

zLinq's One-man Marketing Team Generates a Closed-Won Deal in 2 Weeks with ViB Appointments

- 2 weeks to achieve their first closed-won deal
- 75% shorter sales buying cycle, reduced from 150 days to weeks
- 400% ROI on pipeline generated
- 5 closed-won deals from ViB Appointments to date

Overview

As a long-time marketing vice president for technology companies, Stew Maurer is used to going in and fixing what's broken in a marketing program. But when he was hired at zLinq in February of 2023, the five-year-old telecom and technology lifecycle management company did not even have a marketing function.

Up until that point, the company's sales team did outbound sales for its voice and data lifecycle management solution, including:

- Finding leads that fit the company's profile on databases like LinkedIn and Zoominfo
- Cold calling and cold emailing prospects
- Setting up cold sales meetings and trying to win over prospects
- Conducting sales motions that typically took an average of 150 days

When zLinq received additional funding in late 2022, it earmarked some of the funds for building a marketing operation — starting from the ground up. For Maurer, the *first marketing hire*, "the job was a blank slate. There was no marketing in place at all. No demand generation. No marketing source leads. No marketing source deals. It was a 100% outbound sales motion."

What Maurer did have, though, was "a lofty goal." He was tasked with driving sales growth and expanding the company's annual recurring revenue by ten-times by 2026.

"We could not achieve that goal with cold calling," he said. "While outbound got the company to where we are, zLinq leaders have bigger plans now. And to have a material impact on sales, we need to take a rigorous, investor mentality to marketing."



Stew Maurer

VP of Marketing, zLinq

"ViB Appointments is amazing. It's like the perfect inbound marketing easy button. We got our first closed-won deal within two weeks of launching the service. Our average sales motion before ViB was 150 days."

"We need to define our target audience, determine what they're doing now, and find out what message will entice them to contact us about zLinq's solutions. We were able to achieve all of that with ViB Appointments and the ViB Community."

Stew Maurer

VP of Marketing, zLinq

To gain the sales team's support for an entirely new approach to marketing, Maurer also wanted to generate near-term value. "I needed to win over the sales team," he noted. "They were used to their outbound methods. I needed to show them how much better the process can be when we deploy an inbound marketing strategy."

Challenges faced

- No prior marketing team, strategy or resources
- Lofty goal of 10x ARR that could not be done with existing outbound strategies
- Needed to win the trust of a mature sales team with swift results

Aiming for near-term value quickly with ViB Appointments

To win the sales team over, Maurer needed to achieve three objectives:

- Target mid-market companies with \$50 million to \$1 billion in revenue in its three primary industries — financial services firms, manufacturers, and healthcare organizations.
- Find the right decision makers within those industries.
- Launch inbound marketing tactics to encourage the target audience to reach out to zLinq for a sales meeting.

To accelerate the entire process, Maurer called on a demand generation firm he had worked for at his previous employer — ViB. In August of 2023, he contracted with the company to launch a ViB Appointments campaign.

"zLinq sells into a similar market as my previous employer," explained Maurer. "Since I had achieved success with ViB there, I decided to try it here, too."

"There are so many things to do to get a new marketing program off the ground. ViB provided me with an easy and fast way to start delivering value to the zLinq sales team right away. ViB Appointments made it easy for me to get inbound marketing off the ground and demonstrate near-term value."

Stew Maurer

VP of Marketing, zLinq

Results with ViB Appointments exceed zLinq's expectations

zLinq's first foray into inbound marketing with ViB Appointments included a guarantee of **15** appointments with prospects who met the company's criteria. "We reached that target quickly," noted Maurer.

While he had a lot riding on his launch of ViB Appointment, the results were greater than he anticipated. Back when they relied on outbound marketing methods, zLinq's sales team often were enmeshed in the long sales motions.

With ViB Appointments, the company not only gained its first closed-won deal within **two weeks**, but also closed a second deal within the first **three months**.

On average, ViB has significantly accelerated zLinq's sales process by **75%**.

Maurer notes that ViB-sourced deals take an average of **38** days to close, down from their average deal cycle of 152 days — enhancing their operational efficiency and customer acquisition rate.

Besides that, zLinq saw an uptick in the quality of leads who were ready for a demo.

"Our inbound approach with ViB really changed the conversation with prospects. Instead of our sales team going into calls cold, the prospects came to us and were very warm. Now our salespeople were having different kinds of conversations because the leads were ready for sales meetings right out of the gate. It was very exciting for everyone."

Stew Maurer

VP of Marketing, zLinq

As of early 2024, zLinq has successfully closed **five deals** sourced through ViB Appointments. One of these clients also quickly upsold to a more comprehensive service package.

All these add up to an impressive **400% ROI** on pipeline generated relative to their investment in ViB Appointments, showcasing substantial financial gains from Maurer's strategy.

How ViB Appointment's unique inbound approach works

Powering ViB Appointment's results is a unique community-based approach to matching marketers with the right buyers. This community is a millions-strong network of precisely segmented tech professionals. Most importantly, community members are here to explore emerging technologies and solution providers through our help — meaning they come with purchase intent.

Here's how it works

1. Our team builds a dedicated page on our community portal, with vendor-neutral information about zLinq's solution and the pain points addressed
2. ViB actively promotes the page to ICPs who match zLinq's targeting criteria
3. Relevant community members voluntarily opt-in to take a meeting if the solution fits their interests and needs

Finally, only qualified appointments held are considered, to make sure that targeting is a perfect fit, and that lead guarantees are met. That winning approach is how zLinq could assuredly reach their targets, and see qualified prospects convert.

"The leads we received from the ViB Community matched our criteria exactly. They needed our solution to solve their voice and data management challenges. So they were immediately ready for a sales meeting. This changed our salespeople's conversation with prospects. Instead of calling companies cold, our salespeople were having conversations with prospects who were very warm."

Stew Maurer
VP of Marketing, zLinq

ViB's highly targeted approach supports zLinq's strategic marketing goals

Maurer has a very specific view of the job of a company's marketing organization. "Marketing is often viewed as a creative process. But I think that's the wrong perspective. Marketing is the core function of a business. It's where you define your market, determine who to target, and strategize how to reach them.

"ViB's approach to marketing supports my view," said Maurer. "It has delivered a material impact in a very short time. It has brought us leads and deals and a way to scale up our sales program — which is exactly what we needed.

Maurer says that marketing support from ViB Appointments has included:

- Identifying well-targeted prospects in the ViB Community
- Creating an awareness of what zLinq does and its solution
- Communicating zLinq's value proposition for meeting decision makers' pain points
- Making it easy for leads to set up an introductory phone call with zLinq
- Not only scheduling meeting with new leads, but also helping zLinq create a lead pipeline

"We made a huge shift from outbound to inbound marketing. ViB Appointments helped us reach well-targeted new prospects and communicate our value prop. This is helping our sales team scale up growth in predictable and repeatable ways. It's been a real boost for the salespeople and the company."

Stew Maurer
VP of Marketing, zLinq

Scaling marketing results with ViB

zLinq's success with its first ViB Appointments campaign inspired Maurer to expand his work with ViB. Additional services zLinq has contracted for include:

- Renewing its contract for ViB Appointments, and doubling the number of guaranteed appointments to be delivered
- Launching its first-ever webinar with ViB Webinars
- Launching a report using ViB Research from which it will create multiple pieces of inbound marketing content

These usual marketing tactics, across pipeline generation, original content creation and virtual event management, would usually take a full marketing team to execute. But with ViB, it was easy for Maurer to ramp up a range of marketing strategies and see incredible results, even as a one-man team.

"The greater productivity and deal velocity ViB provided helped us get quick wins and create a lot of goodwill and high hopes within the company. It gave us an easy way to get our marketing program off the ground. Now we can go to the CEO and Board of Directors to gain support for the budget we need to expand our marketing program."

About ViB

Learn how we deliver the highest quality leads with our lead-generation services and active network of millions of technology decision-makers and influencers from a wide range of industries, including software, cybersecurity, cloud computing, and more. [Put us to work for you.](#)