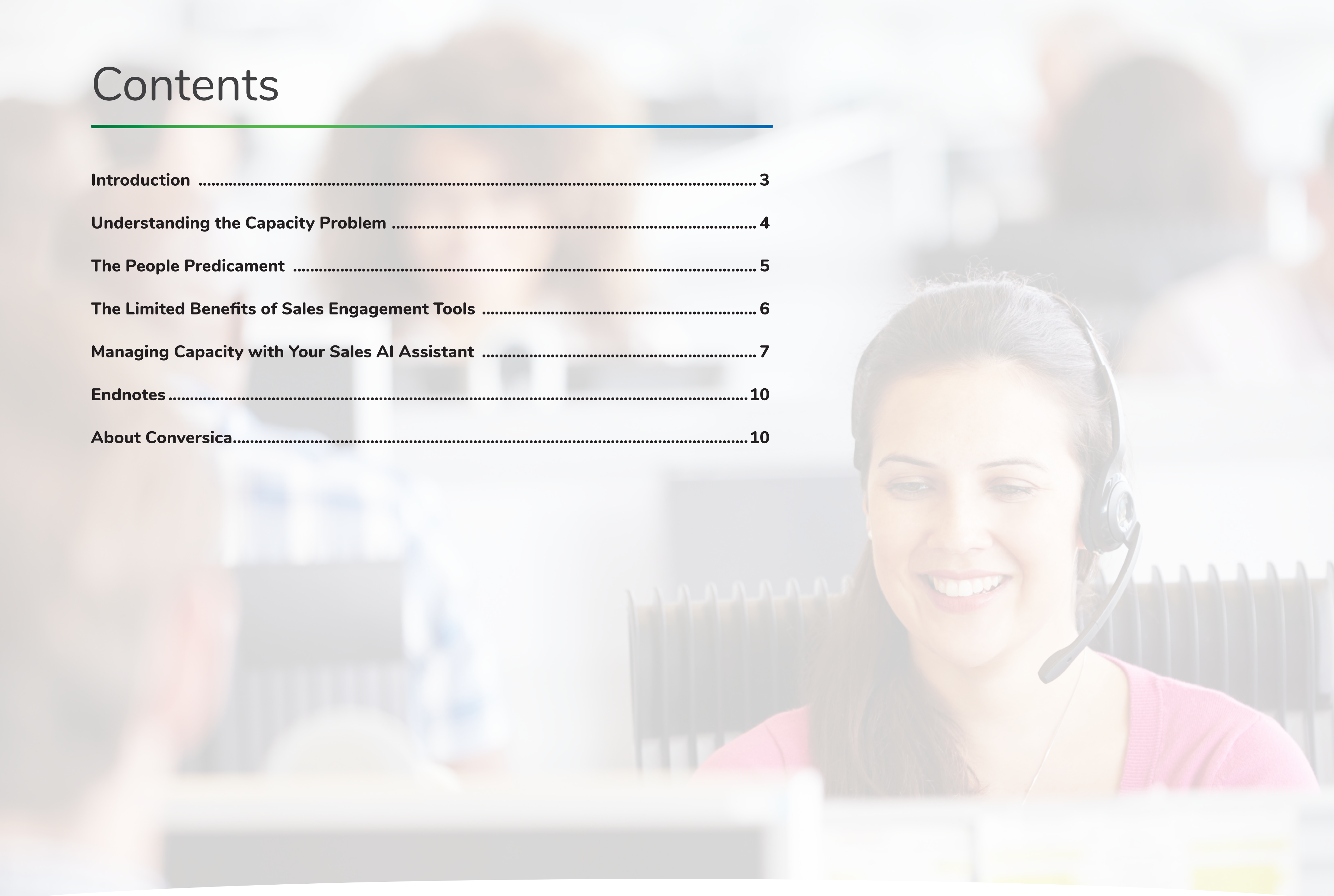
conversica

The Sales Capacity Challenge

NEVER MISS A SALES-READY OPPORTUNITY AGAIN





Contents

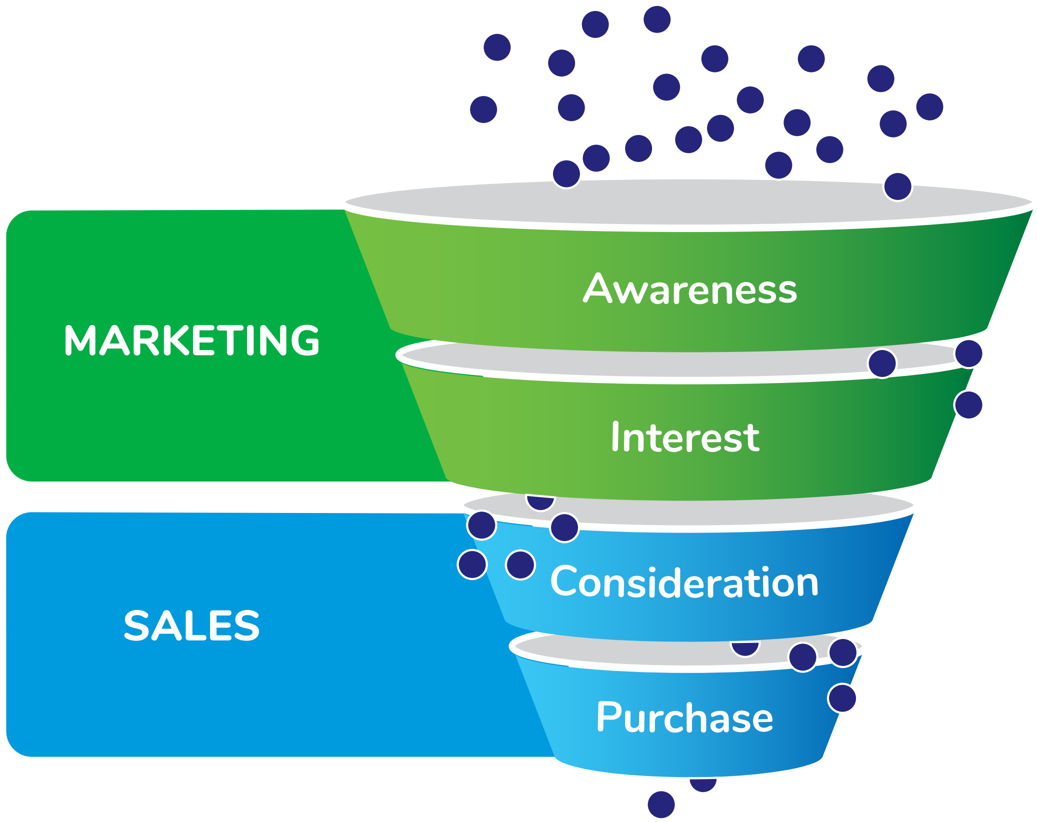
Introduction

Within every organization is the drive to optimize their marketing and sales funnel. This includes relying on Marketing teams to generate leads, Business Development teams to engage with those leads, and Sales teams to convert those leads. Of course, the funnel in practice isn't perfect since a large number of leads require employees to focus their time on some leads over others.

But how does your organization strategize the lead follow-up process to ensure the greatest number of leads are touched in an optimized and efficient manner? What happens when the number of Marketing-generated leads exceeds the capacity of the Sales team to touch each and every one?

This is a longstanding pain point for businesses of all sizes. To make the best of this situation, some companies have adopted Business Development Representatives (BDRs) or Inside Sales teams to prioritize their time on the hottest and most recent leads in hopes of converting them into opportunities for the Sales team. Others do not have this luxury and instead rely on a Sales team for lead outreach, lead nurturing, and closing deals. In either case, many leads are regrettably left untouched due to the simple fact that Salespeople or BDRs only have so much time to spend on each lead.

This is what we are calling the **sales capacity challenge** and it leaves many Sales-ready leads out of the loop or undetected. Many organizations simply accept the capacity challenge as a matter of course or something to be solved by simply hiring more Salespeople or BDRs. Unfortunately, this often results in adding too many reps too early or missing potential revenue because they don't have enough capacity (or budget) to meet demand.



Lack of Sales and Marketing Alignment Results in a Leaky Funnel

Sales – do you want more, highly qualified leads from marketing?

Marketing – are you tired of Salespeople not following up in a timely manner?

More than two-thirds of Salespeople have admitted that, while their relationship with their Marketing team is good, it could be better.

Tight alignment between Sales and Marketing leads to direct impact to company performance.

Let's explore the capacity model, its limitations, and potential solutions.

Understanding the Capacity Challenge

Even the best Salesperson or Business Development Representative can only handle a certain number of leads per day. Sales teams and BDRs follow up with a lead a few times via email, phone, or SMS text message before moving on. This prevents spending too much time and effort on an inattentive lead in favor of hotter leads; at least in theory. Unfortunately, this leaves major gaps in lead outreach.

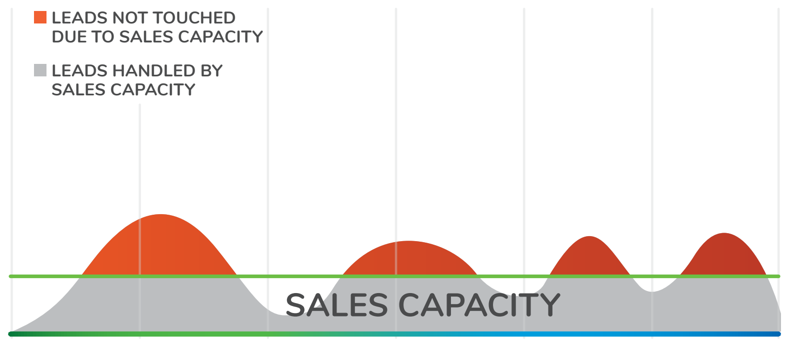
These gaps include:

- **Leads that do not score highly enough as a Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL)[1]**
- **Leads that do not respond to the first, second, or third outreach attempts**
- **Leads that are neglected because the Salesperson simply has no more time to reach out to more leads**
- **Leads who go dark after initial contact, seemingly without cause**
- **Leads who were recycled and may be back in the market, but nobody has the time to touch**
- **Leads who are interested in speaking with Sales but for whatever reason go undetected**

To make matters worse, the number of incoming MQLs is not static. A coordinated event and media push generates a large number of leads, many of whom will not be touched by the Sales team. Conversely, seasonal downturns may leave Sales teams bereft of leads to contact. In either case, there is a quandary with the number of leads and your capacity to touch them. A fluctuating volume of inbound leads is difficult for Sales teams to handle. As a result, leads slip through the cracks and opportunities are missed.

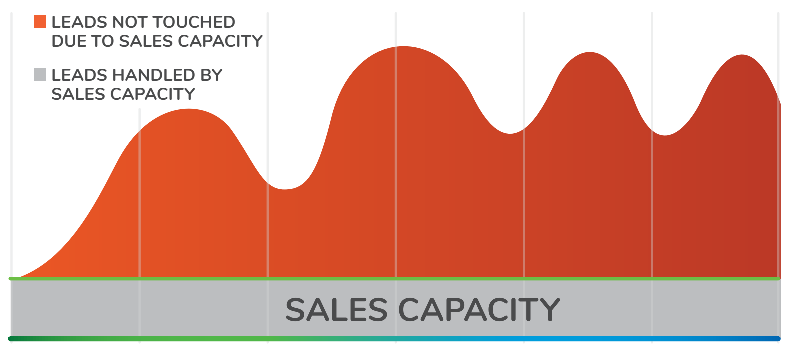
Most organizations attempt to identify patterns to match demand, but this can be risky as those patterns shift over time. Resulting strategies allow teams to estimate their needs according to lulls and surges in the number of leads garnered. But inevitably, organizations will either scale too quickly or lag behind. And that's no small issue.

Variable Leads and Capacity



The total number of leads is highly variable sometimes exceeding your Sales team's ability to touch them.

Consistently Excessive Leads and Capacity



If the total number of leads always exceeds your capacity to touch them, you will likely miss opportunities.

The People Predicament

If the quantity of leads always exceeds the capacity of the Sales teams or Business Development Reps, the solution is simple: just hire more people to handle incoming inquiries. However, if the number of leads is highly variable — as is the case in almost any industry — things become more complicated. Hiring more staff can become a costly endeavor for employers; not to mention a frustrating experience for overwhelmed Sales teams.

Due to time constraints, Salespeople often cherry pick leads, preferring to go after what they believe are the hottest and more recent leads. However, this leaves many potential opportunities unexplored and untouched.

Furthermore, people aren't perfect. New hires require training that may take months to come up to speed[2]. Even experienced employees tend to make mistakes when it comes to consistent messaging, persistence, and politeness. Employees also get sick, take vacation days, or leave the company. All of these things factor into your team's overall outreach capacity.

To assuage the people predicament, many businesses integrate lead management tools into their existing workflows. It's a prudent approach, but only if the solutions chosen are appropriate for the tasks at hand.

The Limited Benefits of Sales Acceleration Tools

Automation tools and software exist to take some of the pressure off your teams. For example, sales acceleration tools help Salespeople manage tasks and leads within their capacity by assessing which leads are most deserving of their attention. Benefits include improved efficiency for day-to-day activities including email or social outreach; better workflow management; and integrating several sales communication channels within one cohesive platform. Even so, these tools don't act as a complete solution.

Yes, sales acceleration tools including InsideSales, Outreach or SalesLoft assist employees to execute, analyze, and improve workflows. They are also helpful for automating outreach for leads further down the funnel. However, these tools and solutions do not engage in natural two-way conversations without manual intervention (i.e. they cannot act autonomously). Similarly, sales acceleration solutions have several crucial limitations such as offering only general calls to action and little-to-no personalization capabilities.

Regrettably, these tools often put more of a burden on your already overstretched employees by requiring them to manage, oversee, and trigger these operations. These tools, helpful as they may be to certain tasks, still occupy a certain level of a person's capacity, and the time spent managing these solutions takes away from the time spent touching leads.

That being said, complementing sales acceleration tools with an Intelligent Virtual Assistant for Sales and Marketing drastically improves outcomes without contributing to the capacity challenge.

Managing Sales Capacity with Your Intelligent Virtual Assistant

The Conversica Sales AI Assistant can help your team with lead management without putting more tasks on their to-do list. Your Intelligent Virtual Assistant will handle everything outside of your reps' capacity. This way, you don't have to worry about scaling your team up or down based on the number of MQLs you have. Instead, your Sales team can now focus on leads that are ready to talk to Sales (i.e. Sales-ready leads) and allow your Sales AI Assistant to communicate with the rest. Using a Sales AI Assistant from Conversica, your Marketing teams can focus on nurturing more leads in the top of the funnel and your Sales team can prioritize the leads that are ready to speak with them.

There are many things that you can expect when you make these changes. In general, the outcome when you start using a Sales AI Assistant will include the following:

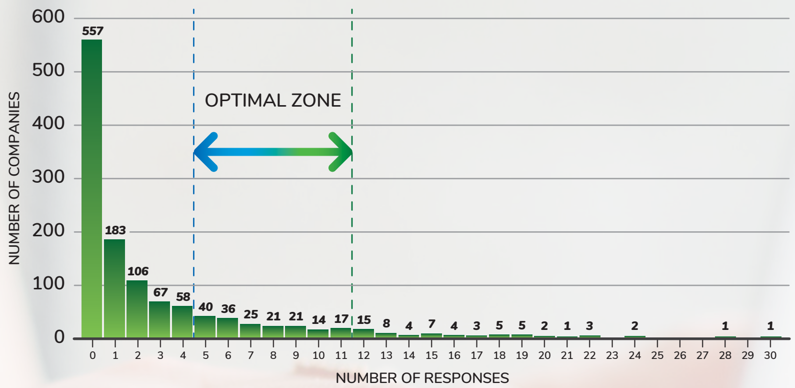
Increased SQL Volume

What happens when an IVA filters your leads to find the people who are truly Sales-ready? Your Salespeople will have better and more productive conversations. The quality of the leads they are speaking with is higher and the number of leads that your BDR or Salesperson marks as Sales Qualified Leads (SQLs) becomes larger. Furthermore, an Intelligent Virtual Assistant touches and qualifies every lead without putting additional pressure on your team.

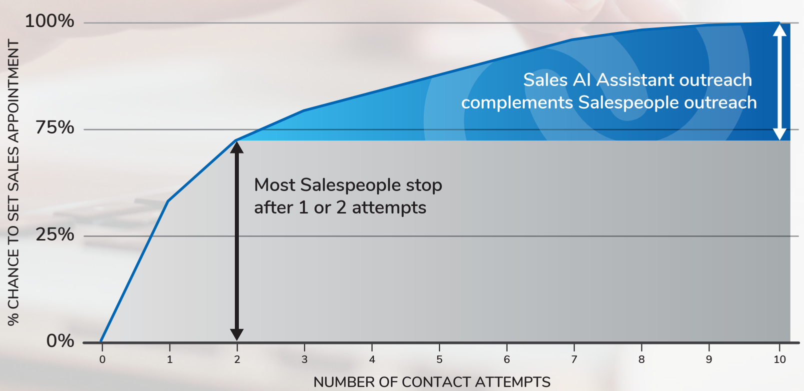
Increased Speed to Touch

The faster your team makes a "touch" with a lead, the more likely they are to continue engaging with you. Likewise, the faster a Sales rep can communicate with the lead, the more likely they are to get a sale. Time to touch matters, because the likelihood of conversion drops significantly during the first 3 minutes after a lead's inquiry.[3] Adopting a Sales AI Assistant allows you to touch every lead instantly.

The importance of being persistent



Augment your Sales team with an Intelligent Virtual Assistant



Increased Number of Touches

The optimal number of touches to instigate a lead to convert is between five and 11. This is far higher than most companies realize[4]. Unfortunately, most Sales reps make significantly fewer touches and give up after just two attempts. Using an Intelligent Virtual Assistant can help reps handle all leads and adhere to their follow-up strategy.

The main advantage here is that a Conversica Sales AI Assistant can help you manage your leads at any stage. Your IVA will engage with leads who need more nurturing, ask leads if they are interested in talking to a Salesperson, and then pass off leads to a member of your Sales team when they're Sales-ready.

Your Sales AI Assistant can also touch leads who are non-Sales ready. These leads are far more prevalent than Sales-ready leads and are generally deprioritized by overstretched employees. Rather than letting these leads fall by the wayside, your Sales AI Assistant engages and nurtures these non-Sales ready leads through your pipeline until they're ready to communicate with a Salesperson. Using an Intelligent Virtual Assistant ensures that leads won't slip through the cracks and frees your reps to focus on Sales-ready leads.

Higher Response Rates by Engaging Cold Leads

Conversica also engages with leads who've gone cold and nurtures them until they are Sales-ready, thus driving higher response rates. These leads are often ignored by busy employees who prefer to engage the hottest and most recent leads. Now Conversica can touch these leads without adding to the capacity challenge experienced by your employees.

Consistent, Persistent and Polite Conversations

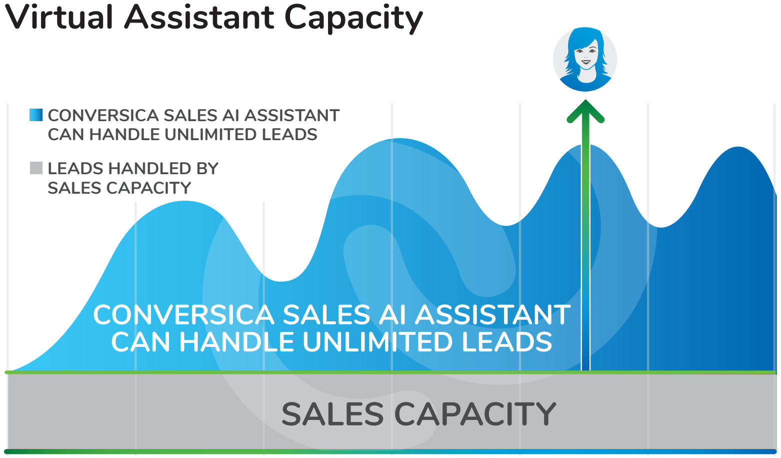
Conversica's Intelligent Virtual Assistants run on Natural Language Understanding (NLU), Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Natural Language Generation (NLG), which means they can understand real conversations and respond to those conversations without the need for oversight. Our IVAs always use consistent messaging, are always polite, and always persistent. In other words, our Sales AI Assistant perform all the necessary actions that get people to respond.

Managing Sales Capacity with Your Intelligent Virtual Assistant (cont'd)

Employing a Sales AI Assistant offers major benefits to your organization. Conversica's Sales AI Assistants augment your workforce in engagement marketing and lead follow-up. Now, you don't have to worry about matching your Sales team's size to incoming lead volume which is highly variable or consistently beyond your ability to match it. When your reps go on vacation or take sick time, no one at your company will be scrambling to continue the conversation.

Sales AI Assistants have the ability to drive intent and understand common messages like out-of-office notifications and requests to reach out at different times. The Intelligent Virtual Assistant then waits until prospects are back in the office or ready to talk and picks the conversation back up automatically. Best of all, these conversations will feel authentic and personalized for your potential buyers.

Unrestricted Intelligent Virtual Assistant Capacity



Conversica Sales AI Assistants can touch every lead at scale without putting pressure on your Sales team.

Additionally, your organization can still make use of tools that push out and manage messages. Conversica Sales AI Assistants maximize the investments you've already made in these tools. AI leverages these tools and allows you to create deeper relationships with your prospects which leads to better results. Our Intelligent Virtual Assistants augment your workforce so that regardless of your lead type, the IVA automatically follows up in a timely and persistent manner. That way, you'll see better outcomes including:

- Increase in quality of touch
- Decrease the time to touch
- Increase in the number of touches

Sales AI Assistants make it easier for your team to do the activities that go into generating sales without putting pressure on your employees. When all these things come together, more leads make it through your pipeline and your business development and Sales team gets back their time to focus on high-value leads. By combining the power of an Intelligent Virtual Assistant with your existing Sales and Marketing team, it becomes much easier to understand and plan for the capacity of your business.

If your organization is struggling with capacity, Intelligent Virtual Assistants are the answer you've been searching for. Intelligent automation will help you balance your usage of engagement marketing and lead outreach with ease. Using an Intelligent Virtual Assistant takes the headache out of determining capacity. Conversica's Sales AI Assistant gives your team more time to focus on the most critical sales conversations, ultimately driving larger SQL volume and increasing your sales pipeline.

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About Conversica

Conversica is a leading provider of Intelligent Virtual Assistants helping organizations attract, acquire and grow customers at scale. A Conversica Intelligent Virtual Assistant is an AI-powered, SaaS-based software application that serves as a virtual team member and autonomously engages contacts, prospects, customers, or partners in human-like, two-way interactions at scale to drive towards the next best action accelerating revenue; whether that's scheduling a sales meeting, gauging interest to buy additional products or services, or politely but persistently collecting overdue payments. Reaching out to over 100 million people on behalf of thousands of companies, Conversica's AI Assistants are built on a proven and patented intelligent automation platform integrating natural language understanding (NLU), decision and policy management, natural language generation (NLG), autonomous action chains and deep learning capabilities that engage prospects over multiple communication channels and in multiple languages. Conversica was founded in 2007 and is headquartered in Foster City in Silicon Valley with additional US offices in Seattle, Bellingham and Kansas City, as well as offices in Chile and the UK. Conversica is a portfolio company of Providence Equity, Kennet Partners and Toba Capital. To learn more visit conversica.com and follow the company on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook.

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