

Definitive Sales Call Statistics

Actual Metrics on Sales Perseverance
Based on Real Research



Introduction

There are hundreds of statistics out there that speak to the value of perseverance in sales and to the shortfalls that exist in current sales practices. Unfortunately, while most of the stats contain the same general message, many of them are completely made up or can't be easily substantiated. This often ends up hurting the credibility of legitimate research and makes it more difficult to sort through published metrics to distinguish between valid and exaggerated claims.

Velocify is a firm believer in research integrity, and through its rigorous research methods, coupled with unrivaled access to data on millions of leads, associated sales activities, and sales outcomes, Velocify is able to provide sales professionals valuable research findings they can trust. In this eBook, Velocify sets the record straight and tackles one of the most referenced sets of sales statistics:

Questionable Sales Statistics

Figure 1



Source: National Sales Executive Association

What Does It All Mean?

And really, what do the stats on Figure 1 even mean? Where did the data come from to generate these statistics? Was there a survey? What types of prospects and companies were included in the study? What was the research methodology?

If almost half of all salespeople NEVER follow up with a prospect, does that mean they only take incoming calls? The first four stats seemingly imply all salespeople fall into one of five categories: those that never follow up with a prospect, those that follow up only once (which isn't called out but can be deduced to be 5% since the other four add up to 95%), only twice, only three times, or more than three times. It's highly doubtful that all salespeople consistently call ALL of their leads the same number of times, whether that's once, twice, or ten times each.

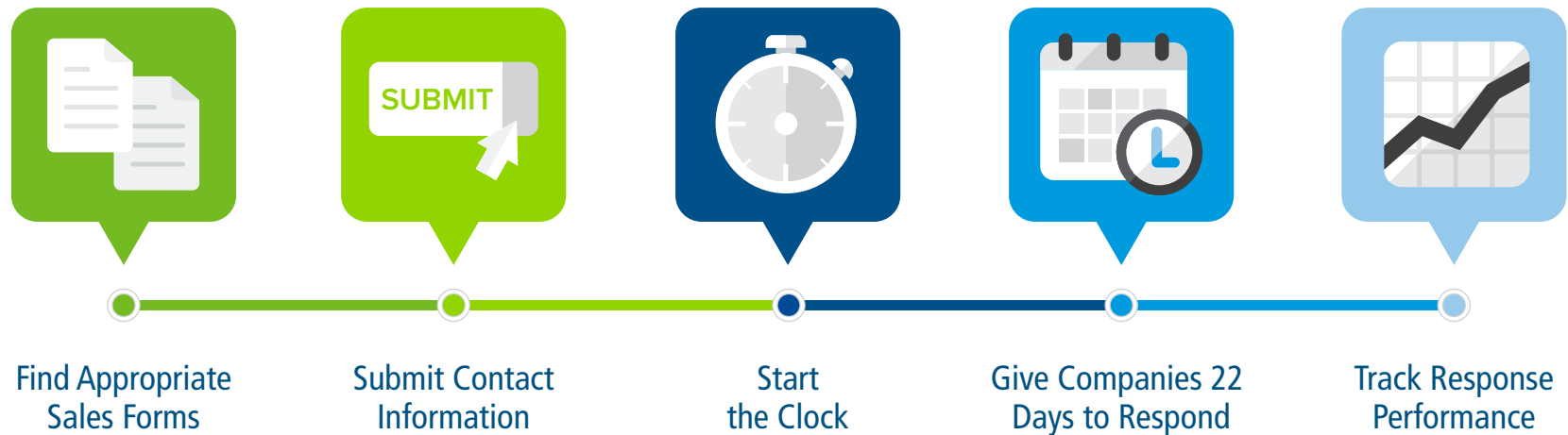
A better question would be how many times each LEAD gets called before a salesperson gives up. That's exactly what Velocify set out to find through numerous research studies.

One of the many problems with frequently quoted statistics is that **they often leave one with more questions than answers.**



Methodology

Research Methodology



To truly understand sales practices, Velocify researchers first found appropriate online lead forms for a variety of different businesses. Only forms where potential customers could express strong interest to purchase but couldn't actually complete a purchase were used in these studies, such as demo or quote requests. Inquiries were submitted during normal business hours, and the clock started ticking as soon as forms were submitted. Companies were given 22 days to respond via phone and email without any response from the prospects, to test the sales teams' level of persistence. The following key performance indicators (KPIs) were tracked:



Initial Contact Attempts and Persistence

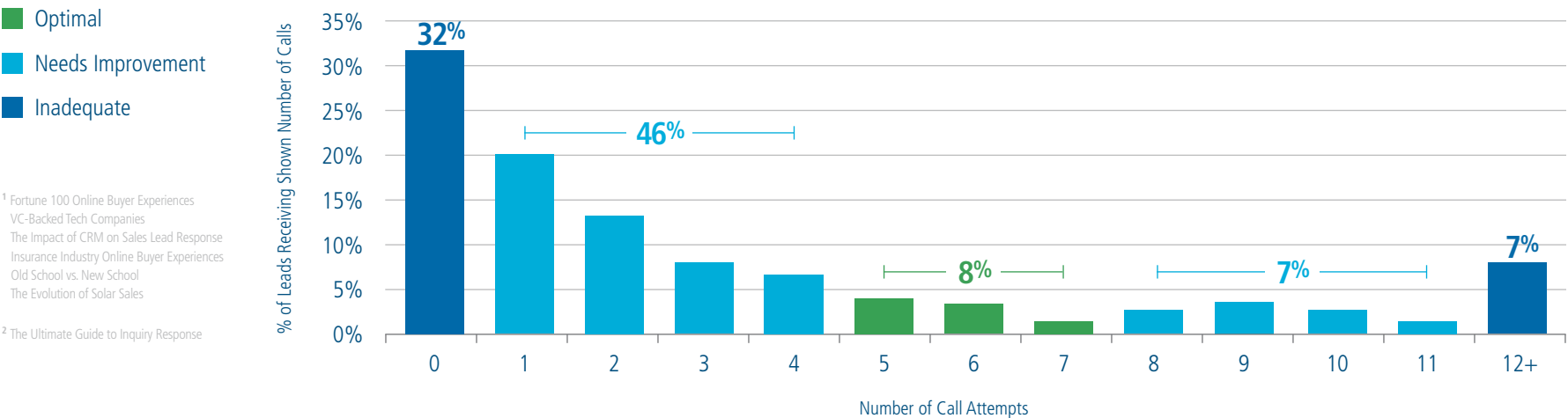
Velocify has conducted thousands of these lead response assessments for hundreds of companies in different industries and business segments, including Fortune 100, technology, mortgage, insurance, for-profit education, and solar companies, to name a few.¹ Although there are some differences in the response practices of different companies in different industries, the one constant is that most sales teams completely neglect a large number of leads and usually give up too soon. The aggregate results across all industries indicate that almost one-third of all leads are never called.

This doesn't mean that one-third of salespeople never follow up with incoming leads. It just means that 32% of leads were not called within the 22 day research tracking window. That a salesperson failed to call one lead doesn't necessarily mean they always fail to call **ALL** leads, or that not calling leads is their common practice. There are some salespeople that call every one of their leads, whereas there are some that call only a small percentage of their leads.

Velocify's extensive research has found that even leads that do receive calls are usually not called enough—46% of them only received between one and four calls in the 22 day research period. On the other hand, a considerable number of leads are also overcalled—7% are called between 8 and 11 times and another 7% are called 12 or more times. Only about 8% of all leads receive the number of calls Velocify considers to be in the optimal range—five to seven calls.²

Actual Call Persistence

Figure 2



¹ Fortune 100 Online Buyer Experiences
VC-Backed Tech Companies
The Impact of CRM on Sales Lead Response
Insurance Industry Online Buyer Experiences
Old School vs. New School
The Evolution of Solar Sales

² The Ultimate Guide to Inquiry Response

Accordingly, the more accurate, up-to-date, and valuable statistics for initial call persistence are the following:

National Sales Executives Association Stats



Velocify Research Stats

Contact Prior to Conversion

The second set of stats from the National Sales Executives Association, shown in Figure 1, appears to relate to the number of contacts, or actual conversations, leading up to a sale. Those metrics are very dependent on the complexity of the sale, product, industry, and purchase readiness of each lead. There are a few industries in which a one-call close is very achievable, while in most others, it is nearly impossible.

Salespeople should be focused on shortening the sales cycle and actually closing a sale. Sometimes that requires a few conversations; other times, that requires many conversations. The number of conversations required should be dictated by the nature of the conversations and the progress being made with each subsequent call.

“What is more relevant and useful to a salesperson is when to stop calling an unresponsive lead and move it to a nurture stage.” - Jorge Jeffery

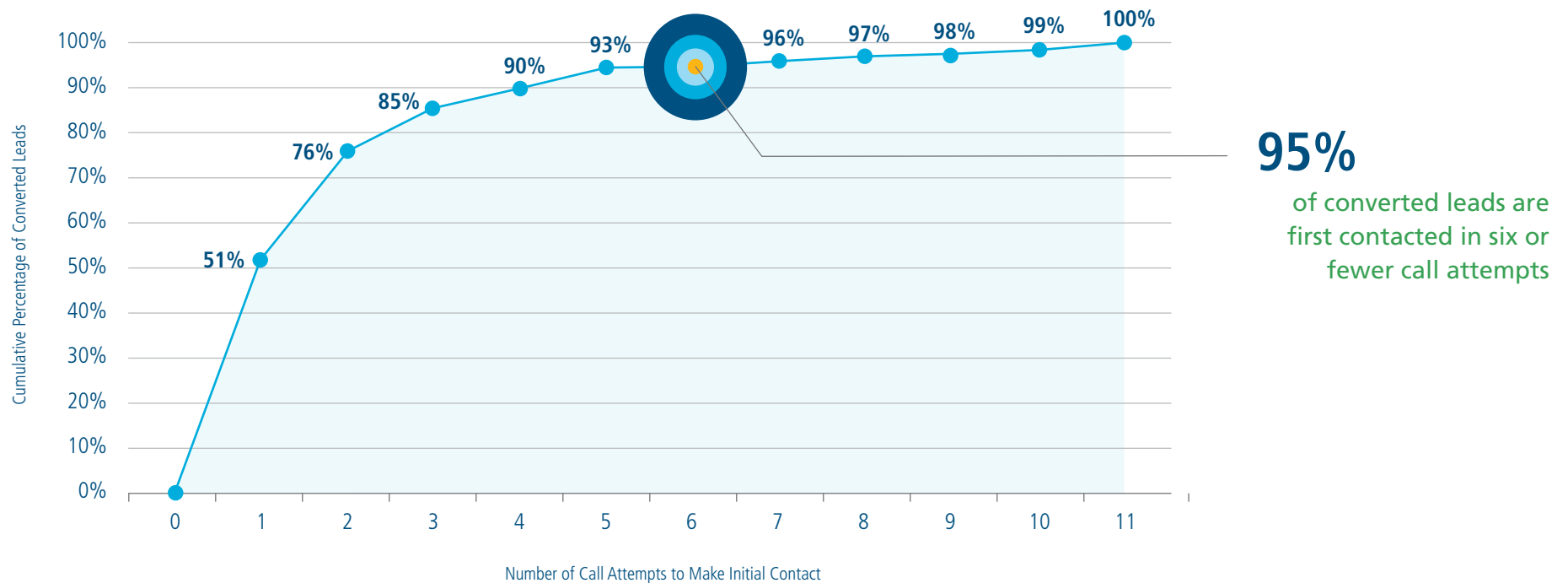
The number of conversations salespeople should or shouldn't have prior to closing a sale should be inconsequential.



Velocify's analysis of millions of leads, from data collected from hundreds of clients, has shown that approximately half of all sales come from leads that were initially contacted on the first call attempt. That doesn't mean that the sale was actually closed on that first call, but that the chances of closing a sale are better the sooner a salesperson is able to make contact.

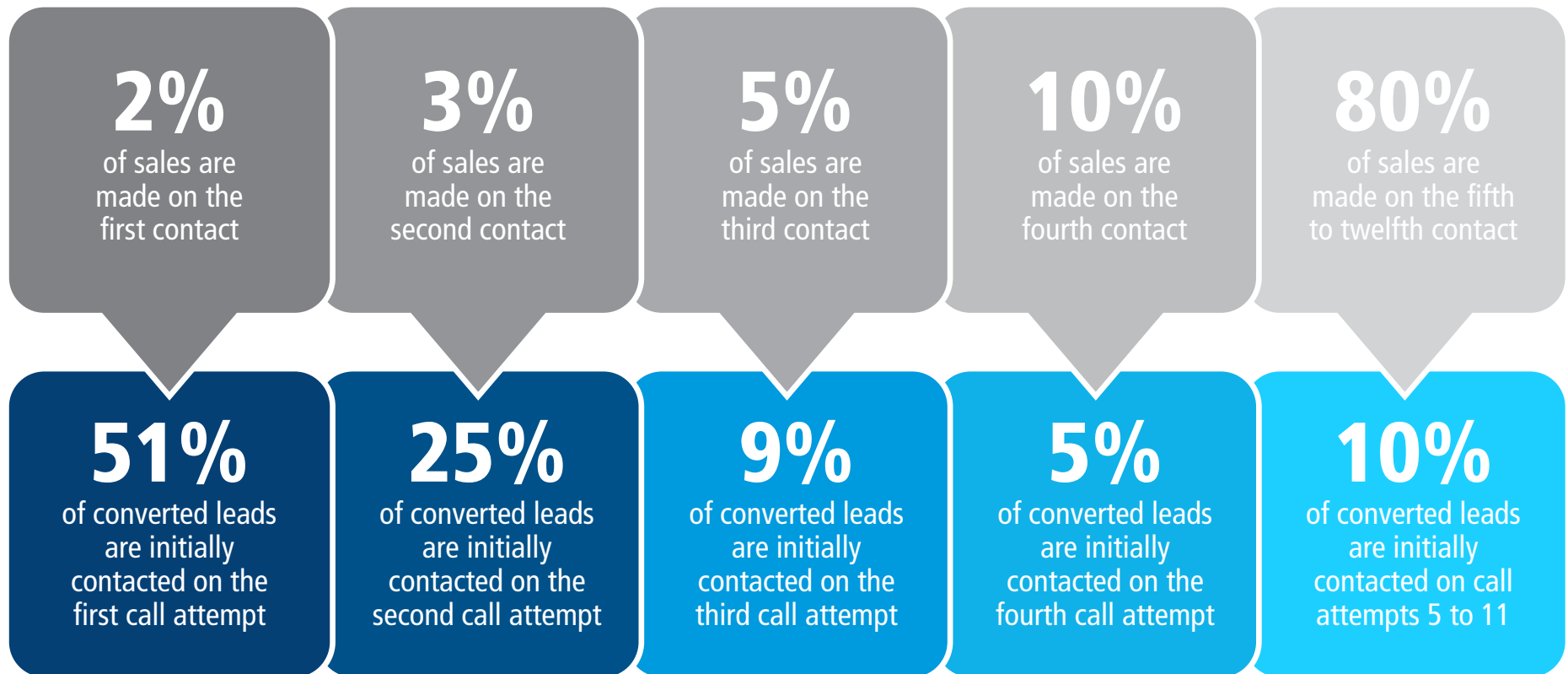
The more attempts it takes to make initial contact, the less likely a lead is to close. The law of diminishing returns is very applicable here, but stopping after one or two failed call attempts would leave a considerable amount of revenue on the table. There comes a point when the cost of the resources required to make an additional attempt outweighs the potential benefit. Velocify's research shows that 95% of all leads that eventually convert are first contacted in six or fewer call attempts. As shown in Figure 3, the increase in sales that could be achieved by attempting seven or eight calls to unresponsive leads, instead of six, is minimal, which is why Velocify recommends a six call strategy to attempt initial contact.

Calls Required for Initial Contact for Converted Leads



Accordingly, the more accurate, up-to-date, and valuable statistics for tying initial contact to conversion are the following:

National Sales Executives Association Stats



Velocify Research Stats



Conclusion

In Summary

Sales metrics and analytics are only valuable if they are from a credible source and if the details behind them are clearly stated and understood. Without these prerequisites, statistics can do more harm than good.

Velocify research confirms that many leads are in fact ignored and that most are under called. This is a problem that warrants immediate attention.

A key to successful phone follow up with inbound leads includes having systems and processes in place that ensure the following:

- **Each and every lead is called**
- **The first call attempt is made as quickly as possible**
- **Persistence through six appropriately timed attempts, if calls are not answered**

Of course, while an effective phone strategy is one of the most important aspects of the sales process, and the one we focus on here, it should not be the only strategy for reaching out to leads. Appropriate use of email, text, voicemail, and social outreach strategies should complement a phone strategy to maximize the likelihood of success. Many other Velocify studies provide additional research on these complementary communication methods. Visit [Velocify's Resources Page](#) for full access to a comprehensive library of sales research topics.





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