Outbound Marketing: Key Channels for SaaS

Now that we've explored the fundamentals of inbound marketing, we shift our attention to the second core component of SaaS growth: **outbound marketing**.

Outbound marketing is about **proactive outreach where the company initiates contact with potential customers**, rather than waiting for them to discover the product organically. This contrasts with inbound marketing, which draws in prospects through content, SEO, and engagement over time. While inbound strategies are typically more subtle and focused on nurturing long-term interest, outbound tactics aim to deliver the message directly**, often at greater speed and scale.**

So, **outbound casts the net outward**, reaching people who may not be actively searching for your solution but could still be a strong fit. This makes it particularly valuable for targeting **high-value accounts, niche markets, or prospects who are difficult to reach through organic means**. It can be a powerful lever for early growth or expansion when inbound alone isn't enough.

To understand how outbound marketing works in practice, let's explore the most important **channels SaaS companies use to reach prospects**.

- **Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising:**

First, we have Pay-Per-Click Advertising. In these online ads, you pay per click or impression. Examples could be Google Search ads or LinkedIn sponsored posts. This is a classic outbound tactic because **you are pushing your message to people who may not know you**. PPC can quickly drive traffic and leads by targeting **specific keywords or audience demographics** relevant to your product.

The value is speed and scale: you can get in front of thousands of potential buyers almost immediately. PPC spend is huge in the B2B market. Global PPC advertising spend was around **$190 billion in 2024.**
[growthscribe.com](#)

PPC is highly measurable, though costs per click in competitive niches can be high - often several dollars or more per 1 click.
[tripledart.com](#)

Still, when executed well, these ads help SaaS firms generate awareness and feed the sales funnel quickly. This is often a key outbound strategy chosen by SaaS firms during their early go-to-market phase.

- **Cold Outreach (Email and Calls):**

The next key outbound channel is direct one-to-one outreach: **cold emailing** and **cold calling**. In this channel, **you reach out to prospects who haven't interacted with your company before**.

Email is the most scalable: a cold email campaign can be personalized at moderate scale using automation tools. However, response rates for truly "cold" emails are modest – a recent large study found an average cold email response rate of only about **5.1%**.

Sending at least two emails in a sequence raised reply rates to ~6.9%, and targeting fewer than 100 contacts at a time achieved the highest reply rates.
belkins.io

So, short tailored emails perform better – messages under 100 characters had the highest reply rates.
belkins.io

Next, there's **cold calling which is more resource-intensive** but can be powerful for connecting with busy executives. Surprisingly, data shows cold calls are still quite effective in B2B. Study from 2025 found that **51% of B2B leads came from cold calling.**
cognism.com

And, about **82% of buyers have accepted meetings at least occasionally with salespeople who reached out cold**.

cognism.com

For instance, HR platform **Trinet** experienced rapid growth in its early years. They scaled from $0 to over $70 million in Annual Recurring Revenue between 2013 and 2016.

This growth was largely attributed to a robust outbound sales approach. The company built a substantial sales team, expanding to over 200 Sales Development Representatives and Account Executives. This team focused on high-volume outreach, including cold calls and emails, targeting small businesses to promote their HR platform.

However, the negative side can be that many calls go unanswered. In general, roughly only 32% of prospects will pick up a call from an unknown company. And the average success

rates are around 2–3%. Thus, the typical SaaS outbound strategy uses **both** email and phone.

● Direct Mail (Physical Mailers/Gifts):

An often underrated outbound channel for SaaS is direct mail – sending physical items like letters, postcards, or branded corporate gifts to prospects' offices. In the digital age, receiving a tangible item can cut through the noise. **Direct mail has seen a bit of a revival in B2B marketing, particularly as part of Account-Based Marketing campaigns for high-value accounts. We will explore this type of marketing later in this chapter. Its** response rates are actually higher than many digital methods. Recent data shows average direct mail response rates of about **2.7%–4.4%**.

Open rates for physical mail can reach **60–90%**, since people at least glance at most physical mail they receive.

blog.leadrebel.io

For SaaS companies targeting enterprise clients, a creative mailer can grab a busy executive's attention in ways an email might not. Direct mail in SaaS outbound is often tied to **personalized gifting** – e.g. sending a small gift with a note.

This technique has proven results: in one campaign, sending thoughtful gift boxes to select prospects yielded a **63% gift acceptance rate** and drove an 18% conversion to opportunities.
alyce.com

Such high engagement is rarely seen with emails alone. Of course, direct mail comes with higher cost per contact, so SaaS teams typically reserve it for their most valuable target accounts.

An example could be platform **6sense**, specializing in account engagement. They spent about **$6,200 on personalized gift cards** aimed at dormant target accounts. Out of 235 gifts, **42 were accepted**, leading to re-engaged conversations and more than **$3.6 million in sales pipeline**. This showcases the powerful ROI that thoughtful, personalized gifting can deliver when used strategically.

● Retargeting:

The last frequently leveraged channel is **retargeting**. This means **showing ads to people who have already interacted with your website or content**. While retargeting is a form of

advertising, it's unique in focusing on prospects who visited your site or clicked an email and nudging them toward conversion.

For example, if a visitor checks out your product's page but leaves, you might retarget them with a LinkedIn ad highlighting a case study. Retargeting activates after an initial inbound visit, but then proactively pushes outbound ads to re-engage the lead. It's extremely effective when done correctly. Statistics show retargeting ads significantly outperform cold ads: the median conversion rate for retargeting campaigns is **3.8%**, much higher than the 1.5% conversion rate of general prospecting ads.

Some studies found that retargeting can boost ad conversion rates by **150%** compared to non-retargeted campaigns.
demandsage.com

Essentially, a retargeted prospect is far more likely to sign up or respond because they already showed interest. SaaS marketers value retargeting as a way to increase ROI on all those anonymous website visitors garnered by inbound efforts. Common retargeting channels include **Google Display Network banners**, **LinkedIn** and **Facebook ads**, and even retargeting via platforms like **Reddit** or niche sites depending on your audience.

For SaaS, retargeting often helps **shorten sales cycles**: a potential buyer may need several touches and reminders before committing, and seeing your ads repeatedly can bring them back to engage with sales. Best practice is to tailor the retargeting content to the visitor's behavior - for example, one message for someone who read a technical blog vs. another for someone who put an item in a trial sign-up cart.