



Sales Development Case Study

PREPARED BY CIENCE TECHNOLOGIES, INC





How CIENCE Helped Learning Ally Build Its Clientele

About Learning Ally

Learning Ally is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that aims at increasing literacy rates across the U.S. It helps struggling readers and learners at all grade levels keep pace with the class by offering audiobooks for students.

The Learning Ally Audiobook Solution is a multi-sensory reading accommodation that levels the playing field for students who struggle to read due to a reading deficit or learning difference, providing them the opportunity to achieve in school and life.

The uniqueness of Learning Ally is that they offer the only human-narrated solution with the largest library of over 80,000 culturally relevant books and textbooks aligned to the curriculum. Their books are read by trained actors and voice artists, and their textbooks are recorded by content experts.



Candice Long

Marketing Director

Industry

Non-profit Organizations

Website

learningally.org

This way, students have a true model of fluency and can hear the prosody of the language and writing as it was intended to be read by the author.

At the moment, Learning Ally works with 1,600 schools across the U.S. The company is currently looking for new ways of reaching more schools so it can help more kids read faster and learn better.

The Story of Learning Ally

Before partnering with CIENCE, Learning Ally had been outsourcing its outbound efforts and was planning to bring a team in-house. However, the company found it difficult to expand quickly and find sales development representatives (SDRs) with the right level of expertise to achieve its goals.

Inspired by its data-driven approach, Learning Ally looked into a partnership with CIENCE. It was a pretty extensive two-month initial sales journey involving both teams working diligently to create a new strategy for outreach.

To scale their business effectively, Learning Ally started with three CIENCE teams to focus on different geographical regions and writing different playbooks for each target market.

Challenges & Scope

As an NGO in school education, Learning Ally had its specific challenges. It was harder to get new clients because of the lack of brand awareness and limited access to the most up-to-date data about decision-makers at the schools. CIENCE's data-driven strategic approach became an optimal solution to tackle these challenges.

Challenges

Learning Ally struggled to connect with prospects at the district level, such as superintendents and principals, in K-12 schools nationwide. Being a non-profit organization, they were often limited in their resources to do marketing on their own to reach their target audience.



Besides that, Learning Ally had some trouble with the primary elements of outbound, such as open rates and reply rates. In such institutions, it is not always clear how to reach the decision-makers. Learning Ally found it difficult to reach the superintendents or even vice superintendents directly, which prevented them from setting appointments with potential clients.

Need

Learning Ally needed to raise brand awareness and extend its bandwidth in reaching these clients. It was looking for integrated marketing research and outbound strategy to increase the number of high-quality leads and set more appointments.

Opportunity

CIENCE offered Learning Ally exceptional data and analytic capabilities. They could collect data in a much more systematic way, gaining more insight and intelligence on micro-targeting within districts, regions, and states.



Why CIENCE?

CIENCE's experience in the education market allowed Learning Ally to successfully build the right outbound strategy. CIENCE knew precisely who to target, reaching out to the principals, assistant principals, and the school-level personnel who were the heavy influencers in the decision-making process.

The campaign and messaging that CIENCE was able to craft for Learning Ally were relatively new and different from what has been done internally. Learning Ally saw the strategic data points that CIENCE could leverage to make the outreach relevant and resonate with its target audience.

Contact information for K-12 schools was hard to find, especially in private schools. While public schools follow the requirements that staff is listed publicly, private schools usually do not—but CIENCE was able to obtain the most up-to-date data for both. “They were blown away by our data and what we captured in our sample. Our team did a phenomenal job with the data set,” says Chris Bowles, sales executive in CIENCE.

Results

CIENCE's teams used various channels: phone, email, LinkedIn, landing page, and programmatic ads. During the first four months, CIENCE was able to secure more than 60 sales appointments, approximately 17 appointments per month.

The call channel performed exceptionally well, securing two-thirds of all appointments. The team found that in the hectic environment of K–12 schools, the staff pick up their phones more often than check their emails. In their call scripts, CIENCE's team used a combination of QVC and best contact methodologies to achieve optimal results:

QVC (question, value, call-to-action)

This straightforward approach guides the prospect on a journey from a starting point (the question) to their destination (the value provided), with a specific call-to-action in the span of just a few sentences. This cut-to-the-chase approach worked particularly well for Learning Ally's clientele as school principals appreciate brevity to save valuable time.

Best contact and referral methodologies

These techniques helped CIENCE to solve one of the main Learning Ally's struggles—finding the right person to talk to within the school. Getting the contacts of the school personnel is a difficult task, but even then it usually remains unclear who this decision-maker is. By using the best contact and referral scripts, CIENCE managed to reach the decision-makers quickly.

Partnership Success

Learning Ally appreciated CIENCE's data-driven scientific approach to marketing and great outbound results. For CIENCE, it was also important to provide Learning Ally with viable insights and a solid strategy that could work on a larger scale.

"We're impressed with the technologies and methods they use to deliver their work—they definitely supersede our internal capabilities," says Candice Long, marketing director at Learning Ally. This is why, before switching back to in-house marketing, Learning Ally decided to extend their partnership with CIENCE for another year.

CIENCE's team was pleasantly surprised by the willingness of principals and assistant principals to engage with Learning Ally, who recognized the value of their product to address improve learning and reading skills at all grade levels.

Working with this non-profit organization became an incredible opportunity for CIENCE. "It's a real pleasure to work for a company that is doing good in the world," shared Dave Phillips, campaign strategist at CIENCE. "We utterly enjoyed this partnership because it was beyond developing in the business sense and growing efficiencies. Learning Ally is actually helping kids to read."



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Key Takeaways

- CIENCE has expertise in selling in the educational sector, skilled at the subtle art of communicating with people in education, which is very different from a business-oriented environment.
- Access to data and analytics is hugely important. Having accurate data is essential, but knowing what to do with that data is even more crucial for success.
- Outsourcing outbound campaigns is a great choice for companies looking for efficient ways to create, implement, and perfect their outreach strategies.



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