

## 12 Best BDC Practices

As in any department, there are best practices that can be implemented in a business development center (BDC) to help ensure success. Over the years, I've developed a long list of best BDC practices and here are 12 from which every BDC can benefit:

1. Daily Team Meetings – Start each day with a team meeting to monitor all goals, update everybody's average production recap report and warm up prior to going live on the phones. Also have one-on-one meetings between business development representatives (BDRs) and team leaders (TLs) or business development managers (BDMs) to track production goals, and choose one skill for each BDR to practice and sharpen throughout the day.
2. Circle the Wagons – At least one BDM or team leader should be “circling the wagons” at all times. Designate a timeframe for every BDM and/or TL to be up and walking around the office while BDRs are on the phones. BDMs and TLs should be ready to load lips or take a turnover during this “circling” time. Similar to the TO policy on the sales floor, if a phone conversation between a BDR and a customer is leading to an ineffective and unproductive call, turn it over to a manager or team leader.
3. Sales Training and Product Knowledge – To ensure your BDRs have effective communication and persuasion skills, every BDR should have both sales training and product knowledge. It's also imperative for BDRs to believe in what they are selling. BDCs should be kept up to date on all the dealership's marketing campaigns so BDRs can answer customer questions during the call. Sell the appointment, and then sell the vehicle. Selling skills and persuasive communication skills are far more important than scripts. Sales training is imperative to converting ANY type of lead or call into an appointment. (Never mind follow up and B-Back appointments)
4. Assumptive Questioning – Typically, you shouldn't ask yes/no questions when talking to a customer. For example, instead of asking, “Can you come in tonight?” ask an assumptive question like, “Is this afternoon or evening best for you?” Then you can lead into the next best practice: setting all appointments east and west of the hour while “checking your appointment calendar”. Sell the validity of the appointment.
5. East/West Appointment Setting – When setting an appointment, always make sure appointments begin 15 minutes east or west (after or before) of the hour (i.e. at 1:45 or 2:15). It is psychologically proven that people are more likely to remember 1:45 or 2:15 appointments than those set on the hour or half-hour (i.e. at 2:00 or 2:30). Also, let customers know they're setting an appointment with a manager in the dealership. It helps sell the appointment as a significant and valuable appointment. The result is that customers take it more seriously and hold themselves more accountable.
6. Same-Day Appointments – While setting an appointment with a customer on the same day a BDR calls them is sometimes not feasible, always try to set a same-day appointment. When it is impossible, the second best is a next-day appointment. After every appointment is set, it should be confirmed with another phone call that results in a conversation. Confirm appointments for next morning before leaving each night. Leaving a message does not count as a confirmation call, just an attempt. Continue to show your customer how important their visit is and the urgency to act quickly so as not to miss this special “window of opportunity”.

7. Maximize Tools – Regardless of *which* technological tools you have at your disposal in your BDC, use them to their fullest potential. You should be able to run various ROI reports, which should be given on a regular basis to whomever the BDC is held accountable (dealer principal, general manager, etc.).

8. Constantly Improve and Protect the Integrity of your Database – Every time you make contact with someone always get a second phone number. Make note of any changes in the customer's information, actively seek referrals and ad source/lead source for every customer. This will help management track the effectiveness of advertising campaigns and lead providers. Not only does maintaining a database add worth to the BDC, it also helps generate sales through referrals and lets the dealer know where his/her money is best being spent. They can then know where the majority of traction is coming from and where they can refocus marketing dollars for a better return.

9. Mirrors by Monitors – Every work station should have a mirror in front of it, so BDRs can watch their own body language when speaking to customers. Body language is extremely important during a phone call because it goes hand-in-hand with tonality. It's impossible to sound as if you're smiling when you're frowning. Having the appropriate tonality with each customer can also help build commonality. With one customer, I may need to speed up or slow down. With another I may need to quiet down a little bit or relax my speech in order to instantly develop commonality. When people speak alike, they have something in common. Remember, commonality equals rapport and rapport is what gets people to show up for appointments.

10. Boomerang Process – Also known as pacing and leading, the boomerang process works similar to a physical boomerang. It goes out and comes back and you're able to lead throughout the conversation. Whenever an objection or obstacle presents itself on a phone call, a BDC needs to have a staff filled with skilled people capable of validating what the person is saying and pacing them. Pacing means to align and agree with them. The key factor that separates the fake and the scripted is telling them why you understand and agree with them.

11. Set Scheduling – All points of contact (appointment-setting calls, follow-up calls, e-mails, leaving voicemail messages, etc.) should be scheduled. Also, BDC employees should keep their own notebooks and trackers so they always know how they're performing and have their own personal records of everything. (This is excellent for personal accountability, cross referencing with their BDM and as a back up to the internet.)

12. Contests and Rewards – Always have contests and rewards to motivate your BDC employees to perform at and above benchmark level. One contest I use is called "Take Ben Home." I'll put up a \$100 bill on the board and offer to let the BDR or TL, with the most shows over an established standard for the day or weekend, take Ben home. They really do get motivated for that extra \$100. Dinners and other rewards are very smart investments to make in your top producers.

While there may be many more BDC best practices, this is a solid list which has proven to help BDCs generate results. If some of these aren't in place in your BDC, implement and monitor them to see if productivity and/or ROI increase. For more best practices or to clarify any areas of the 12 above, call me toll free: (866) 532-2827 or visit our BDC and seminar pages on [www.NewVisionSales.com](http://www.NewVisionSales.com) or to read more BDC articles from ADM, visit our Articles page. As always, have a great month and thank you for all the feedback on last month's article!