



Ebook

Why Leads Die Between Marketing and Sales (And How To Fix This)

The "Fancy Strategy" Trap and the Fake Pipeline

In B2B marketing, generating leads is rarely the real problem.

The bigger problem is what happens next.

A campaign launches and marketing reports a healthy flow of MQLs.

Then sales starts working the list—and that is where things often fall apart.

Some leads are not decision-makers; others have no meaningful buying intent. On paper, it looks like pipeline. In reality, it is just noise.

If you work in B2B technology, this pattern is probably familiar. You invest in demand generation to accelerate growth, but instead of qualified pipeline, you get volume without traction.

That is an execution gap. Further research into this "fake pipeline" phenomenon reveals why the gap exists:

Critical B2B Revenue Gap



Inadequate Qualification

67%

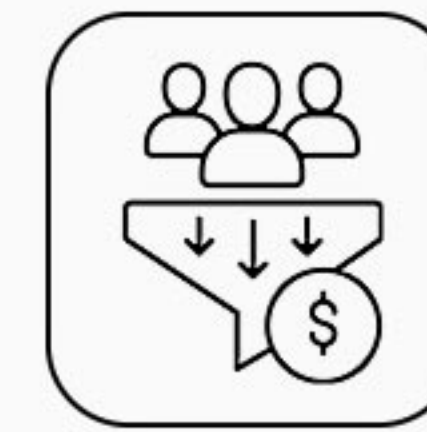
of lost sales result from rep chasing volume over ideal profile



Premature Handoff

61%

of sales handoffs are too soon (Only 21% of the leads are actually SQLs)



The MQL/SQL Leak

85%

the vast majority of Marketing Qualified Leads (MQLs) do not convert into Sales Qualified Leads (SQLs)

Many vendors are still being sold by marketing agencies on polished or fancy strategies that sound impressive in a pitch deck but break down in execution. The promise is scale, but once the campaign is live, the cracks show.

The targeting is too broad, the outreach is too generic, and the people reached are not the right buyers.

When "more leads" creates less confidence, it creates a dangerous illusion of progress:

- Marketing sees lead volume.
- Sales sees poor fit.
- Leadership sees a forecast that feels less and less believable.

This is how fake pipeline gets created. And fake pipeline is expensive. It wastes budget, weakens trust between marketing and sales, and makes revenue planning harder because nobody is fully confident in what the numbers actually mean.

The MQL-to-SQL Drop-off

Even when lead quality is acceptable, many companies still struggle at the next stage: follow-up.

This is where the MQL-to-SQL drop-off becomes painful.

Marketing may do its job and generate interest. But internal sales teams are often stretched thin. They are managing multiple priorities, working across regions, and operating with limited bandwidth. As a result:

follow-up is delayed, inconsistent, or missed entirely.

Now add channel partners to the picture.

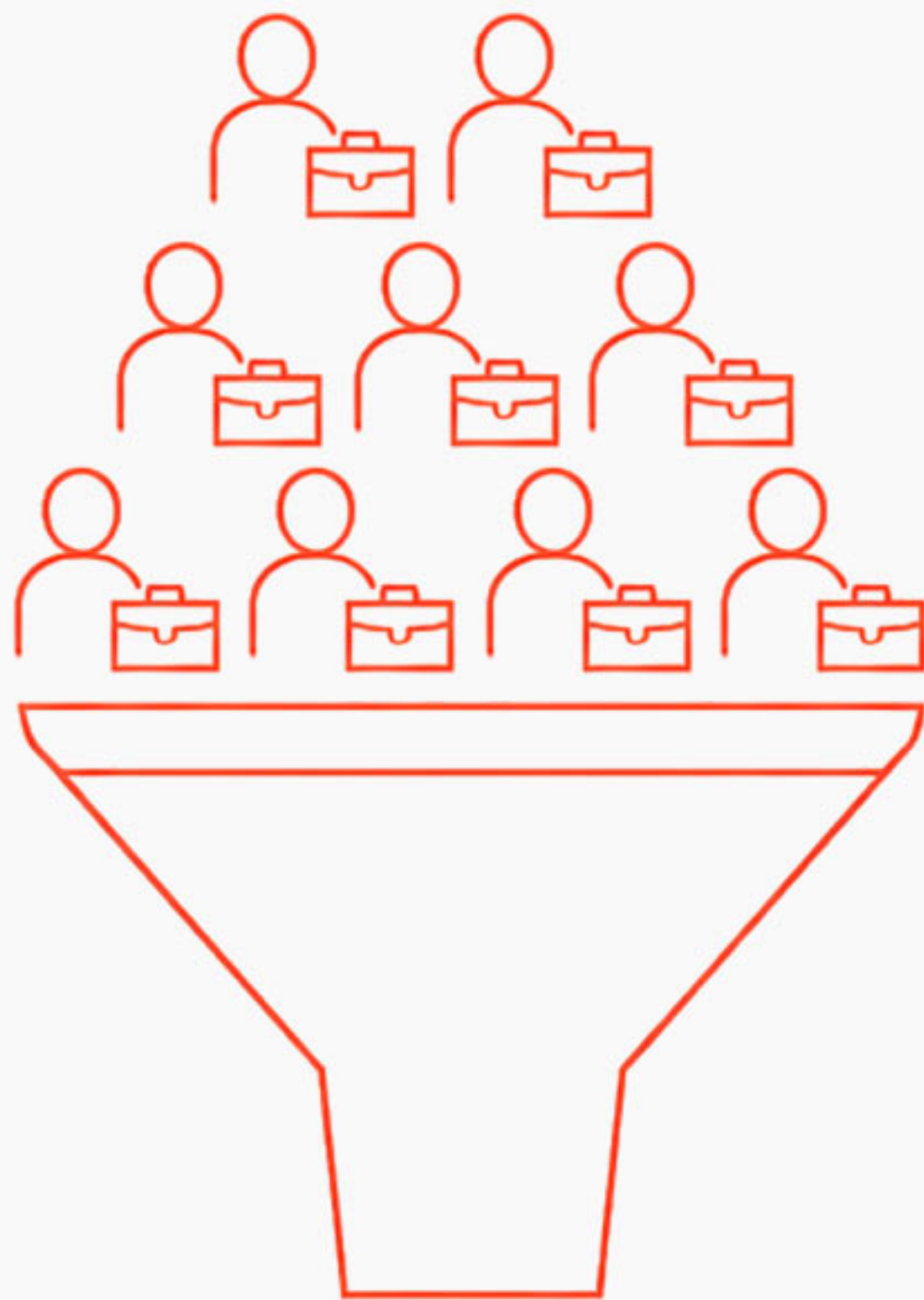
The problem usually gets worse.

Partners may receive Market Development Funds and campaign support, but that does not automatically mean they have the time, structure, or motivation to work every lead properly.

Many have been disappointed by poor lead quality before, so they approach new campaigns cautiously. Some deprioritize follow-up. Some fail to update lead status. Some simply move on to other priorities.

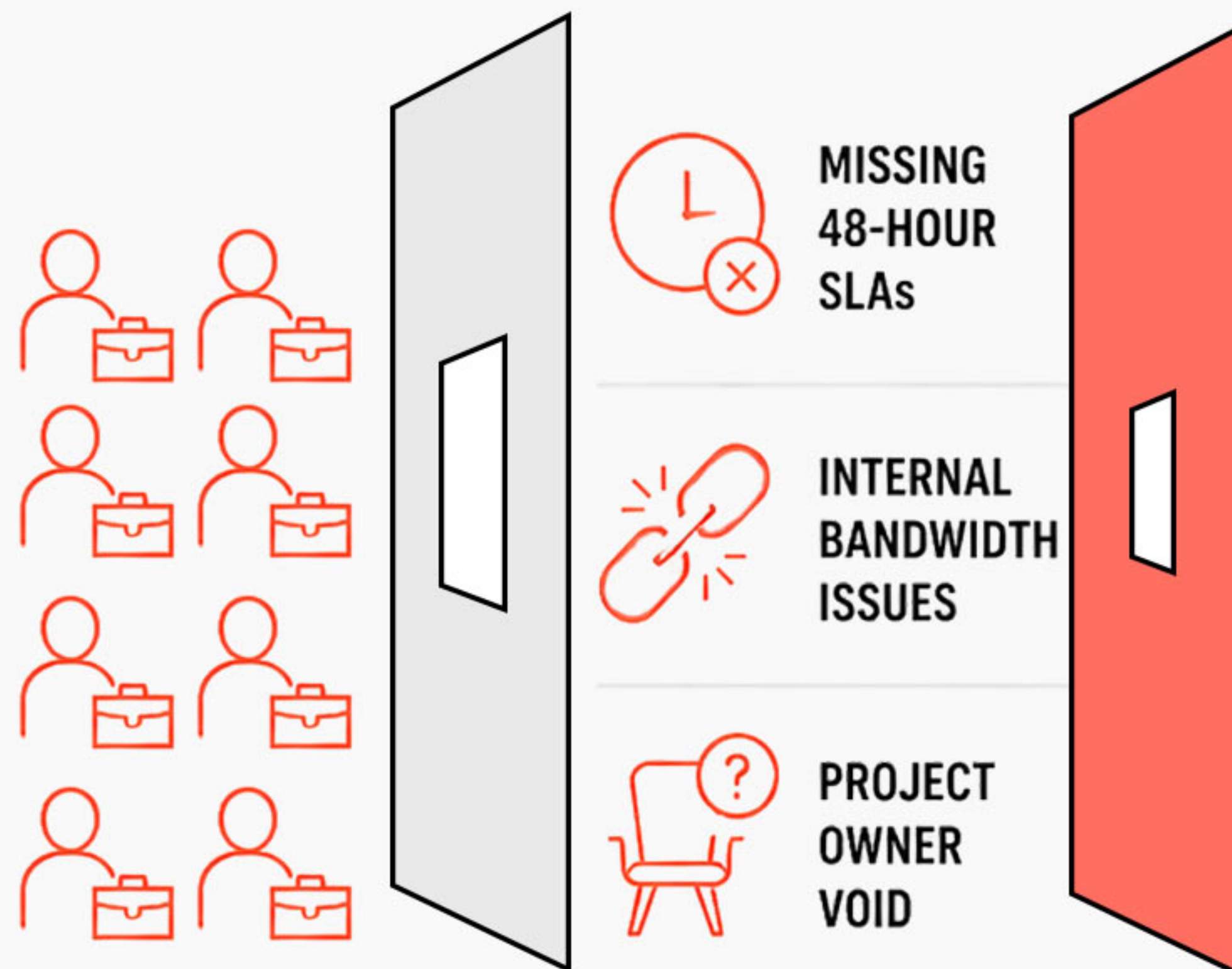
The Follow-Up Failure

HIGH VOLUME OF LEADS



Too many leads enter the funnel without proper qualification.

INTERNAL ROADBLOCKS



Process gaps and bottlenecks slow things down and leads go cold.

FEW LEADS FOLLOWED-UP



Valuable opportunities are lost when leads aren't followed-up.

From the vendor side, it becomes very difficult to answer a basic question:

What is actually happening with the leads we paid to generate? If that question cannot be answered clearly, confidence drops fast.

Zero Pipeline Visibility

At this point, the problem is no longer just operational. It becomes political inside the business.

- Marketing leaders need to report ROI.
- Sales leaders need confidence in pipeline.
- Regional teams need proof that partner programs are working.

But if partners are not updating CRM records, and if sales follow-up is inconsistent, dashboards stop reflecting reality.

That creates a painful mismatch.

- Budget has been spent.
- Activity has happened.
- But the system shows little or no pipeline movement.

For a marketing or sales decision maker, this is one of the most frustrating positions to be in.

You know work is happening somewhere, but you cannot prove impact to defend the investment.

And in B2B tech, where targets are high and scrutiny is constant, lack of visibility is more than an inconvenience.

It becomes a credibility risk.

The Integrated Engine

Marketing & Sales ROI requires more than lead generation.

It requires a connected commercial engine.

That means marketing, inside sales, partner enablement, and CRM visibility cannot operate as separate layers. They need to work as one system.

This is where a highly specialized and experienced Sales and Marketing agency like Onboard can help.

For more than 25 years, we helped B2B technology companies turn marketing activity into real sales progress by connecting lead generation, follow-up, partner coordination, and data visibility.

We do not promise flashy growth.

We focus on strategic operation and execution.

We would rather set realistic expectations and outperform them than sell a pipeline story that never converts.

From vanity metrics to verified pipeline:

Onboard's solutions are built on processes through hundreds of successful B2B technology programs. We solve the Execution Gap by focusing on these key solutions:

1. Integrated marketing and inside sales

If your internal teams or partners do not have the bandwidth to work leads consistently, the process breaks.

While 91% of B2B marketers prioritize lead gen, a staggering 80% of leads never convert to customers due to poor follow-up and lack of nurturing.

We solve that by combining digital marketing, telemarketing support, inside sales, and end-to-end lead management. That means leads are not just generated. They are handled.

And when needed, we reconnect directly with SQLs, end users, or system integrators to confirm that momentum is still active and nurturing is progressing.

To get a comprehensive understanding of how this works, explore our demand generation services [Demand Generation](#)

2. Clean data, better decisions

Inconsistent and fragmented records are often no one's responsibility, but they are everyone's problem.

76% of organizations struggle with fragmented CRM records, leaving a massive opportunity for those who prioritize data health to outpace the competition.

Our data services support CRM consultancy, data maintenance, migration, cleansing, and reporting across platforms such as Salesforce, Zoho, and HubSpot. The goal is simple: make sure the commercial reality is visible, trackable, and useful.

Because better visibility does not just improve reporting.

It improves decision-making. When a CRM is properly maintained and implemented, the ROI can exceed 245%

3. Local execution for channel growth

Partner marketing fails when communication feels generic.

The reality is that partners often lose focus or lack motivation—not because they don't want to sell, but because they often don't know how to navigate complex vendor systems or they feel unsupported in their own language.

90% of partners cite "human-to-human" trust-building (such as local events or native-language support) as the #1 factor for marketing impact.

We help vendors work more effectively with distributors by engaging locally, supporting partner communication, and helping teams use lead reporting systems properly. That includes native-language support in markets where relationship-building and clarity make a measurable difference. Ineffective communication is the #1 barrier to growth for 41% of organizations.

The result is not just better coordination.

It is stronger partner engagement.

4. The pivot advantage: Flexibility when campaigns stall

Not every campaign runs smoothly.

Sometimes a partner becomes unresponsive. Sometimes data cannot be shared.
Sometimes a market response is slower than expected.

When that happens, rigid programs lose momentum quickly.

Rigid B2B programs are a primary reason why 80% of campaigns stay below expectations. We utilize an agile execution model to bypass the "quarter-behind" trap—where non-flexible teams are 23% slower to update plans in response to market shifts.

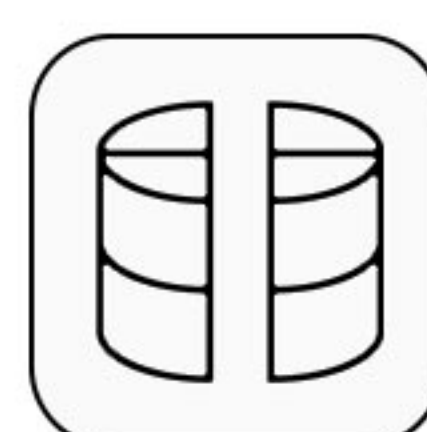
We utilize an agile execution model to adjust in real-time. This ensures your investment is protected and redirected away from ineffective channels the moment they stall.

80%



of leads never convert due to poor follow-up and lack of nurturing

76%



of companies struggle with fragmented CRM data; losing competitive edge

245%



ROI increase can be achieved if the CRM is properly maintained

90%



of partners cite "human-to-human" trust-building as #1 marketing impact factor

41%



of organizations cite ineffective communication as their #1 growth barrier

80%



of campaigns fail to meet expectations because of rigid programs

Results Speak for Themselves

Most agencies are great at talking about lead generation, but few can actually TRANSFORM a "lead" INTO a "sale."

Execution is the differentiator. Companies aren't looking for another fancy strategy or a high volume of unverified leads; they are buying a process that works. Real execution means turning MDF spend and partner activity into trackable pipeline movement—the kind of results that give leadership total confidence in their marketing ROI.

If your team is tired of funding campaigns that create noise instead of pipeline, Onboard can help you build a model that is easier to trust, easier to manage, and much more likely to convert.

Because in the end, leads are only valuable when someone actually moves them forward.



70%

pipeline growth - Channel Concierge Program with Amazon Web Services (AWS)

[Read Case Study](#)

2x

faster sales cycle- SolutionsPT (AVEVA Select UK & Ireland)

[Read Case Study](#)

156%

of target leads - creating €3.4M in pipeline for Europe's #1 industrial SaaS company

[Read Case Study](#)[Contact Us](#)