

The True Cost of Building an SDR Team



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Summary

In 2025, building a high-performance sales function in-house is more expensive, more complex, and less predictable than ever before.

This report lifts the lid on the hidden costs, time drains, and opportunity losses that come with recruiting, ramping and retaining sales talent in today's environment. It contrasts the "build-it" mindset with more agile, outcomes-first models that

are allowing the UK's most forward-thinking enterprises to generate consistent, scalable revenue without carrying the operational burden.

Backed by industry benchmarks, real-world case studies and durhamlane's 15+ years of experience in B2B sales performance, this report gives commercial leaders the strategic insight needed to make high-confidence decisions.

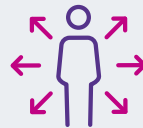


SUMMARY

Key Takeaways



The true cost of an in-house SDR can exceed £106k per year – before pipeline emerges



Outsourced or hybrid SDR models are becoming the default for enterprise go-to-market leaders



Ramp time, attrition, and management drag cripple speed-to-impact



CCOs, CMOs and CROs are shifting focus from hiring to outcomes



The Sales Function Has Changed. Has Your Model?

Why 2025 is a pressure point for sales teams:



Hiring Costs are up.



Ramp times are longer



Buyer journeys are more complex



Budgets are tighter, but revenue expectations haven't changed.

The old blueprint – hire a few SDRs, give them a playbook, watch pipeline roll in – is no longer fit for purpose. Instead, businesses are rethinking sales development as a flexible, high-impact, performance-first function, not a headcount line on a spreadsheet.

Too often, we see enterprise sales teams burning 6–12 months trying to replicate a model that worked five years ago.

The reality? The game has *moved on*. And so have your buyers.



The Real Cost of Building an SDR Team

Cost Category	Per SDR (annualised)
Base Salary	£33,000
Variable Compensation	£10,000
National insurance contribution	£6,450
Pension Contribution	£1,290
Recruiting Fees	£6,600
Tech Stack (CRM, diallers, data and prospecting tools)	£5,500
Initial Training	£6,000
Equipment (laptop + mobile)	£1,700
Office Space	£3,700
Admin Overheads (HR, payroll, etc.)	£1,500
Shared Management Time per SDR	£20,000
Turnover cost (excl. lost productivity)	£10,890
TOTAL	£106k+ (on average)

Figures based on durhamlane insight, UK market salary data, and third-party benchmarks

And that's before you see a single qualified opportunity.

Add 3–6 months ramp time, typical attrition between 12-18 months, and patchy data visibility – and the ROI case starts to crack.



The Real Cost of Building an SDR Team



“Sales Leadership is stretched further than ever before; the biggest cost isn’t really the financials; it is the time needed to find, hire, train, manage, develop more junior sellers with the pressure to show immediate impact and stay on top of the day job of this quarters number.”

James Middleton | Head of Sales, durhamlane

Most enterprises might think they’re building capability.

What they’re actually building is complexity.



Use the SDR Cost Calculator to run your real-world numbers.





The Hidden Costs That Don't Show on the Balance Sheet

1

Leadership Distraction

“Heads of Sales and Marketing get pulled into low-value activities: coaching juniors, firefighting performance issues, re-hiring the same roles again and again.”



Richard Lane
Co-Founder, durhamlane

2

Missed Market Opportunities

“While you’re building and onboarding, competitors are already live in your key territories.”



James Middleton
Head of Sales, durhamlane



The Hidden Costs That Don't Show on the Balance Sheet

3

"A revolving door of SDRs sends the wrong message internally and externally. Team morale suffers. So does your employer brand."

Brand and Culture Impact



Donald Kelly

Founder, The Sales Evangelist

4

"The true cost of an SDR team isn't the CRM license or the dialer fee. It's the hidden downtime between calls. Bad data, disconnected tools, and reporting friction quietly erode pipeline by stealing focus, slowing decisions, and leaving prospects unreached."

Data Gaps and Reporting Friction



James Donaldson

Founder/Director, Stakki



Build vs Buy — The Strategic Trade-Off

	Build	Outsourcing
Time to impact	6-9 Months	30-60 days
Cost to Ramp	£106k per SDR	Fixed, scalable fee
Attrition Risk	High, owned by you	Shared and managed
Flexibility	Low (fixed headcount)	High (scale up/down)
Reporting & Data	Build track and report yourself	Clear reporting done for you
Talent Quality	Market dependant	Pre-trained, sector-aligned
Outcome Ownership	Yours	Shared KPIs & SLAs

When you buy intelligently, you're not outsourcing sales.

You're insourcing performance.



What Best-in-Class Looks Like in 2025+

The most successful enterprise sales leaders are moving towards:



Outcome-based partnerships:

Shared success metrics,
not just resourcing



Hybrid Models:

In-house closers,
external openers



Agile sales development:

Shared success metrics,
not just resourcing



Data visibility and reporting by default



Strategic Recommendations

1

Audit your current sales development spend

Use the [SDR Cost Calculator](#) to model your real total cost.

2

Identify internal bottlenecks

Where are you slowest to market, weakest on conversion, or lowest on pipeline consistency?

3

Explore a hybrid or outourced approach

Partnering with a performance-led provider can remove the heavy lifting and speed up impact.

4

Book a discovery call

Put your numbers on the table and see what a 30–60 day turnaround could look like in your world.

Pinpoint where time and value are leaking from your sales process

Explore how a different mod could accelerate pipeline without adding complexity



About durhamlane

We help businesses grow revenue through high-performing SDR outsourcing.

At durhamlane, we specialise in building scalable, consistent sales pipelines for ambitious B2B organisations. Our model combines great people, smart tech, and a proven sales methodology – all underpinned by a performance-based structure that aligns with your goals.

We don't just deliver leads. We deliver qualified opportunities that convert.

Whether you're evolving your sales function, launching into new markets, or looking to accelerate pipeline without adding internal complexity, we act as an extension of your team.

**We're not just a delivery partner.
We're a commercial performance partner.**

Learn more at durhamlane.com