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Ideation and Prototyping of a Collaborative Sales Ecosystem for Startups and Small Businesses: Addressing Prospecting Inefficiencies Through a Cross Company Lead Sharing Framework

Finn David Langpape

Work project carried out under the supervision of:

Professor Sai Kalvapalle

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes inefficiencies in current outbound sales processes, focusing on impact-driven startups that face resource constraints, shorter financial runways, and the dual challenge of profit and purpose. To address these issues, it introduces Bridgely, a collaborative lead-sharing ecosystem designed to optimize sales efficiency by repurposing disqualified leads. Grounded in the Lean Startup methodology and validated through iterative cycles, including 54 interviews and two surveys, the research explores Bridgely's feasibility, competitive positioning, and societal impact. By enhancing resource optimization and improving customer acquisition, Bridgely supports sustainable growth, offering actionable insights to empower startups in competitive markets.

Keywords: Sales Optimization, Lean Startup Framework, Sales Process Inefficiencies, Collaborative Sales Models, Digital Sales Transformation, Lead Sharing Ecosystem

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1. Introduction

"Nothing happens until someone sells something." – Henry Ford (Gerhardt 1980)

This statement by Henry Ford remains as relevant today as it was during his time. For startups, sales represent a fundamental component of organizational growth and long-term viability. Even when startups offer innovative products or services, the absence of structured and efficient sales processes often determines their likelihood of success or failure (Keogh and K.N. Johnson 2021). Research and industry analyses emphasize the critical importance of developing robust sales strategies at an early stage to ensure sustainable growth and stability (Raju 2024).

Marc Andreessen, co-founder of the venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz, has famously said that achieving product-market fit (PMF) is "the only thing that matters" for startups. While PMF ensures that a product addresses real customer needs, it is only a foundational step in the building of a successful business. A well-designed sales strategy is needed to turn this alignment into measurable outcomes like revenue and customer growth. Without it, even products with strong market fit can struggle to gain traction. Similarly, the CB Insights Report highlights poor customer acquisition and sales strategies as major contributors to early-stage failures, further underscoring the importance of prioritizing sales development (CB 2022).

For impact startups, the importance of sales is even more pronounced. Based on their definition as “startup whose purpose is to contribute to solutions that create positive change – and over time enables and evidences strong impact performance through proportionate impact practice” (Andreou 2022), they face unique challenges that set them apart from traditional startups. A key obstacle is limited access to funding. While investments in sustainability-focused companies have grown significantly in recent years, as highlighted by the World Economic Forum’s *Impact Investing Report*, total funding remains modest compared to traditional private market investments (WEF 2023). This is partly because of perceptions that impact startups yield

lower financial returns, making the path to capital even more difficult. This makes the financial runway even shorter for impact companies, which increases the pressure to generate revenue quickly. In addition to resource constraints, impact startups must balance dual objectives: achieving profitability while fulfilling their mission-driven goals. Unlike conventional startups, which can focus purely on financial outcomes, impact startups must navigate the added complexity of aligning their sales strategies with their mission. PwC's *State of Climate Tech Report* emphasizes that refining sales strategies is critical for these startups, as it extends their runway, maximizes their societal impact, and ensures financial sustainability (PwC 2022).

These compounded challenges underline why efficient and scalable sales processes are vital for impact startups. However, traditional sales methods, particularly outbound prospecting, have become increasingly saturated, making it harder for startups to stand out and connect with their ideal customers. For impact startups, this inefficiency is especially problematic, as limited resources and shorter financial runways leave little room for wasted effort. The pressure to balance profitability with mission-driven goals further complicates the development of effective sales strategies.

This thesis explores whether innovative approaches, such as collaborative lead-sharing networks, can provide a solution to these challenges. Specifically, it addresses the question: Can collaborative lead-sharing networks improve sales efficiency and accelerate growth for impact-driven startups, enabling them to overcome resource constraints and achieve both financial and mission-driven objectives?

By examining how sales ecosystems can help impact startups address resource constraints and improve customer acquisition, this study aims to introduce a solution that supports both financial sustainability and mission-driven growth.

2. Objectives and Methodology

The primary objective of this thesis is to address inefficiencies in modern outbound sales processes, with a specific focus on impact-driven startups. These startups face unique challenges, including resource constraints, shorter financial runways, and the need to balance profitability with mission-driven goals.

To explore potential solutions, this study introduces Bridgely: a collaborative lead-sharing platform designed to help startups optimize their sales efficiency by repurposing leads that do not align with their Ideal Customer Profile (ICP). Companies contribute unused leads—potential customers they have engaged but disqualified due to misalignment with their needs, industry, or value proposition—to the ecosystem in exchange for leads that better match their ICP and value proposition. This collaborative approach aims to reduce wasted resources, improve customer acquisition, and foster sustainable growth.

The thesis pursues four key objectives to achieve its aim. First, it identifies inefficiencies in traditional outbound sales processes, particularly those affecting resource-constrained impact startups. Second, it investigates the feasibility of Bridgely's concept through iterative cycles of hypothesis testing, drawing on Lean Startup principles to validate its value proposition, operating model, technical requirements and market alignment. Third, the thesis evaluates Bridgely's competitive positioning and financial viability to determine its practical relevance and scalability. Finally, it analyzes Bridgely's broader societal impact, particularly its potential to empower impact startups by helping them achieve both financial sustainability and mission-driven objectives.

To achieve these objectives, the thesis employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the problem space and solution development.

The primary research includes a total of 54 interviews including 26 Sales Professionals, 9 Heads of Sales, 4 Sales Managers, and a total of 15 Founders. These roles were chosen to capture a wide range of perspectives, ensuring the findings would be representative of different levels and responsibilities within the sales process.

The interviews served multiple purposes. Initially, the goal was to identify shared pain points through exploratory interviews. These were analyzed thematically to reveal common challenges in prospecting, specifically in creating successful outbound campaigns. Once these pain points were identified, our discussions focused on understanding them in greater detail. For this, detailed interview scripts including specific clusters for analysis were created, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the identified issues. In later stages, the interviews shifted to gathering feedback and requirements on Bridgely's proposed solution. This focused on identifying key features for the software, putting emphasis on identifying relevant data points to assure value creation before prototyping the solution and refining it through demos and walkthroughs. The final purpose of the interviews was to understand user adoption barriers and find the project's limitations.

In addition to interviews, two surveys were conducted to complement the qualitative insights and to quantify specific dimensions of the problem and solution. The first survey targeted mortgage brokers and real estate agents as it focused on quantifying the value of lead sharing, receiving 94 responses. The real estate industry was chosen because of their well-established reliance on lead-sharing practices, making them a relevant benchmark for this research. The second survey, with 53 responses, targeted sales professionals across various roles. The objective of this survey was to identify the most relevant data points for their sales operations and therefore required for developing a prototype.

3. Problem Identification

This chapter examines inefficiencies in B2B sales practices by analyzing real-world applications and contextualizing them through established frameworks from literature to highlight gaps between theory and practice. By contrasting these frameworks with primary research findings from 54 interviews with founders, heads of sales, and sales representatives, we identify recurring shortcomings that informed Bridgely's solution design, as detailed in Chapters 4 and 6. The analysis focuses on challenges in lead generation, qualification, and broader sales processes, emphasizing process reliability—a critical factor for startups, particularly those with limited resources, such as impact-driven ventures.

3.1 Literature-Based Analysis of B2B Sales Practices

Aaron Ross's *Predictable Revenue* presents a central methodology for B2B sales, emphasizing role specialization, outbound prospecting, and lead qualification as critical pillars for driving sales efficiency and growth (Ross, 2011). These principles have been widely adopted by startups and established companies alike, aiming to create a systematic approach to sales (Roberge, 2015).

Role specialization within sales teams is identified as a key driver of productivity. By dividing responsibilities between Sales Development Representatives (SDRs) and Account Executives (AEs) companies can optimize their sales process and ensure scalability (Ross, 2011). While AEs handle deal closures, SDRs engage in prospecting - defined as the process of sourcing and qualifying potential customers to create new sales opportunities (Jolson and Wotruba, 1992).

Outbound prospecting builds the backbone of scalable B2B sales, enabling sales teams to proactively target high-potential prospects aligned with their ICP (Archer, 2024). Unlike inbound prospecting, which relies on customers initiating contact through content engagement

or other channels (HubSpot, n.d.), outbound methods like cold emailing and cold calling allow companies to build a predictable pipeline by proactively engaging their most promising targets. For example, at Zuora, a B2B SaaS company, each SDR is tasked with making 30 cold calls and sending 60 personalized emails daily (Ross, 2011).

After identifying leads, ensuring effective qualification is critical to building a sustainable and predictable pipeline. Lead qualification focuses on identifying high-potential prospects and discarding low-quality leads, ensuring that time and resources are allocated efficiently. Mark Roberge, former Chief Revenue Officer at HubSpot, emphasizes this point: “It’s not about the quantity of leads but the quality,” highlighting that prioritizing well-qualified prospects maximizes conversion potential while reducing wasted resources (Roberge, 2015). Achieving this precision often requires lead enrichment, a process of uncovering specific pain points and tailoring outreach to resonate with prospects.

While this structured outbound approach demonstrates the potential for scalability, its success hinges on the reliability of lead data. Both outbound prospecting and effective lead qualification depend heavily on high-quality data; poorly sourced or low-quality leads undermine outreach efforts, distort sales metrics, and diminish return on investment (ROI). This is proven by the average metrics within all of Salesforce’s Customer-Relationship-Management (CRM) environments, showing that employee and customer referrals achieve a 3.6% closing rate, significantly outperforming external lead databases, which generate revenue at just 0.1% (Raichshtain 2014). This stark contrast highlights the challenge of sourcing reliable data for outbound sales and questions the effectiveness of Ross’ proposed solution of utilizing cold calls and cold emails to achieve reliable outbound success. Balancing access to reliable lead data and qualifying leads rigorously emerges as a key challenge for sales teams, particularly for resource-constrained startups. Addressing this gap is essential to create a scalable and reliable sales pipeline as intended by Ross (2011).

3.2 Practice-Based Analysis of B2B Sales Practices

While the analysis of current B2B sales practices revealed inefficiencies that need to be addressed, our primary research reveals significant challenges in implementing these practices. The interviews conducted focused on uncovering the practical inefficiencies faced by B2B sales teams, with participants sharing detailed experiences and examples. A thematic analysis was applied, identifying recurring patterns across industries and roles. These findings were then grouped into two major categories of challenges: general growth journey constraints and inefficiencies in B2B prospecting.

Growth journey challenges reveal that startups are often caught between two constraints: limited financial resources to hire dedicated sales teams and the limited capacity of founders to drive sales efforts themselves (Melegati and Kon 2020). In our interview the founder of a retail design startup pointed out: “Sales is demanding for small companies, often falling on me as the founder. Hiring, however, requires commitment and adds financial bloat and overhead”. Similarly, the founder of a technology company added to this by emphasizing: “Hiring is really difficult for an early-stage startup since you need to compete with a large number of other startups, while your employer brand is virtually nonexistent”. Despite these constraints, many startups scale too early due to hyper-ambitious revenue targets, which is a common consequence of venture capital (VC) investments (Knaup 2024). The Head of Partnerships at NetZero noted: “I would say sales is the bottleneck to our growth. If we don’t meet our revenue targets, we’re not going to be able to raise the next round, which we’re fundraising for.” This pressure from VCs can distort decision-making, leading teams to pursue opportunities that may not align with long-term objectives.

In prospecting related problems, we specifically identified issues in lead generation and lead qualification as previously identified in 3.2. Our research confirms that generating high-quality leads is a significant hurdle for many startups. During our interview the Head of Sales at

Thermosphr noted the limitations of external lead databases: “I have thought about buying external leads and running large outbound campaigns (i.e. cold emails) on them, but I have a feeling that it is like looking for a needle in a haystack”. An SDR at Mercanis echoes this frustration: “We’ve shied away from using external data sources because the results weren’t reliable enough. Now, we employ freelancers to manually identify and enrich leads”. This quote also stresses the pain of lead enrichment, which an SDR at GoodCarbon underlines: “The market is so complex, and the prospects are so unsure that tailored outreach is much more successful. Enrichment takes more time but pays off.”

Regarding issues with lead qualification the Head of Partnerships at NetZero explained: “We analyzed our sales process and found that the lowest conversion happened after giving out free trials. It made us realize that our qualification process wasn’t strict enough and we were onboarding the wrong people.” This is underlined by an SDR at Planted, claiming they had to create an additional qualification step, as “[…] otherwise, we had unaccounted bloat in our pipeline, that didn’t realistically have a chance of conversion.” These examples highlight how poorly defined qualification criteria result in wasted resources and distorted sales metrics, which directly affect the predictability and scalability of sales outcomes.

An extensive analysis of all identified problems can be found in the tables of Appendix A.

3.3 Summary of Problem Identification

Both the literature and practical findings highlight the critical role of lead sourcing and qualification as key inefficiencies in current B2B sales. While outbound prospecting remains essential for small companies, its success depends on the quality of lead data - a recurring challenge for startups. Salesforce data reveals that external lead databases achieve only 0.1% conversion rates on average, requiring 1,000 outbound leads to close one deal (Raju 2024). The remaining leads, although eventually discarded, drain significant resources during the outreach

and qualification stages, creating redundancies and inefficiencies. These inefficiencies contribute to the overwhelming noise surrounding ICPs, as SDRs engage a large volume of irrelevant leads before qualifying their misalignment. This not only wastes time and resources but also highlights the need for solutions that minimize redundancy, improve lead quality, and optimize prospecting processes.

In response to these challenges, Bridgely, introduced in the next chapter, offers a new approach to transforming discarded leads into high-value opportunities, reducing irrelevant touchpoints, and enhancing overall sales efficiency.

4. Solution: Bridgely's Lead Ecosystem

Before explaining the iterative refinement of our proposed solution (Bridgely) through BML cycles in Chapter 6, this chapter maps Bridgely to the sales challenges identified in the previous analysis. Critical inefficiencies include unreliable lead generation, inconsistent qualification, and redundant outbound efforts. Startups struggle with resource-intensive manual lead enrichment, ineffective external databases, and the overwhelming noise of irrelevant outreach, which saturates ICPs.

At its core, Bridgely transforms disqualified leads—prospects that fail to meet a company's ICP or qualification criteria—into valuable opportunities through a collaborative ecosystem. Instead of discarding such leads, companies can share them with others whose ICPs or unique selling propositions (USPs) align better. Each lead is enriched with contextual insights gathered during initial qualification, such as buying intent, budget, or pain points, allowing for precise mapping against participants' ICPs.

Through this collaborative exchange, Bridgely minimizes reliance on costly, low-quality databases and reduces the need for manual lead sourcing. By accessing enriched and pre-qualified leads, sales teams can craft targeted outreach that addresses prospects' specific needs.

This eliminates noise and ensures fewer but more relevant touchpoints for ICPs. By streamlining lead generation and qualification, Bridgely helps startups allocate resources more efficiently, stabilizing sales metrics and easing capacity constraints on small sales teams.

Beyond operational efficiency, Bridgely fosters a collaborative mindset within the sales ecosystem. By replacing scattergun outreach with quality-driven engagement, it encourages companies to leverage shared intelligence for mutual benefit. This promotes a sustainable approach to outbound sales—one that prioritizes relevance, reduces waste, and builds meaningful connections with prospects.

Detailed assumptions and their refinements are explored in Chapter 6, with limitations addressed in Chapter 10. The broader impact implications of Bridgely on sustainable outbound practices are discussed in Chapter 9, while financial considerations are detailed in Chapter 8. A full mapping of Bridgely's problem-solution fit is provided in the tables of Appendix B.

5. Theoretical Foundation

To establish a theoretical foundation for Bridgely's development, this thesis draws on established frameworks and principles of startup development and software engineering, followed by an analysis of various prototyping approaches. These concepts provide the necessary structure, context and methodology for aligning primary research findings with practical application and ensure a science-based approach to entrepreneurship.

6. Bridgely's Journey

6.1 Introduction into Past Research

Building on the insights gathered from identifying challenges in startup's sales practices in the Problem Identification chapter, this chapter outlines the iterative process of validating two interconnected ideas: a sales agency (RampUp) and a lead sharing solution (Bridgely). Guided by the Lean Startup Framework and its BML feedback loops, this journey highlights the evolution of our solution through continuous testing and refinement. Each BML feedback loop will be referred to as a cycle.

The chapter begins by introducing the RampUp solution, before reproducing its validation in Cycle 1. Based on further insights uncovered during this validation an informed pivot decision was made. A discussion on how RampUp's insights shaped the eventual design Bridgely solution follows.

Cycle 2 focuses on validating Bridgely's value and business model. Cycle 3 discusses two operating models for Bridgely`s application and quantifies the potential value of lead sharing. In Cycle 4, the development and testing of a prototype for a cross-company lead-sharing marketplace are laid out, followed by Cycle 5, which aims to show market validation.

6.2 Cycle 1: Validating RampUp and Pivot Decision

To maximize our impact by leveraging our team's strengths, we mapped our expertise against the problem areas identified in the Problem Identification Chapter (the detailed Problem Identification can be found in Appendix A). Drawing on our experience with impact startups and prospecting, we focused on issues related to premature scaling and hyper-ambitious sales targets driven by VC investments. This led us to create RampUp, a sales agency offering flexible, short-term sales support tailored to impact startups.

RampUp was designed to address key pain points in startup sales processes. First, it aimed to outsource SDR related tasks, reducing operational overhead and eliminating long-term liabilities associated with in-house hires. This also alleviated hiring challenges in competitive markets, particularly for startups with limited employer brand visibility. Second, RampUp promised transparent and predictable cost structures by charging solely for Sales Qualified Leads (SQLs), allowing startups to mitigate risks of underperforming hires while maintaining stable sales metrics like customer acquisition costs (CAC). Lastly, by offering short-term contracts it provided startups with the operational flexibility to adapt to rapidly changing market demands.

6.2.1 Build

RampUp's proposed solution is built on three main hypothesis: first, that sales inefficiencies are a critical barrier for impact startups' growth (H1); second, that startups would be willing to outsource their prospecting efforts if transparency could be ensured (H2); and third, that SQLs in the form of discovery meetings would be valued and monetizable through a combination of retainer and success-based payment models (H3). Additionally, we identified two key assumptions: our proposed sales agency would enter a highly competitive market (A1) and that

impact startups face growth challenges distinct from those encountered by traditional startups (A2). This formed the foundation of our research objectives for Cycle 1.

6.2.2 Measure

To test these hypotheses, we conducted 18 semi-structured interviews in total, with 11 founders, four sales executives, one venture capital representative, one industry expert and two mentors. The objectives were to validate our ideation of the proposed solution and to identify its limitations.

RampUps solution was directly validated by two use cases that emerged during interviews (Table E.1, Appendix E). The CEO of Blaenk and a senior executive at Cordes & Graefe's venture department described the financial and operational pains of committing at least €3,500/month per seller to scale outbound efforts. The CEO of Blaenk referred to the expense as "money we simply don't have," while the Cordes & Graefe executive pointed out the lengthy onboarding times required for new hires in niche industries. Another recurring issue for was the lack of clear ICP and USP, which hindered startups' ability to effectively target and engage the right audiences, leading to reduced conversion rates and inefficient use of resources (Table E.1, Appendix E). Among other findings (Table E.1, Appendix E) these cases validated H1, H2, and H3, demonstrating demand for a cost-effective and flexible sales agency.

However, interviews also revealed significant limitations of the agency model (Table E.1, Appendix E). Challenges included scalability, differentiation in a saturated market, financial feasibility, and operational complexity, all of which limited RampUp's future potential.

6.2.3 Learn and Pivot Decision

While the mentioned use cases and customer interest expressed in the interviews highlight the potential of a sales agency tailored to impact startups, several findings marked the model unsustainable for us (detailed in in Table E.1, Appendix E). Scalability constraints turned into

a significant issue, underlined by our interview with the founder of ThinkingPartner, emphasizing the dependency on additional personnel. This was further enhanced by the shortage of qualified sales professionals in Portugal, as pointed out by an industry expert and founder of LeadResults. Furthermore, insights from our discussions with an impact expert underscored the highly saturated nature of the agency market. The interview emphasized that differentiating RampUp's offering through a Blue Ocean Strategy (Kim and Mauborgne 2017) presents significant challenges. This observation was further reinforced by additional findings from this cycle. An analysis of the growth challenges faced by impact startups reveals that, while they contend with unique pressures such as shorter financial runways, their broader growth challenges are largely consistent with those experienced by non-impact startups, which disconfirms A2. The detailed findings of these challenges, as identified in interviews conducted during Cycle 1, are summarized in Table F.1 (Appendix F).

Financial feasibility also posed a substantial barrier. For example, one interview partner currently pays €800 per month for a similar service, which would be insufficient to cover the costs required to deliver high-quality SQLs. Operational dependencies further enhanced our doubts about the future of the agency model. Another interviewee noted that agencies often receive lower-quality leads because clients prioritize high-potential leads for internal teams, which makes success more challenging. Additionally, the underutilization of Jakob's business informatics expertise underscored a team-market misalignment, a common pitfall in startups (Blank 2013).

The culmination of the described challenges, as detailed in Table E.1 (Appendix E), underscores the limitations of pursuing the agency concept, revealing that it could not deliver an innovative solution and a scalable impact. Despite the validated interest in RampUp, these challenges compelled us to pivot.

Guided by the Lean Startup framework, we revisited the inefficiencies identified in the Problem Identification Chapter, aligned them with our team's strengths, and reflected on key learnings from Cycle 1. This led to the development of Bridgely, a cross-company lead-sharing platform designed to address the inefficiencies of outbound sales. A detailed explanation of Bridgely can be found in Chapter 4, with Table E.2 (Appendix E) highlighting how Cycle 1`s learnings shaped the solution.

The decision to pivot from the sales agency model is not a rejection of the insights gained but rather a reflection of the Lean Startup principle of building on validated learnings.

6.3 Cycle 2: Validating Bridgely

6.3.1 Build

To refine and validate the ideation of Bridgely's cross-company lead-sharing approach, we aimed to assess whether companies see value in transforming discarded leads into actionable opportunities. To achieve this, we translated the concept into three hypotheses and one foundational assumption: companies are open to sharing unused leads if incentivized (H1); lost and enriched leads hold value for others, driving model adoption (H2); and sustainability-focused companies are likely early adopters due to their collaborative nature (H3). With the underlying assumption being that informal lead-sharing practices already exist, providing a behavioral foundation for Bridgely's model (A1).

6.3.2 Measure

To test these hypotheses, we conducted structured interviews with 10 stakeholders, including 7 founders and 3 sales related decision-makers. These represent our ecosystem's primary users and beneficiaries, making their input essential for validating and refining the lead-sharing concept.

Companies' openness towards sharing unused leads emerged as a nuanced topic in our discussions. An SDR Teamlead at HR Technology Startup expressed openness to adopt Bridgely, stating, "If this tool can help me spend less time prospecting and more time closing, that's a huge win." However, a more cautious perspective came from the Chief Information Offiver (CIO) at Smart Ports, who underscored the reluctance to part with potentially valuable contacts, saying, "I would never share an important lead, even if it takes 100 years to convert it." While these conversations partially confirm H1, they also hint towards a possible resistance to sharing leads with other companies.

The notion that lost and enriched leads hold value for others resonated with some interviewees and validates H2. A Portfolio Manager at Fundacao Algaes pointed out: "Some companies in our portfolio need the same type of leads." This reinforces the potential utility of shared data for VCs. However, concerns about lead quality and contextual relevance were highlighted. Moreover, an AE at SAP observed: "If the leads I receive are consistently low quality or not a good fit for my industry, it's a time sink rather than a benefit." Similarly, the founder of About Impact commented on the challenges of maintaining lead quality, noting: "The quality of leads will be hard to match."

Sustainability-focused companies showed a marked alignment with the collaborative ethos central to Bridgely's concept. A Portfolio Manager at Unreasonable stated: "Impact startups are more likely to collaborate and share contacts with other startups," reflecting a cultural inclination toward shared value creation. Additionally, an SDR at The Oater described the existing reliance on personal networks in early-stage sales, saying, "Startups often rely on personal networks and informal exchanges for lead generation." These conversations therefore provide an early validation of H3.

The assumption that informal lead-sharing practices already exist (A1) was supported and validated by several participants. A Portfolio Manager at Unreasonable remarked, "The sharing

is already happening, just on a higher level; you're formalizing the informal," while an Executive Director of the Nova SBE Leadership for Impact Knowledge Center highlighted the trust-based nature of such exchanges, stating: "Sharing in sales is best done through a close and small ecosystem."

6.3.3 Learn

The findings from Cycle 2 provide early validation for Bridgely's core hypotheses while uncovering critical challenges and unexpected insights that shape future iterations. Given the project's ideation phase, the results remain qualitative and intangible but form a strong foundation for targeted testing in subsequent cycles.

The realization that companies are open to revising their current processes only when they perceive clear and consistent value reshaped how we approached stakeholders in later cycles. Psychological barriers around lead ownership revealed a cultural resistance to collaboration within traditional sales environments, underscoring the importance of emphasizing trust as a core component of Bridgely's platform. Similarly, the collaborative tendencies of impact-driven startups positioned them as an early ICP. Most importantly, the validation that informal lead-sharing practices already occur within trust-based ecosystems provides a strong behavioral foundation for Bridgely's model.

An unexpected insight emerged from a conversation with a tech leader at IBM, who highlighted inefficiencies in intra-corporate lead sharing within large organizations. This raised the question of whether Bridgely should prioritize cross-company or intra-corporate lead sharing, leading to the exploration of a secondary operating model. By addressing siloed operations, Bridgely enables departments to repurpose disqualified leads, reducing prospecting time and fostering cross-departmental collaboration. This alternative operating model for Bridgely will be referred to as Intra-Corporate Lead Sharing Model.

To conclude, Cycle 2 validated the viability of the lead-sharing concept while highlighting critical areas for refinement, such as addressing cultural resistance and trust-building. None of the core hypotheses were significantly challenged, which justified the decision to persevere with the solution. The insights gained, particularly around intra-corporate lead sharing, provide a strong foundation for the next BML feedback loop and pave the way for Bridgely's continued evolution across the following cycles.

6.4 Cycle 3: Exploring Cross-Company vs. Intra-Corporate Lead Sharing Model

The primary objective of Cycle 3 is to explore the two established operating models: the cross-company lead-sharing ecosystem and the intra-corporate lead-sharing model. Additionally, this cycle aims to quantify the measurable value of lead sharing through a survey. The real estate sector was selected for this purpose, as research indicates a strong history of deal sharing and collaboration within the industry.

6.4.1 Build

To validate the intra-corporate lead-sharing model, we formulated the following testable hypothesis: Intra-corporate lead sharing within large companies improves sales efficiency and fosters collaboration (H1). This hypothesis is supported by two key assumptions: (A1) large corporations have established systems and processes that enable lead sharing between departments, and (A2) their company culture embraces and incentivizes cross-departmental collaboration.

Additionally, a broader hypothesis regarding the general value of lead sharing was developed: Lead sharing enhances deal closure rates (H2). Lastly, the hypotheses from Cycle 2 for the cross-company lead-sharing solution remain relevant and continue to guide our validation efforts.

6.4.2 Measure

For this cycle, we conducted interviews with two SAP sales professionals to assess intra-corporate lead sharing and 10 additional interviews to refine our understanding of the cross-company model. A survey of 94 real estate agents and mortgage brokers quantified the value of lead sharing for improving deal closure rates. These methods explored themes such as lead quality, willingness to share, and trust concerns.

Intra-Company Lead Sharing

Interviews with an Presales Executive at SAP and AE at SAP highlighted significant barriers to intra-company lead sharing, including siloed organizational structures, underutilized CRM systems, and cultural resistance to collaboration. SAP's hierarchical setup positions AEs as central coordinators, and collaboration with specialized sellers and SDR teams is often limited to immediate needs. As noted by an SAP AE, "The AE is the central node for deals; collaboration depends on their active involvement."

Our conversations also uncovered that SAP's CRM system was recently updated to support lead sharing across organizational units. This clearly demonstrates that SAP believes that intra-company lead sharing can provide them value, which validates H1. Nevertheless, the interviews simultaneously revealed that the CRM`s complexity and time-consuming processes deters usage. An SAP Presales Executive observed, "CRM systems are too cumbersome for regular lead sharing, leading to reliance on informal channels." This reliance on ad hoc communication undermines systematic lead-sharing processes, therefore disproving A1. Cultural factors further enhance this issue, as sales teams prioritize individual quotas over collaboration, which therefore disproves A2. Despite these challenges, interviewees noted that incentives, such as financial rewards for shared leads, are currently being rolled out and expected to drive adoption of the recently added lead sharing feature.

The findings suggest that while intra-company lead sharing holds potential, it requires streamlined systems, robust incentives, and cultural shifts to become viable. Also, it underlines the challenge of mass adoption in a large corporation. These insights are summarized in Table G.1 (Appendix G), which outlines the structural and cultural barriers alongside potential solutions.

Cross-Company Lead Sharing

As previously discussed in the Problem Analysis chapter, and reaffirmed in this cycle, our interview partners consistently emphasized the inefficiencies of traditional lead acquisition methods. The Head of Sales at Hier Foods criticized external databases, stating, "They provide bad data at high costs." In contrast, manually qualified leads, enriched with contextual data from discovery calls, were viewed as highly valuable. Underlining this, the Managing Director at HR Technology Startup explained, "Discovery calls provide us with detailed insights into pain points and decision-making structures - this data could be invaluable for other companies."

Another key takeaway was a possible incentive structure for lead sharing. The Head of Sales at Hier Foods highlighted that his SDRs should not be incentivized to sell other companies products, and this was supported by the belief of an SDR at Mercanis that credit-based systems encourage platform engagement. This revealed a preference towards a credit-based incentive system for a lead sharing platform.

Participants also highlighted significant openness to collaboration, particularly within complementary industries. The Head of Sales at Thermosphr noted the potential in sustainability-focused networks, stating: 'Sustainability sectors align better for collaborative efforts.' She also expressed that she already proactively shares leads within her network, without incentive. This underlines how personality factors can enhance shared value creation solutions like Bridgely. However, trust and security concerns emerge as critical challenges for

implication. The Co-Founder of Standsome emphasized the need for GDPR compliance and safeguards against competitive risks, stating: "Sharing leads with competitors is risky; secure systems and clear rules are essential."

Overall, our findings further validate the potential of cross-company collaboration, but underscore the importance of industry alignment, enriched data, and trust-building mechanisms. Table H.1 (Appendix H) presents detailed insights into these opportunities and barriers, supported by direct quotes and examples.

Quantifying the Value of Lead Sharing

The results of the survey with real estate agents and mortgage brokers reveal that while lead sharing occurs moderately frequently at 60% of the time, it has a significant positive impact on deal closure rates (80% positive impact), which validates H2. A detailed analysis can be found in table I.1 (Appendix I).

6.4.3 Learn

Intra-Corporate Operating Model Learnings

While our validation confirmed that lead sharing within large corporations holds potential value, it also raised critical questions about whether this opportunity aligns with Bridgely's mission and operational feasibility. Ultimately, our assessment drove us to persevere with the cross-company lead-sharing operating model instead of pivoting to the intra-corporate model. This decision was guided by several factors.

Selling to large corporations introduces significant challenges due to their inherent complexity. These organizations require multi-stakeholder approval processes, involving specialized roles across finance, sales, and technology departments. Each of these represents distinct micro-deals that must align for a sale to close, as highlighted during interviews in Cycle 3. Furthermore,

underutilized systems, complex internal processes, and a resistance to share leads create substantial barriers to companywide adoption and retention.

SAP's introduction of an internal lead-sharing platform further diminishes the viability of pursuing the intra-corporate model. If their platform proves successful internally, it is likely they will commercialize it, leveraging their resources and expertise as a global software provider. Competing with such an industry leader would place Bridgely at a significant disadvantage, particularly as a student-led initiative with limited resources.

Yet, most influential in our decision to disregard the intra-corporate model was Bridgely's mission to empower smaller businesses and foster collaborative ecosystems, not to optimize processes for established corporations. By focusing on sustainability-driven startups, Bridgely has the potential to drive indirect impact, amplifying the success of businesses that align with our mission of creating an equitable marketplace.

Cross-Company Operating Model Learnings

This cycle also deepened our understanding of the cross-company lead-sharing model, further validating its potential. While Cycle 2 identified some resistance to collaboration among salespeople and emphasized the importance of lead quality and matching, Cycle 3 highlighted additional requirements for success. GDPR compliance must be addressed with clear rules and transparency, and concerns about sharing leads with competitors need proactive solutions. Monetary incentives were dismissed, introducing the use of a credit-based system, which aligns with user preferences. Notably, real estate data demonstrated measurable improvements in deal closure rates through lead sharing, further strengthening the case for this model while pointing to areas for refinement.

These findings reaffirm our decision to focus on the cross-company lead-sharing model, which aligns more closely with Bridgely's mission, values, and strengths. This model emphasizes

collaboration and mutual growth, especially for smaller businesses and sustainability-driven startups, creating the potential for a broader positive impact.

6.6 Cycle 5: Market Validation

Based on the prototype defined and its derived value, Cycle 5 aimed to validate Bridgely's proposed solution further by assessing market intent through targeted interviews. These discussions explored the factors influencing user adoption or rejection and sought to secure Letters of Intent (LoIs) as tangible indicators of early interest. This phase marked a critical transition from broad problem exploration to evaluating our solution's feasibility and market alignment. The primary objective was to identify the most suitable vertical for launching the ecosystem and uncovering key barriers to adoption.

6.6.1 Build

Building on insights from the previous cycles, we formulated four hypotheses to address Bridgely's critical challenges. First, recurring trust and reputational concerns led to the hypothesis that trust-based, consent-driven workflows - such as double opt-in mechanisms - will mitigate these risks and foster higher adoption rates (H1). Second, hesitations about sharing leads with competitors informed the hypothesis that Bridgely's model can be used as a tool to nurture potential deals with active leads, rather than sharing disqualified leads (H2). Third, we hypothesize that industries characterized by high transaction volumes, short product lifecycles, and low lock-in effects are optimal candidates for launching the ecosystem (H3). These hypotheses establish the foundation for our validated learning approach in Cycle 5.

6.6.2 Measure

Key insights emerged regarding workflows and trust. A Co-Founder of Fenyx explained: "If I'm talking to a customer who has a more pressing pain to solve first, I could use your ecosystem to connect them with solutions for their immediate need. This strengthens my relationship while advancing the buying window for my own deal." This introduces Bridgely's potential as a deal-nurturing tool, allowing sellers to address adjacent priorities and advance the buying windows for their own offering. Expanding on trust a Forbes 30-under-30 awardee and Co-Founder of Ello emphasized the reputational risks of poorly aligned introductions and advocated for double opt-in workflows. He warned, "Legality won't be an issue, but morality may. Your lead has opened up about his problems based on trust; how will he feel if these insights are shared?" His perspective highlights the critical role of consent-driven workflows in establishing trust, validating H1's focus on mitigating reputational risks and H2's emphasis on building relationships through controlled lead sharing.

While trust and workflows emerged as foundational elements for adoption, stakeholders also enhanced our understanding about market preferences and strategies for Bridgely's initial rollout. A Sales Manager at Tradias emphasized prioritizing industries with short product lifecycles and transactional sales models, such as real estate or the services sector, over industries like insurance or banking, where disqualified leads may retain long-term internal value. This aligns with findings from Cycle 3's real estate survey and validates H3. Regarding initial rollout, the Co-Founder of Bleane suggested leveraging existing networks such as open VCs to achieve network effects while minimizing customer acquisition costs. He advised, "Rather than convincing 200 startups to join, focus on providing free infrastructure to existing networks." Lastly, the challenge of achieving a network effect emerged as a critical hurdle for Bridgely's effective rollout. A Sales Manager at Marta highlighted the difficulty of cross-industry matchmaking, cautioning, "Matchmaking is incredibly difficult, and then the question

is whether the data is even sufficient. If you do it horizontally across industries, it becomes extremely hard to achieve a network effect." Similarly, an Investor at Nucleus Capital, a sustainability focused VC, underscored the importance of measurable network effects, emphasizing that companies are unlikely to alter existing workflows without demonstrated value.

These insights highlight the need for a targeted approach to achieving network effects in the initial rollout phase, focusing on building concentrated value within specific ecosystems rather than attempting broad, horizontal scaling too early.

6.6.3 Learn

This cycle revealed a promising alternative to Bridgely's current use case, positioning the ecosystem as a deal-nurturing tool rather than solely a platform for redistributing disqualified leads. By enabling sellers to connect their leads with solutions that address immediate priorities, Bridgely helps advance the buying window and maintain stronger relationships. This use case aligns closely with user trust concerns identified in Cycles 2 and 3, as well as resistance to changing existing workflows, as highlighted by an investor at Nucleus Capital. Similarly, the deal-nurturing use case aligns with a broader trend of referral-based sales (see Chapter 3.1 and 7.1).

The importance of trust, identified across multiple cycles, underscores the need for consent-driven workflows. Although Bridgely is not required to mandate double opt-ins for data security, the platform should advocate for these practices in its messaging and workflows, emphasizing their role in protecting user trust and mitigating reputational risks – both of Bridgely and the individual seller.

Additionally, insights from Cycles 3 and 5 emphasized the importance of choosing the right vertical for Bridgely's initial rollout. While real estate shows promise due to existing lead-

sharing behaviors (see Cycle 3), it offers limited alignment with Bridgely's sustainability-driven mission. In contrast, sustainability-focused companies, particularly clean-tech startups and VCs, present a more fitting opportunity. Green-tech represents a strong macro trend, creating increasingly populated verticals with growing funding flows (PwC 2023). This could provide an ideal starting point for initial rollout but requires further analysis in subsequent BLM cycles. Current market alignment was validated by receiving three LoI's (see Appendix P).

7. Competitive Landscape of Bridgely

Building on the market validation from Cycle 5, this section examines Bridgely's positioning within the broader B2B sales technology landscape. A clear understanding of this competitive environment is essential to highlight Bridgely's unique value proposition. By analyzing direct, indirect, and adjacent competitors, this section identifies gaps in existing solutions and demonstrates how Bridgely addresses these challenges more effectively than competing tools.

7.1 Direct Competitors

Direct competitors such as Leadfellow, Crossbeam, and PartnerStack share Bridgely's goal of enhancing collaboration in sales, yet their approaches differ significantly. Leadfellow facilitates lead-sharing through monetary incentives tied to closed deals, using both one-to-one and one-to-many mechanisms. However, it lacks an industry-specific focus and requires users to operate outside their CRMs, leading to workflow inefficiencies. Crossbeam integrates with CRMs to analyze leads and accounts across ecosystem participants, identifying overlaps to facilitate connections between companies. When one participant is engaged with a target account of another, Crossbeam enables collaboration by generating Ecosystem Qualified Leads (EQLs) based on existing business relationships. While effective for fostering trusted referrals, its scalability diminishes in larger ecosystems due to reduced personalization and trust (as explained by Joana C. in 6.3.2). PartnerStack monetizes EQLs, allowing companies to set rules

and pricing for referrals within their networks. Bridgely differentiates itself by seamlessly integrating into CRMs, enabling contextualized lead-sharing while preserving workflow efficiency and ensuring enriched data quality.

7.2 Indirect Competitors

Indirect competitors such as Apollo.io, LinkedIn Sales Navigator, ZoomInfo, Clay.com, and Honeysales address specific aspects of the sales funnel but lack Bridgely's collaborative and holistic approach. Apollo.io and LinkedIn Sales Navigator provide extensive lead databases and filtering options for lead sourcing, yet they fail to offer detailed insights into the leads and accounts. ZoomInfo focuses on high-level data enrichment, delivering broad insights but lacking granularity for individual prospects. Clay.com has a very similar profile, with the difference in leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) for lead scraping, offering more flexible results. Honeysales addresses hiring problems by outsourcing SDR tasks through offering qualified sales meetings for fixed prices.

7.3 Adjacent Competitors

CRM platforms such as Salesforce, HubSpot, and Pipedrive may be regarded as adjacent competitors but are ultimately positioned as future collaborators for Bridgely. These platforms excel in pipeline management and centralized data organization, providing the foundational infrastructure that Bridgely relies on for effective deployment. In this, they currently lack mechanisms to repurpose or monetize disqualified leads. By integrating with these solutions, Bridgely enhances their offerings, transforming static, unused lead data into actionable opportunities, thereby adding value to their current value provided.

In conclusion, Bridgely occupies a unique position within the competitive landscape. Direct competitors facilitate lead-sharing but lack scalability and seamless integration. Indirect tools excel at lead sourcing and enrichment but fail to address wasted leads, while adjacent

competitors, such as CRMs, provide infrastructure but do not unlock the value of disqualified leads. As highlighted in the problem-solution matrix (Appendix Q), this comparative analysis reaffirms Bridgely's unique differentiation: it combines contextualized lead-sharing, CRM integration, and collaborative efficiencies to deliver a solution that existing tools fail to provide.

8. Financial Considerations

The financial considerations outlined in this section are essential for evaluating Bridgely's sustainability and scalability. By exploring revenue streams, cost structures, and customer acquisition strategies, this analysis provides a clear understanding of how Bridgely can achieve economic viability.

Revenue scalability lies at the heart of Bridgely's subscription-based model. With negligible duplication costs for each additional user, every subscription directly increases revenue once operating costs are covered. These operating costs, which are largely fixed, will primarily include the creation of an initial software product and CRM integrations to ensure seamless compatibility for users. As such, the financial model allows for revenue to grow almost linearly with user acquisition, reinforcing the platform's scalability.

The biggest challenge lies in managing CAC, especially in the early stages of the project. To address this, Bridgely will leverage one-to-many sales opportunities by targeting ecosystems where concentrated groups of potential users can be reached simultaneously. A Portfolio Manager at Fundação Algaes highlights the inefficiencies within venture capital portfolios: "Some companies in our portfolio need the same type of leads, and at the moment, they might be duplicating efforts." The Co-Founder of Bleane echoes this by suggesting Bridgely focus on existing networks: "Rather than convincing 200 startups to join, focus on providing free infrastructure to existing networks." By partnering with VCs, trade associations, and similar organizations, we aim to rapidly onboard users while keeping acquisition costs manageable.

Pricing will follow B2B SaaS industry standards, with monthly per-user subscriptions. While the specific price point remains undecided, competitor analysis provides benchmarks. Tools like LinkedIn Sales Navigator, Cognism, and Lusha average $129 per user per month, while Leadfellow, our most direct competitor, charges between €25 and €99. These figures guide pricing considerations, which will ultimately reflect the value Bridgely delivers, such as reduced prospecting time and more reliable sales pipelines.

In summary, Bridgely's subscription-based model, supported by targeted partnerships to reduce CAC and operational efficiency, ensures scalable and cost-effective growth. While pricing and costs will be further refined through development, these foundational elements already point to a promising and sustainable path forward.

9. Impact Assessment

Understanding the impact Bridgely might have requires thoughtful exploration of how its usage might influence broader ecosystems, including both its direct users and the ripple effects of their success. Bridgely's core mission is to empower sustainability-driven companies to improve their sales effectiveness and efficiency while fostering collaboration among sales professionals. This aligns closely with systemic goals of driving positive economic, psychological, and environmental change through enhanced sales practices.

To evaluate this potential and understand the ripple effect, we use frameworks like the Simfoni impact assessment process, which provides a structured approach for understanding the impact of projects or strategies (Simfoni, n.d.). It emphasizes the importance of measuring both direct and indirect effects, creating a comprehensive view of the value created. Applying these principles, this section outlines the three primary dimensions of Bridgely's potential impact: sustainability amplification through client success, psychological benefits for salespeople, and economic empowerment for small businesses.

8.1 Indirect Impact: Impact on Sustainability Through Client Success

Small sustainability-focused companies face unique challenges in scaling their operations. Their budgets seldom include expensive inbound marketing campaigns, forcing them to rely heavily on outbound strategies, which are increasingly crowded and inefficient (Chapter 3.2). Bridgely addresses this problem by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their sales efforts, enabling these companies to close more deals while minimizing costs (Chapter 4).

The potential for indirect sustainability impact arises through Bridgely's target clients. By supporting businesses that are in their core focused on generating positive environmental or social change, Bridgely acts as an amplifier for their impact. Each additional deal closed by these companies translates into measurable benefits - which when aggregated across all Bridgely users, might surpass the direct contributions of individual companies, amplifying sustainability outcomes on a systemic level. To realize this potential, we must prioritize partnerships with sustainability-oriented companies to align our platform to our impact-mission.

To measure our indirect impact, CRM integrations can be used to track the number and value of deals closed through the platform, while client surveys can provide qualitative insights into the role Bridgely plays in helping to close deals.

8.2 Direct Impact: Psychological Impact on Salespeople

Next to indirect impact, we made it our mission to contribute to the wellbeing of a very stressful profession: being a Salesperson. These typically experience high stress and performance pressure, as your salary is directly linked to your performance. This makes them very susceptible to burnout - specifically sales burnout. This is a well-documented phenomenon, defined by emotional exhaustion, a diminished sense of personal accomplishment, and detachment from work (Maslach and Leiter 2016), with salespeople struggling with depression

more than three times higher than colleagues in non-sales roles (Lussier et al. 2023). Drivers of burnout include role ambiguity, intense performance pressure, and a lack of social support, as highlighted by Babakus et al. (1999). These stressors are very prevalent in sales, where individual performance metrics such as revenue targets and deal closures are paramount.

Because of this, we want to help by creating a sense of togetherness, putting collaboration over competition. Research by Maslach et al. (2001) underscores the value of collaborative environments in mitigating burnout, as they provide the social support and reduced individual pressure necessary for psychological well-being. To move this from theory to practice, we need to clearly measure our impact on psychological well-being. This will mostly rely on pre- and post-adoption surveys, focusing on metrics such as emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and team cohesion. Retention rates and qualitative testimonials from sales professionals using Bridgely can further illustrate its role in reducing stress and improving workplace culture.

8.3 Economic Empowerment of Small Companies

For small businesses, reducing CAC is a critical factor in achieving financial sustainability. In this, Bridgely enables small companies to enhance their sales efficiency and close more deals at lower costs (see Chapter 4). By streamlining outreach efforts and providing enriched, high-quality leads, we reduce the resources wasted on ineffective operations, allowing small companies to allocate funds more effectively (see Chapter 3.3). The economic benefits of this improved efficiency extend beyond individual businesses. As small companies achieve greater stability, they are better positioned to create jobs, invest in local economies, and build resilience against market fluctuations. These outcomes contribute to broader economic empowerment, reinforcing Bridgely's mission of supporting small businesses. These impacts can be measured through metrics such as reductions in CAC, increases in deal velocity, and revenue growth patterns pre- and post-adoption of Bridgely.

10. Discussion and Outlook

This discussion reflects on Bridgely's development journey, placing it within the context of broader trends in sales technology and AI. It highlights key insights from validation efforts, addresses challenges identified during development, and outlines pathways for refinement and future research. By examining Bridgely's role in an evolving B2B sales environment, this chapter explores its potential as a scalable and impactful solution.

10.1 The Role of AI in Sales

AI has become a critical component of the sales industry, automating repetitive tasks and optimizing processes to enhance efficiency. It is widely applied in lead scoring, outreach personalization, and workflow automation, helping sales teams identify potential customers, tailor messaging, and streamline pipeline management (Fischer 2022). These advancements significantly increase the efficiency of SDRs and BDRs, particularly for early adopters. However, as more companies integrate AI into their workflows, the already noisy and crowded outbound sales environment may become even more challenging to navigate. In the short term, this amplifies the need for solutions like Bridgely, which can facilitate meaningful first contacts.

Beyond its supporting role, AI is discussed to have the potential to fully replace certain sales roles. A study by Luo et al. (Luo et al. 2019), demonstrates that AI can perform highly structured outbound sales calls as effectively as experienced sales personnel. However, the study also revealed a 79.7% drop in conversion rates when prospects realized they were interacting with AI. While this study focused on a B2C financial services company in Asia, it highlights both the promise and limitations of AI in sales.

For B2B sales, where deal volumes are often larger and relationships are more complex, human interaction remains essential. Even as AI increasingly takes over prospecting and lead qualification tasks, challenges like market noise and deal nurturing will persist. Bridgely`s

value proposition still holds for this evolving landscape by offering a collaborative lead-sharing platform that complements AI-driven efficiencies while addressing the human-centric aspects of B2B sales.

Bridgely not only recognizes the transformative role of AI in sales but also plans to integrate established AI practices into the platform`s core functionalities. Our research highlighted the need for robust quality assurance mechanisms to filter out low-quality leads and match shared leads to businesses based on their ICP and value proposition. While further research and validation are required, Bridgely could leverage OpenAI's GPT API to implement these functionalities cost-effectively. For example, GPT-4's ability to analyze text-based lead descriptions could enable AI-powered lead scoring and matching.

By not only acknowledging but also integrating AI, Bridgely is well-positioned to remain relevant both in the short term and as AI continues to reshape the sales industry.

10.2 Impact Assessment and Validation Needs

Bridgely's potential impact spans sustainability amplification, psychological well-being, and economic empowerment, as laid out in Chapter 8. However, while these dimensions highlight Bridgely's promise, they remain primarily theoretical. Comprehensive measurement frameworks should be deployed to validate these claims across different sectors and user bases. Examples include tracking deal outcomes through CRM systems, conducting longitudinal studies and collecting testimonials to assess qualitative improvements in sales culture and efficiency.

The current impact assessment faces two primary challenges: reliance on self-reported metrics and the complexity of attribution in multi-factor sales environments. Self-reported data, while useful for initial validation, is prone to biases that may distort findings. Objective, third-party data sources are essential for more accurate evaluations. Attribution complexity further

complicates assessing Bridgely's role, as closed deals may also result from external market conditions, product improvements, or other tools. Addressing these limitations requires more complex data sources, including surveys, CRM analytics, and qualitative interviews, to provide a fuller picture of Bridgely's impact. Developing sector-specific pilots could also provide more granular insights into indirect and direct impacts.

10.3 Limitations of Validation Efforts

Current validation efforts for the Bridgely model rely primarily on interviews, surveys, and experiments. While these approaches provide valuable insights, they lack practical testing with real data in active sales environments. This limitation prevents a full evaluation of usability, adoption rates, and the effectiveness of Bridgely's lead-sharing features.

Another significant gap is the absence of detailed financial data on pricing strategies and user willingness to pay. These dynamics are critical for validating financial feasibility and ensuring long-term sustainability. Key ROI metrics, such as CAC and Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), remain incomplete and require further research and iteration.

10.4 Future Research Directions

Further research is needed to address these limitations and refine Bridgely's potential as a scalable solution. Conducting an additional Build-Measure-Learn (BML) loop is necessary to validate Bridgely's suitability as a deal-nurturing tool, as highlighted in Cycle 5. This process will clarify whether lead sharing or deal nurturing better aligns with market needs and user pain points, guiding Bridgely's strategic direction.

The development of a fully functional MVP, as indicated in Cycle 4, is critical to overcoming current constraints. A full-code MVP would enable practical testing in live sales environments, allowing for the evaluation of adoption rates, user behaviors, and the tangible impact of lead sharing. Such testing would also facilitate iterative improvements and provide insights into how

network effects—like user growth—impact lead quality, trust, and engagement, which are vital for scaling Bridgely.

Moreover, conducting controlled pricing experiments and leveraging financial models to predict ROI will help determine the most viable pricing strategy. This data will be crucial for ensuring Bridgely's long-term financial sustainability and competitiveness.

In summary, Bridgely has demonstrated early promise as an innovative solution to inefficiencies in B2B sales processes. However, further work is required to validate its value proposition through live testing, refine financial models, and explore its full potential in cross-company environments. With continued iteration and real-world validation, Bridgely has the potential to deliver significant economic and societal impact, empowering startups to achieve sustainable growth.

11. Conclusion

This thesis addressed a critical question: can collaborative lead-sharing networks improve sales efficiency and accelerate growth for impact-driven startups? By exploring this challenge, it highlighted inefficiencies in traditional sales processes, particularly for startups constrained by resources and the dual objectives of profit and purpose. Bridgely emerged as a proposed solution, building on a collaborative lead-sharing ecosystem to help prospecting efficiency.

Our research findings revealed that saturation in outbound prospecting demands innovative approaches to connecting with ICPs. Bridgely's focus on leveraging collaboration and contextualized lead-sharing offers a novel way to tackle these challenges, creating a shared ecosystem where sales teams can amplify their efforts while minimizing redundancies.

However, significant challenges remain. Data quality and privacy concerns must be addressed to ensure trust within the ecosystem, especially for sensitive sales information. Moreover, while theoretical contributions highlight Bridgely's promise, live testing in active sales environments

is necessary to validate its impact and refine its functionalities. These include exploring pricing strategies, ROI metrics, and network effects critical to the model's long-term scalability.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Problem Identification

Table A.1: Inefficiencies in Lead Qualification

Pain Point	Reason	Implication	Source
Time wasted on disqualifying leads	Lack of robust prequalification processes	Delayed prospecting and inefficiencies in reaching ideal prospects	SDR at Mercanis: "The team spends far too much time disqualifying dead ends. It's inefficient, and it slows down our whole process of reaching the right prospects."
Onboarding wrong prospects	Insufficient criteria for identifying non-converting leads	Low conversion rates and wasted resources	Head of Sales at NetZero: "We analyzed our sales process and found that the lowest conversion happened after giving out free trials. It made us realize our qualification process wasn't strict enough—we were onboarding the wrong people."
Pipeline bloat	External leads not qualified enough	Distorted metrics, inefficiency in pipeline management	SDR at Planted: "We had to add an additional cycle step for our SDRs to have a pre-discovery call with leads in order to really qualify them for the AEs, otherwise we had unaccounted bloat in our pipeline, that didn't realistically have a chance of conversion."
Educational barrier in qualification	Limited market awareness	Added complexity in sales funnel	Marketing Manager at GoParity: "We have to do a lot of education to qualify leads, which adds another layer of complexity to our sales funnel."

Table A.2: Challenges in Sourcing High-Quality Leads

Pain Point	**Reason**	**Implications**	**Source**
Inefficiencies in data sources	High costs and low reliability of external lead databases	Increased manual effort and reduced ROI on sourcing	SDR at Mercanis: "We've shied away from using external data sources because the results weren't reliable enough to qualify their price point. Now, we employ freelancers to manually enrich leads."
Manual enrichment challenges	Overwhelming manual research needs	Inefficient targeting and time-intensive sourcing	Founder of Bleane: "Identifying our target group takes a lot of time and effort."
Broad campaigns yield low-quality data	Poorly targeted outbound campaigns	Inefficient prospecting and reduced trust in data quality	Head of Sales at Thermosphr: "I have thought about buying external leads and running large outbound campaigns (i.e. cold-emails) on them, but I have a feeling that it is like looking for a needle in a haystack."
Skepticism in complex markets	Complexity of markets and audience skepticism	Preference for tailored outreach	SDR at GoodCarbon: "We've worked with Magnify and Sopro, but the market is so complex and prospects are so unsure that tailored outreach is much more successful."

Table A.3: Misalignment Between Sales Teams and ICPs

Pain Point	**Reason**	**Implications**	**Source**
Evolving ICPs	Constant changes in target audience	Reduced efficiency and adaptability in sales strategies	Founder of Bleane: "When you're trying to achieve product-market fit, your ICP evolves constantly. It's hard for sales teams to adapt quickly, which leads to inefficiencies."
Freelancer alignment issues	Poor communication of ICP specifics	Misalignment and inefficiency in targeting	Head of Partnerships at NetZero: "We're still figuring out who our ideal customer is. Working with

			freelancers hasn’t worked because they didn’t understand who we were targeting—it’s an ongoing challenge."
Unstructured collaboration	Lack of clear processes for SDR and AE collaboration	Inefficiencies in pipeline and lost opportunities	SDR at Planted: "Pre-discovery calls are essential to avoid pipeline bloat."
Unfinalized ICPs impact sales	Inability to finalize ICPs	Lost opportunities and lower conversion rates	Co-Founder at ESGate: "We’re in a discovery phase, and that affects how well we can target and convert leads."

Table A.4: Lack of Actionable Insights in CRM Data

Pain Point	**Reason**	**Implications**	**Source**
Decaying leads	Lack of systematic CRM management processes	Reduced ability to leverage historical data for future campaigns	SDR at Mercanis: "Previously, we’ve engaged in generic outreach which resulted in more than 10,000 burnt leads that are simply decaying in our CRM."
Untapped CRM potential	Poor organizational workflows	CRM becomes a storage space rather than an actionable tool	Founder of Bleane: "Our CRM could be a powerful tool, but without clear data on who we’re targeting, it ends up being just a storage space for unused contacts."

Table A.5: Premature Scaling

Pain Point	**Reason**	**Implications**	**Source**
Hiring challenges	Lack of resources and operational readiness	Financial and operational inefficiencies	Founder of _blaenk: "Sales is demanding; hiring adds overhead, and outsourcing risks our brand."
Limited capacity for founders	Sales often falls on founders due to lack of a dedicated sales team	Founders' time is consumed by operational sales tasks, limiting strategic focus	Founder of _blaenk: "Sales typically operates on an exec-to-exec level, requiring a lot of time from me as the founder and MD."

Table A.6: Hyper-Ambitious Revenue Targets

Pain Point	**Reason**	**Implications**	**Source**
High revenue expectations	Overly ambitious targets for funding rounds	Pressure on sales teams and unrealistic expectations	Head of Partnerships at NetZero: "If we don't meet revenue targets, we won't raise the next round."
Dependency on scaling revenue	Investor demands for rapid growth	Creates short-term focus on hitting numbers over building sustainable sales pipelines	Founder of Generosa: "After this current round of funding, we're required to 10x our current revenue."

Table A.7: Ineffective Outbound Sales

Pain Point	**Reason**	**Implications**	**Source**
Ineffectiveness in traditional outbound methods	Complexity of markets and conservative ICPs	Wasted resources and limited ROI on outbound campaigns	SDR at GoodCarbon: "Tailored outreach is much more successful in complex markets."
Lack of tailored approaches	Reliance on generic campaigns	High rejection rates and burnt leads	SDR at Mercanis: "We are currently deploying Clay for lead enrichment to guarantee relevance of our outbounds. Before that, we were just trying

			everything, which created over 10,000 fully discarded leads."
Misaligned outreach strategies	Conservative and niche ICP preferences	Outbound sales channels like cold calling or emailing fail to resonate	Sales Manager at Tradias: "Large scale outbound sales never worked because our ICP are conservative executives who don't want to be contacted via email or phone call but prefer conversations during lunch."

Appendix B: Bridgely Problem-Solution Fit

Table B.1: Problems Identified that Bridgely Solves

Problem	**Details**	**How Bridgely Solves It**
Inefficiencies in Lead Qualification	Sales teams spend excessive time disqualifying leads that do not align with their ICPs, leading to wasted opportunities and operational bottlenecks.	Bridgely converts disqualified leads into valuable opportunities for others by sharing them with added contextual insights.
Inefficiencies in Lead Qualification	Manual qualification processes dominate, reducing efficiency and increasing time-to-engagement with the right prospects.	By minimizing reliance on manual disqualification, Bridgely streamlines workflows and allows teams to focus on high-priority leads.
Challenges in Sourcing High-Quality Leads	High-quality leads are difficult to source, requiring time-intensive manual enrichment or expensive external databases with inconsistent reliability.	Bridgely creates a shared ecosystem where pre-qualified leads with actionable insights are exchanged, reducing dependency on databases.
Challenges in Sourcing High-Quality Leads	Manual sourcing often yields inconsistent results and consumes significant resources.	The ecosystem offers a steady pipeline of high-intent leads enriched with detailed context, minimizing guesswork and wasted effort.
Misalignment Between Sales Teams and ICPs	Evolving ICPs lead to inefficiencies in targeting, pipeline bloat, and lost sales opportunities	Bridgely enables companies to share leads that don't fit their ICPs but align with others,

	as sales strategies struggle to adapt.	helping participants refine their targeting.
Misalignment Between Sales Teams and ICPs	Disqualified leads are often wasted despite being relevant for other companies with complementary USPs.	By leveraging shared insights, Bridgely ensures leads are not wasted and allows for greater agility in adapting to shifting ICPs.

Table B.2: Problems Identified that Bridgely Partially Solves

Problem	**Details**	**How Bridgely Partially Solves It**	**Remaining Gaps**
Lack of Actionable Insights in CRM Data	Many companies lack clear workflows for CRM data, resulting in poor organization, decaying data, and limited actionable insights.	Bridgely indirectly contributes by providing higher-quality leads with enriched data that can improve CRM utilization.	Bridgely assumes participants have functional CRM workflows to manage and prioritize shared leads.
Premature Scaling	Early-stage companies face challenges balancing the need for efficient sales processes with the risks of hiring or outsourcing.	Bridgely reduces the urgency for scaling by providing a reliable pipeline of qualified leads to sustain sales efforts.	Organizational scaling requires broader strategies beyond the scope of lead sharing or Bridgely's ecosystem.
Hyper-Ambitious Revenue Targets	Startups often face pressure to achieve rapid revenue growth, influenced by investor expectations and market competition.	Bridgely improves pipeline efficiency and predictability, helping participants approach targets with better resources.	Unrealistic targets depend on external factors beyond Bridgely's ability to address.

Table B.3: Problems Identified that Bridgely does not Solve

Problem	**Details**	**Reason Bridgely Does Not Solve It**
Lack of Actionable	Poor data management and inadequate workflows hinder CRM effectiveness,	CRM workflows are outside Bridgely's scope. Companies need existing systems to

Insights in CRM Data	delaying deal closures and strategic decision-making.	integrate shared leads effectively.
Premature Scaling	Decisions to hire or outsource sales roles require significant financial and operational considerations, often creating organizational challenges.	Bridgely provides tools to reduce immediate scaling needs but cannot replace strategic decisions about hiring or structure.

Appendix E: Learnings of RampUp Validation

Table E.1: RampUp's Key Validation Criteria

Aspects	**Confirming Insights**	**Disconfirming Insights**	**Key Takeaway**	**Source**
Value Proposition	Generosa validated the need for outsourced sales and willingness to pay for the service.	Helga highlighted that agencies often work with low probability leads, making it difficult to guarantee SQL results.	While demand exists, scalability issues and delivery challenges make the current model unsustainable.	Generosa Interview; Lead Results Interview
-	Martin Bressem (Blaenk) emphasized the need for transparency in outsourcing, validating the value of offering sales intelligence reports.	Mentors (Brian Tam, Rebecca Saltman) questioned whether the model aligns with the mission of creating systemic impact.	Transparency is critical but not a sufficient differentiator in this saturated market.	Blaenk Interview; Mentor Discussions
-	Cordes + Graefe and Bleank expressed interest in an outsourced agency to enable faster scaling and leaner operations.	Mentors highlighted the difficulty of defining a unique value proposition in a competitive market.	Demand exists, but differentiation remains challenging in a crowded competitive landscape.	Cordes & Graefe Interview; _blaenk Interview; Mentor Discussions

Hypotheses 1: Sales Challenges	Startups (e.g., Mykor, Phineo Startups, Trash4Goods) confirmed sales as a critical growth barrier.	Generosa, Mykor and others faced universal sales challenges, undermining the assumption that impact startups have unique needs.	Sales challenges exist but are not exclusive to impact startups, reducing the niche appeal of the solution and limiting uniqueness opportunities in the value proposition.	Mykor, Phineo Startups, Trash4Good, Generosa Interviews
Hypothesis 2: Willingness	Blaenk and Cordes + Graefe confirmed willingness to outsource if transparency concerns are addressed.	Trash4Goods raised concerns about transparency and brand alignment, which could hinder willingness to outsource.	Willingness is conditional and does not guarantee adoption without substantial adjustments.	_blaenk, Cordes & Graefe, Trash4Good Interviews
Hypothesis 3: SQL Value	SQLs are valuable and monetizable, as evidenced by a company's current use of an agency and willingness to pay.	A companies low payment threshold (€800/month) challenges the financial viability of delivering SQLs sustainably.	SQLs are valuable but may not align with startups' limited budgets, challenging revenue sustainability.	Interview with anonymized company
Assumption: Competitive Landscape	Generosa's experience validated the prevalence of competitors in the space, confirming the saturated market.	Mentors noted that differentiation is extremely challenging due to competition.	The competitive landscape is saturated, requiring significant differentiation to succeed.	Generosa Interview; Mentor Discussions
Assumption: Unique Challenges	-	Insights from Cycle 1 showed that many sales challenges faced by impact startups are similar to those	Impact startups face challenges, but they are not sufficiently unique to warrant a niche focus, further limiting	Interviews

		of traditional startups.	differentiation possibilities.	
Operational Challenges	Startups' use of CRM tools indicates adherence to best practices, enabling integration with existing systems.	Helga highlighted that scaling the agency model is difficult in Portugal due to a lack of qualified personnel.	Operational inefficiencies and resource limitations challenge the scalability of the model.	Lead Results Interview
Operational Challenges	-	Agencies require deep alignment with client value propositions, adding complexity to onboarding and execution processes.	This complexity hinders the agency's ability to scale efficiently.	Lead Results Interview
Team Utilization	-	Mentor feedback revealed underutilization of Jakob's expertise in business and informatics, limiting scalability potential.	Leveraging all team members' skills is essential for creating a scalable and innovative solution.	Mentor Discussions
Team Utilization	-	Several startups identified challenges beyond sales, such as onboarding processes and difficulty hiring qualified personnel.	Addressing broader challenges may offer alternative opportunities for impact and innovation.	Interviews

Table E.2: Comparing RampUp's and Bridgely's Solution Scope

Challenge	RampUp	Bridgely	Resolution
Scalability	Dependent on scaling through additional personnel, constrained by limited qualified professionals in Portugal and a single-seller team.	Software-based solution that eliminates dependence on personnel scaling by leveraging a platform model.	Bridgely offers scalability without relying on human resources, addressing a major limitation of RampUp.
Differentiation	Minimal differentiation due to saturated agency market and lack of unique value proposition; impact startups face challenges similar to traditional businesses.	Clear differentiation through a disruptive idea of collaboration in sales, addressing a distinct inefficiency in prospecting.	Bridgely provides a blue ocean like solution that sets it apart from both traditional agencies and general CRM systems.
Financial Feasibility	€800/month willingness to pay from startups fell short of operational costs required to deliver SQLs.	Platform model reduces fixed operational costs while offering a scalable revenue stream through subscription or transaction-based pricing.	Bridgely aligns financial feasibility with customer affordability and sustainable business operations.
Operational Complexity	Misaligned client value propositions and handling low-conversion leads increased onboarding time and inefficiencies.	Simplified operational model focuses on enabling users to share and access prequalified leads directly via the platform.	Bridgely streamlines operations, reducing complexity while addressing user needs directly.
Underutilized Skills	Jakob's business informatics expertise was underleveraged in the RampUp agency model.	Software development and platform management align directly with Jakob's informatics expertise while Finn's	Bridgely fully utilizes team strengths, especially in informatics and prospecting.

		expertise in prospecting is as relevant as ever.	
Innovation Potential	RampUp risked duplicating existing agency solutions without meaningful innovation.	Bridgely introduces a novel lead-sharing model, leveraging technology to address specific pain points in prospecting.	Bridgely fosters true innovation, aligning with the team's ambition to build a impactful and original solution.

Appendix F: Sales Related Problems Identified for Impact Startups

Table F.1: Sales Related Problems Identified for Impact Startups

Best Practices	Companies	Growth & Efficiencies	Companies
Defining & Finding Unique Selling Point/ Value Proposition	NetZero Insights; Bleane; Future Energy Solutions	Market Maturity/ Educating Customers	GoParity, Set Ventures
Identifying Ideal/ Target Customer Profile	NetZero Insights; Bleane;	Automation	Kayo Impacto
		Companies Attractiveness while hiring	Bleane
		Meeting Revenue targets after funding	NetZero Insights
		Inefficiencies/ Optimization	NetZero Insights
		Converting free users to paying users	NetZero Insights
		No on demad sales department available	Bleane
		Reaching large amounts of potential customers	GoParity
		Brand Awareness and Recognition	Filtralife
		Long Sales Cycles	Filtralife

Appendix G:

Table G.1:

Dimension	Findings	Source
Organizational Structure	Silos between AEs and Specialized Sellers hinder cross-departmental lead sharing.	SAP Interviews
CRM Effectiveness	C4C system is underutilized due to complexity and time-consuming processes.	AE at SAP: "Lead creation is too time-consuming"; Presales Executive at SAP: "Complexity deters usage."
Cultural Barriers	Individual KPIs discourage collaboration.	AE at SAP: "Disqualified leads are seen as irrelevant by other departments."
Informal Processes	Most lead sharing occurs informally via personal networks.	Presales Executive at SAP: "Leads are often shared through emails, bypassing formal systems."
Opportunities for Incentives	Incentive structures could drive participation in lead sharing.	Presales Executive at SAP: "A reward system could encourage engagement."

Appendix H: Cross-Company Lead Sharing Model Validation Insights

Table H.1: Cross-Company Lead Sharing Model Validation Insights

Learning Dimension	Findings	Source(s)
Sales Process Structure	Outbound sales dominate in startups due to budget constraints, making manual lead generation critical.	"As a startup, we start with cold calling, email marketing... it's a necessary evil." – Head of Sales Hier Foods; "Lead generation is very manual." – SDR at Mercadis
Sales Process Structure	SDRs gather highly relevant business insights during outreach that can be valuable for other industries.	"Our SDRs often hear about dentists' challenges, which could benefit recruitment industries." – Head of Sales at Dental Technology Startup; "Discovery Calls provide detailed insights." – Managing Director at HR Startup
Sales Process Structure	Discovery calls improve lead qualification, reducing pipeline bloat.	"Pre-discovery calls with SDRs prevent bloated pipelines and unqualified AEs." – SDR at Planted; "Unqualified discovery calls lead to inefficiencies." – SDR at Mercadis
Lead Quality Concerns	External lead databases are costly and unreliable, leading to poor-quality leads.	"External lead databases are expensive, with data quality equivalent to best-guess emails." – Head of Sales at Hier Foods; "Data from RocketReach is often irrelevant." – SDR at Mercadis
Lead Quality Concerns	Manual research by freelancers yields higher-quality leads than third-party databases.	"Freelancers guess emails and phone numbers, which is more reliable than databases." – SDR at Mercadis;

		"Relying on manual research produces better results." – SDR at Planted
Context in Lead Sharing	Discovery calls produce rich contextual data (e.g., pain points, decision-making structures).	"Discovery Calls provide detailed insights on company problems, solutions, and decision-makers." - Managing Director (HR Technology Startup); "Pain points from discovery add actionable value." - SDR (Mercadis)
Context in Lead Sharing	Contextualized data significantly enhances the value of shared leads.	"If the lead has no context, it's just another name in the database." - SDR (Mercadis); "Sharing leads without context reduces their usability." - Managing Director (HR Technology Startup)
Outbound Challenges	Outbound efforts face increased difficulty due to market noise and unqualified outreach.	"Outbound efforts are harder due to market noise; we need to cut through that." - SDR (Mercadis); "Outbound leads often lack context, making outreach inefficient." - Yannik Moll (Growably)
Trust and Data Security	GDPR and privacy concerns are key barriers to cross-company lead sharing.	"Privacy is a big concern, especially with GDPR laws." - SDR (Mercadis); "Data sharing must comply with GDPR to protect customer trust." - Managing Director (HR Technology Startup)
Trust and Data Security	Sharing leads with competitors is risky without clear safeguards.	"Sharing leads with external companies is risky, especially when sensitive data is involved." - Managing Director (HR Technology Startup); "Competitive risks make open sharing difficult." - Co-Founder (Standsome)
Openness to Collaboration	Startups in complementary industries show a willingness to collaborate on lead sharing.	"There's potential in cross-company lead sharing, especially if leads are well-targeted." - Head of Sales (Hier Foods); "Sustainability sectors align better for collaborative efforts." - Head of Sales (Thermosphr)
Openness to Collaboration	Collaborative mindsets in sustainability sectors foster openness to lead sharing.	"Sustainability-driven companies are more open to partnerships and lead-sharing." - Co-Founder (Standsome); "Sustainability fosters mission-driven collaboration." - Head of Sales (Hier Foods)
Incentive Structures	Incentives, such as enriched data or credit-based systems, could drive adoption.	"A credit-based ecosystem could incentivize lead-sharing participation." - SDR (Mercadis); "Participation depends on gaining more than losing." - Managing Director (HR Technology Startup)
Incentive Structures	Companies are open to lead sharing when there's a clear net benefit.	"I'd only participate if I gained more than I gave." - Managing Director (HR Technology Startup); "Incentives must ensure net-positive outcomes for all participants." - Co-Founder (Standsome)
Lead Enrichment	Enriched leads (e.g., decision-making hierarchy, budgets, pain points) reduce prospecting effort.	"Leads with contextualized data improve prioritization and targeting." - Managing Director (HR Technology Startup); "Enriched insights from discovery calls enhance re-engagement potential." - SDR (Mercadis)
Lead Enrichment	Contextual data from complementary industries offers mutual benefit.	"Pre-qualified, enriched leads could help streamline outreach." - SDR (Mercadis); "Contextualized leads reduce redundancy and improve targeting." - Head of Sales (Dental Technology Startup)

Appendix I: Real Estate Agents and Mortgage Broker Survey

Table I.1: Real Estate Agents and Mortgage Broker Survey to Quantify Lead Sharing Value

	Average Answer Based on 94 Responses
Frequency of Lead Sharing (0-10)	4,86
Impact on Deal Completion (0-10)	7,27
Benefit of Collaboration (0-10)	7,32
Importance of Lead Qualification Info (0-10)	8

Appendix M: Survey Results

Table M.1: Analysing Results from Data Point Preferences Survey

Criteria	**Essential**	**Nice to Have**	**Unnecessary**
Decision Maker	33	2	2
Pain Point / Needs	30	2	1
Last Contact	25	6	17
Industry	24	21	2
Budget	24	23	1
Buying Intent	21	19	0
Estimated Response Rate	17	26	12
Posting Date	16	3	16
Location (Country + City)	15	22	2
Comment	6	20	14
LinkedIn Profile	0	21	0
None	0	0	10
Other	0	2	4

Appendix Q: Problem-Solution Matrix of Bridgely Ecosystem

Table Q.1: Problem-Solution Matrix of Bridgely Ecosystem

Competitor	Problem Solved	How Solved	Limitations
Leadfellow	Facilitates lead-sharing through one-to-one and one-to-many mechanisms.	Monetary incentives tied to closed deals.	Lacks industry focus; requires users to work outside CRM; inconsistent data quality due to undefined data points.
Crossbeam	Identifies overlapping accounts and facilitates trusted referrals.	CRM integration with updated data snapshots.	Poor scalability in larger ecosystems; relies solely on CRM imports, limiting flexibility.
PartnerStack	Incentivizes ecosystem collaboration by monetizing Ecosystem Qualified Leads (EQLs).	Customizable referral rules and pricing for EQLs.	Monetizes EQLs rather than closed deals, which may compromise lead quality.
Apollo	Provides extensive lead databases with filters for ICP identification.	Regularly updated contact and company data.	Does not repurpose disqualified leads; lacks contextual insights; data reliability depends on traffic frequency.
LinkedIn Sales Navigator	Enables ICP targeting with advanced search filters.	Access to LinkedIn's professional network; platform-specific direct outreach tools.	Limited to LinkedIn platform; lacks native CRM integration for streamlined workflows; no cross-platform lead management.
ZoomInfo	Enriches lead data with macro-level company insights.	Extensive database of organizational and financial information.	Focuses on company-level rather than lead-level data; lacks granular or contextualized insights tailored to individual prospects.
Clay	Enriches existing lead lists with actionable insights.	Highly specific enrichment features, such as identifying contact details and engagement history.	Does not create shared lead ecosystems; focuses solely on data enrichment, not lead sharing or qualification.
Honeysales	Addresses outbound inefficiencies by scheduling high-quality meetings for clients.	Identifies ICPs and facilitates meeting setups.	Limited to meeting facilitation; does not manage the broader sales pipeline or enable lead repurposing.
Salesforce/HubSpot	Centralizes CRM data for sales and pipeline management.	Comprehensive tools for managing sales pipelines and visualizing data.	No features to repurpose disqualified leads; disqualified leads remain

			static within the CRM without added value.
Pipedrive	Simplifies pipeline management and lead tracking.	Offers integrations with enrichment tools like Clay or ZoomInfo.	Does not support lead-sharing mechanisms; enrichment relies on third-party integrations rather than native capabilities.