Maximizing the impact of outsourced SDRs

Lessons from a CRO's playbook

Introduction: why SDRs matter more than ever

Sales Development Representatives (SDRs) are the first handshake between a company and its future customers.

They create the spark that ignites the pipeline, turning cold outreach into warm conversations.

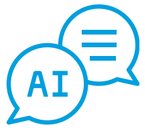
But let's be real—hiring, training, and scaling SDRs in-house isn't easy. That's why more companies are turning to outsourced SDR teams to accelerate sales and drive predictable pipeline growth.

This eBook is packed with insights from industry leaders who've built and optimized SDR teams at some of the most successful tech companies.

We'll cover:

The strategic role of SDRs

What makes a great SDR truly stand out



How AI is changing the SDR game (but not replacing humans!)

How CROs decide whether to outsource vs. build in-house

What a high-performance SDR program looks like

The strategic role of SDRs in sales

What *exactly* does an SDR do?

Think of SDRs as the tip of the spear for your sales team. They don't just send emails and make calls; they identify opportunities, engage prospects, qualify leads, and set the stage for Account Executives (AEs) to close deals.

They are often the first human interaction a prospect has with your company, making them a crucial part of the customer journey.

Where should SDRs sit—Sales or Marketing?

Great question! The truth is, they need to be deeply aligned with both. SDRs should be:

- Territorially aligned with sales teams to ensure seamless handoffs.
- Embedded in marketing's feedback loop to refine messaging and campaigns.
- Informed by real-time market intelligence to help shape go-to-market strategies.

Companies that integrate SDRs across sales and marketing see higher conversion rates and faster pipeline velocity than those that silo them in one department.

What separates the best SDRs from the rest?

Hiring a great SDR is part art, part science.

The most successful SDRs share these three key traits:

1. **Coachability** – They take feedback, adapt, and get better fast.
2. **Grit and resilience** – Rejection is part of the job; the best SDRs don't take it personally.
3. **Curiosity and business acumen** – They ask smart questions, research deeply, and provide real value to prospects.

Fun fact: Companies that focus on grit and coachability in hiring SDRs see a 20% higher retention rate compared to those that prioritize prior experience.

The role of training and enablement

The first 90 days in an SDR role are make-or-break. Companies that provide structured coaching, peer shadowing, and real-time feedback see faster ramp times and better long-term performance. SDRs who feel supported stick around longer—and become top performers.

How AI is shaping the future of SDRs

AI-powered tools are transforming outbound sales, but here's the kicker: AI can assist SDRs, but it can't build relationships. AI helps with:

- Personalized outreach at scale – AI-driven insights help craft better emails.
- Real-time research – SDRs can pull company and industry insights in seconds.
- Trigger event monitoring – AI spots key buying signals faster than humans alone.

Companies that integrate AI tools into their SDR workflows see 35% higher response rates on outbound campaigns. But at the end of the day, buyers want to talk to people, not bots.

AI Won't Replace SDRs— But It's Making Them Better

The in-house vs. outsourced SDR debate

Outsourcing isn't all or nothing

Some companies swear by in-house SDRs, while others go fully outsourced.

The most-effective teams take a hybrid approach, using outsourced SDRs to:

- Ramp up sales in new markets without hiring locally.
- Run short-term campaigns for launches, events, promotions.
- Free up in-house teams to focus on strategic accounts.
- Create a repeatable approach to inbound lead follow-up.

The (hidden) costs of building an SDR team

Many companies assume that keeping SDR operations in-house is more cost-effective than outsourcing—but the numbers tell a different story. A detailed cost comparison shows that outsourcing SDRs can save companies up to $20,000 per rep annually, translating to $200,000 in savings for a 10-person team.

Beyond salary and commissions, hidden costs like hiring, training, management overhead, infrastructure, and turnover quickly add up.

Here are just some of the cost factors to consider when building an SDR team in-house.

Direct costs (monthly per SDR)

- **Salary** – base pay for in-house SDRs
- **Variable compensation** – commissions and bonuses
- **Payroll tax** – employer taxes as a % of salary
- **Benefits** – health, retirement and other perks
- **Licenses and tools** – CRM, dialers, LinkedIn Sales Navigator, etc.

Indirect Costs (monthly and one-time)

- **Management overhead** – cost of SDR managers
- **Infrastructure and facilities** – office space, desks, utilities
- **Hiring and sourcing** – recruiting, interviewing and onboarding SDRs
- **Enablement** – ramp-up time, ongoing coaching, training programs
- **Turnover and replacements** – cost of replacing SDRs who leave

Scaling

- **Hiring and onboarding in new regions** – cost of sourcing, recruiting, and onboarding talent in international markets
- **Language and cultural training** – cost of training SDRs to be fluent and culturally aligned with target markets
- **Regional HR and compliance** – risks associated with different compensation standards, labor laws, benefits and termination policies
- **Time zone management overhead** – managing SDRs around the world requires dedicated staff

The value of SDRs on demand

Key cost differentiators of outsourcing

- **Predictable, all-in cost per SDR** – no surprise overhead expenses
- **No management burden** – eliminates the cost and time spent hiring, training, and coaching
- **Faster ramp time** – experienced SDRs ready to execute immediately
- **Scalability** – easily scale up or down without HR constraints, global complexity, compliance headaches

Beyond the obvious cost savings, outsourced SDRs can provide:

- **Market intelligence** – what prospects are actually saying on calls
- **Persona and vertical expertise** – organizations can pivot, expand, launch new products and services with SDRs who specialize in those areas
- **Data cleansing and validation** – SDRs are trained to keep your CRM clean and accurate
- **Existing prospects** – tap into a large addressable market without having to invest in building out a database

Companies that blend outsourced and in-house SDRs see 40% faster ramp times compared to those who go fully in-house from day one.

What it takes to build a winning SDR program

Data, timing and messaging: The SDR trifecta

The best SDR programs don't just focus on activity—they optimize for relevance and timing.

That means:

- Using trigger events (e.g., funding rounds, leadership changes) to engage prospects at the right moment.
- Leveraging multichannel prospecting (calls, emails, LinkedIn) for maximum engagement.
- Ensuring seamless collaboration between SDRs, AEs, and marketing.

A great success story

How a cybersecurity company doubled pipeline in six months

One fast-growing cybersecurity company struggled with long sales cycles and low outbound conversion rates. By partnering with an outsourced SDR team, they:

- Identified high-intent accounts faster using intent data.
- Used personalized messaging based on industry trends.
- Increased booked meetings by 80% in just six months.

The result? A 2X pipeline increase and faster deal velocity.

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Ready to learn more?

The sales world is changing fast, and SDRs are at the center of it all. Whether you're building an in-house team, outsourcing, or taking a hybrid approach, the key to success is:

1. Hiring for resilience, curiosity, and adaptability.
2. Training your team - and the memoryBlue Academy can help with that!
3. Leveraging AI to enhance, not replace, human connection.
4. Supporting SDRs objectives with tight alignment between them, sales and revenue operations.
5. Aligning marketing support for inbound / outbound SDR efforts.

Want to learn how memoryBlue can help scale your SDR function? Let's talk.

Meet Dean Hickman-Smith, a CRO who has repeatedly transformed sales organizations and delivered results leveraging the outsourced SDR model.

🔗 **Click here to watch this informative webinar**

BONUS

SDR readiness checklist

Thinking about building an SDR team?

Before you take the leap, use this checklist to evaluate whether your business has the internal bandwidth, expertise, and resources to handle SDR operations in-house—or if outsourcing is the better answer.

Many companies find that building and managing SDR teams internally is costly, complex, and slow. The right outsourced SDR partner removes the burden and accelerates pipeline growth.

How to score your readiness for an SDR team

On each page, jot down your score here (there's a place to add it all up at the end)

Your score _____

Each section contains a set of questions designed to assess your readiness to run an SDR team in-house.

Assign points based on how well your company meets the criteria:

- **3 points** – You have a strong foundation in this area and could effectively manage it in-house, if you are prepared to make the investment.
- **2 points** – You have some of the necessary components, but gaps exist that may slow down your success.
- **1 point** – There is a lack of resources, processes, or expertise, making in-house execution difficult.

At the end, total your score to determine whether an outsourced SDR team would be the best solution for you.

1. Sales process maturity

Put down your score

Your score _____

A well-defined sales process ensures SDRs can ramp up quickly. If your process isn't dialed in, your in-house team will struggle, making outsourcing a more efficient solution.

Scoring criteria:

- 3 points – You have a clear, repeatable process with defined ICPs, qualification criteria, and lead handoff procedures.
- 2 points – You have some structure but are missing key elements like qualification criteria or lead routing.
- 1 point – Your sales process is ad hoc and varies by rep.

Considerations:

- Do you have a clear, repeatable sales process that an SDR team can follow?
- Are your ICPs and buyer personas well-defined?
- Have you documented qualification frameworks like BANT or MEDDIC?
- Is there a structured approach for lead prioritization and outreach?

If you don't have these elements in place, training and managing in-house SDRs will be time-consuming. An outsourced SDR team comes with proven processes and playbooks to get started immediately.

2. Messaging and positioning

Put down your score

Your score _____

Strong messaging is crucial for SDR success. Without it, your internal team will struggle to get responses and book meetings.

Scoring criteria:

- 3 points – You have clear messaging, validated through testing, with documented call scripts and templates.
- 2 points – You have general messaging but haven't refined it for SDR outreach.
- 1 point – Messaging is inconsistent or undefined.

Considerations:

- Can you clearly articulate your value proposition and differentiators?
- Do you have messaging frameworks, call scripts, and email templates?
- Have you tested different messaging approaches to see what resonates?
- Do you have customer stories or testimonials to strengthen SDR pitches?

An outsourced SDR provider comes with experience crafting high-converting messaging, reducing the trial-and-error process for your team.

3. Data and technology

Put down your score

Your score _____

Even the best SDRs can't succeed with bad data. Managing, enriching, and maintaining a high-quality prospect database requires dedicated time and technology.

Scoring criteria:

- 3 points – You have clean, enriched data and the right tech stack (CRM, dialers, automation tools).
- 2 points – Your data is mostly accurate, but some tools or processes are missing.
- 1 point – Data is outdated, incomplete, or hard to access.

Considerations:

- Do you have a clean, accurate database of prospects?
- Are you using a CRM that integrates with SDR workflows?
- Do you have an auto-dialer or multi-touch outreach capabilities (calls, emails, LinkedIn)?
- Can SDRs access enrichment tools and intent data to prioritize outreach?

If maintaining high-quality data and tech is a challenge, outsourcing ensures SDRs work with the best tools and data from day one. You get the benefit of the technology without making a big investment.

4. Internal bandwidth and alignment

Put down your score

Your score _____

If you don't have the internal bandwidth to manage and coach SDRs daily, outsourcing can provide the structure and oversight needed.

Scoring criteria:

- 3 points – You have a dedicated SDR manager and strong collaboration with sales and marketing.
- 2 points – There is some alignment, but no dedicated SDR leadership.
- 1 point – SDRs would operate in silos with little oversight.

Considerations:

- Do you have a point of contact to manage SDRs?
- Are your sales and marketing teams aligned on goals?
- Do you have the time and expertise to coach and train SDRs daily?
- Do you have a dedicated team doing sales enablement, with specific focus on the SDR role?
- Is your HR team equipped to handle the high turnover and constant cycle of hiring, training, and replacing SDRs?

If your internal resources are stretched thin, an outsourced SDR partner can provide the dedicated support and structure needed for success.

5. Marketing support

Put down your score

Your score _____

Outbound SDR success is tied to marketing. If your team lacks support, engagement rates will suffer.

Scoring criteria:

- 3 points – Marketing provides content, nurture campaigns, and intent data for SDRs.
- 2 points – Some marketing support exists, but it's inconsistent.
- 1 point – SDRs operate without marketing assistance.

Considerations:

- Does marketing provide SDRs with relevant content?
- Are there nurture campaigns for outbound prospects?
- Can SDRs use marketing insights (e.g., engagement data) to prioritize outreach?

An outsourced SDR team ensures outreach is supported by best-in-class marketing alignment.

6. Lead management and follow-up

Put down your score

Your score _____

If lead handoff is slow or inconsistent, your pipeline will suffer.

Scoring criteria:

- 3 points – AEs follow up quickly with a structured process in place.
- 2 points – Follow-up happens but is inconsistent.
- 1 point – There is no defined follow-up process.

Considerations:

- Do you have a structured process for lead follow-up?
- Are AEs committed to engaging and closing leads?
- Do you track lead progression through the funnel?

Outsourcing ensures leads are managed efficiently and followed up on immediately.

7. Metrics and accountability

Tracking the right KPIs ensures SDR success.

Scoring criteria:

- 3 points – You track and review SDR performance regularly.
- 2 points – Some metrics are tracked, but reporting is inconsistent.
- 1 point – You lack visibility into SDR impact.

Considerations:

- Are you tracking meetings booked, conversion rates, and pipeline contribution?
- Is there a regular reporting cadence?
- Can you test and refine SDR strategies based on data?

An outsourced SDR team provides detailed reporting and optimization insights.

Put down your score

Your score _____

8. Budget and expectations

Put down your score

Your score _____

Building an internal SDR team is expensive. Outsourcing provides flexibility and cost savings. Review the costs involved with building a team in-house and evaluate if you are ready.

Scoring criteria:

- 3 points – You have a clear budget and understanding of costs.
- 2 points – You have some budget but lack clarity or access to more funding for long-term costs.
- 1 point – Budget constraints make in-house hiring unrealistic.

Considerations:

- Is the SDR strategy an experiment? If so, are you ready to make a sizable investment that may not deliver results immediately?
- Do you have a budget for SDR salaries, tools, and management?
- Are you clear on the pricing model for outsourcing?
- Can you afford the ramp time and operational overhead of hiring in-house?

Outsourcing is the best way to scale without budget headaches. *Dial up* your resources (see what we did there?) when you need to and see ROI with every campaign.

9. Expansion and market entry

Put down your score

Your score _____

Expanding into new markets or geographies requires localized expertise, language capabilities, and regulatory compliance. Managing this internally can be complex and costly.

Scoring criteria:

- 3 points – You have experience and resources to expand into new regions successfully.
- 2 points – You have some ability to scale but lack language skills or local expertise.
- 1 point – Entering new markets would be a major challenge due to HR, compliance, or resource gaps.

Considerations:

- Do you have the HR infrastructure to hire SDRs in different geographies?
- Can your team support multi-language outreach?
- Are you equipped to navigate legal and compliance requirements for new markets?
- Do you have experience successfully expanding into new regions?

If scaling into new markets seems overwhelming, an outsourced SDR provider can handle localization, compliance, and language barriers while rapidly deploying teams in new regions.

10. Role flexibility

Put down your score

Your score _____

SDRs can play multiple roles beyond outbound prospecting, including inbound qualification, event follow-up, and lead nurturing. Managing this in-house requires flexibility and cross-functional training.

Scoring criteria:

- 3 points – Your team can seamlessly shift SDR roles between inbound, outbound, events, and nurturing.
- 2 points – You have some flexibility but struggle to adapt quickly.
- 1 point – SDRs are rigidly structured, making multi-role execution difficult.

Considerations:

- Can your SDRs pivot between outbound, inbound, and event follow-up?
- Do you have structured processes for each SDR function?
- Can you scale or shift SDR focus based on business needs?
- Are SDRs aligned with marketing campaigns for event-driven outreach?

If managing multiple SDR functions in-house feels overwhelming, outsourcing allows you to deploy specialized teams for each function with greater agility.

Assessment	Your score
1. Sales process maturity	
2. Messaging and positioning	
3. Data and technology	
4. Internal bandwidth and alignment	
5. Marketing support	
6. Lead management and follow-up	
7. Metrics and accountability	
8. Budget and expectations	
9. Expansion and market entry	
10. Role flexibility	
Total	

Scoring your results

27-36 points: You have the internal infrastructure to support SDRs, but outsourcing may still provide better efficiency and scale with a far smaller investment.

18-26 points: You have gaps that could slow down an internal SDR team. Outsourcing would save time and resources.

17 or fewer points: Running SDRs in-house will be a major challenge. Outsourcing is the best way to scale without the headaches.

Got gaps? No worries—memoryBlue can help you fill them fast.

🔗 **Click here to get a meeting scheduled.**

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