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MANAGEMENT INSIGHTS

WHATS INSIDE

How to Create a High-Performance Sales Team, PART 3

Highlighted in the two previous Sales Management Insights Reports were the importance of goal-setting and attitude, as key attributes of high-performance sales teams.

Part 3 focuses on structure, as the third key attribute from the Velocify survey of sales managers. In this context, structure refers to the sales process, the lead follow-up process and the sales performance measurement process.

Although it's not surprising that high-performing sales organization have closely monitored, strictly enforced and/or automated sales process structures, 26% of respondents to the Velocify survey said they were able to perform at a high level with an informal structure.

The trend lines are very similar when sales managers were asked about the structure of their lead follow-up process, although, again, almost one-quarter of high-performing organizations are able to excel with an informal structure.

Consistently measuring salespeople's results compared to their quotas and holding them accountable was, as one would expect, a structural process that sales managers at high-performing organizations agreed was important. Notice that a significant percentage of sales managers at both average-performing and low-performing organizations were in agreement with the need for results/quota measurement and accountability.

Sales Process Structure, 2015

Structure	High-Performing Organizations	Average-Performing Organizations	Low-Performing Organizations
Non-existent	3%	4%	8%
Informal	26%	28%	40%
Well-documented	22%	28%	24%
Closely monitored	36%	25%	16%
Strictly enforced or automated	14%	10%	10%

Velocify, 2015

Lead Follow-up Process Structure, 2015

Structure	High-Performing Organizations	Average-Performing Organizations	Low-Performing Organizations
Non-existent	5%	5%	7%
Informal	23%	38%	32%
Well-documented	24%	23%	23%
Closely monitored	29%	21%	22%
Strictly enforced or automated	18%	11%	14%

Velocify, 2015

Salespeople Quota Accountability, 2015

Level of Agreement	High-Performing Organizations	Average-Performing Organizations	Low-Performing Organizations
Strongly agree	29%	16%	13%
Agree	38%	47%	34%
Neither agree or disagree	20%	20%	33%
Disagree	8%	9%	13%
Strongly disagree	2%	4%	2%

Velocify, 2015

How to Maximize the Value of Sales Meetings, Part 1

Despite the capabilities of digital technology to enhance the sales process, the interaction of two or more humans in a sales meeting remains the crux of the process.

Therefore, few techniques are more important for your sales team to understand and hone than those that lead to efficient, effective and highly productive sales meetings. Share the following before-the-meeting techniques in your next training session to help your team improve their sales meeting outcomes.

1. Don't ask for a sales meeting, especially with prospects who don't know you, until you can provide a referral or share a bit of information that may address a prospect's pain point.

2. Bend over backwards to accommodate a prospect or client's schedule for the meeting. No doubt, your team has had to meet with retail clients during the late evening or even weekends.

   Although a bit informal, suggest a sales meeting outside the client's office or retail setting to take him or her from the hustle and bustle of the business. A park, sidewalk café or other fresh-air venue may be highly appreciated.

3. Do your homework. Although it is appropriate to ask a few questions prior to the meeting, don't waste the prospect or client's time by asking for basic information about the business that can be obtained from an Internet search. Part of your homework should include educating yourself about the client's industry or retail sector, which is another reason your MEDIACENTER membership is so valuable.

   Don't hesitate to visit the business, especially if it is a retailer, to observe the merchandise offered and the level of customer service. You may recognize issues and problems that you can share during the sales meeting of which the client wasn't aware. Even if he or she knows about these pain points, then you can help build initial trust by demonstrating that you already understand them – and have formulated some solutions.

4. Create a documented agenda that is brief and share it with the client prior to the meeting, by email, and invite him or her to add any points he or she deems important.

Part 2 of this story will appear in the next Sales Management Insights Report and will focus on techniques during a sales meeting.

What You Don't Do Can Make You More Productive, PART 3

Here are the final 7 tasks salespeople should refuse to do to be more productive. Once you've shared/discussed all 19 with your team, ask them to note when, during the next few weeks, they've put them into practice, and then share during future staff meetings what they've learned.

13. Set a time limit for tasks.

Assign a time limit or deadline for every task instead of using whatever amount you just happen to expend. You might exceed the limit the first few times, but eventually you'll know how much time to allocate for answering client emails, upgrading a lead list, etc.

14. Don't waste your career working for a bad boss

Yes, it may disrupt your life, you may even have to move, but there is no value working for someone who is rude, a poor leader/mentor and is not genuinely interested in your success.

15. Live a proactive life.

Being inactive, both physically and intellectually, leads to boredom and unhappiness that will likely negatively affect your professional life. Limit your couch-potato, Netflix-binge-watching sessions and spend more time outdoors and being active. Discover new interests that are challenging and stimulating.

16. Escape the noise.

Not only are humans assailed by a gazillion visual messages every waking moment of the day, but those moments are also filled with a cacophony of noise – and much of it is meaningless. Schedule some time daily, if possible, and find a silent place.

17. Once is enough.

Even if you can't go totally paperless, as suggested in part 2 of this story, then do your best to handle the same document or address an email just once. When you must refer to a document, complete the task to which it relates, so you don't have to return to the document, email, etc.

18. Hire a housekeeper.

After a long day in sales, no one wants to do housekeeping chores. Entering a clean, refreshed home is one of the best ways to start the end of your day. Work hard and earn enough money to hire a housekeeper.

19. Be bigger than the trolls.

Your social media feeds will likely include comments from people commonly known as trolls. They have a right to their opinions, regardless of how uninformed, illogically or irrational they are, but don't waste your time responding – or even reading them.

The Sales Training Paradox

According to a survey from Corporate Visions, a marketing and sales messaging, content and skills training company, of almost 300 organizations, B2B companies face a major sales-training paradox.

The surveyed found that "79% believe they are not training the right number of salespeople on the skills they need each year," but 56% of these B2B companies were reluctant to reduce their sales team's active selling time for training.

Reasons for Sales Training Limitations

Reason	Percent
Don't want to interrupt active selling	56%
Budget constraints	37%
We don't own our salesforce	7%

Corporate Visions, 2016

This paradox often leads to even more damage because 32% of sales managers choose the type of training for their salespeople, although sales managers are more likely to want their team to spend maximum time selling.

Determining Factors of Sales Training

Factor	Used Most Often	Most Effective
Sales reps choose	12%	14%
Sales managers choose	32%	19%
Annual training themes	14%	7%
Role-based training "paths"	21%	25%
Tenure-based training "paths"	6%	6%
Individual rep KPIs	16%	30%

Corporate Visions, 2016

As the previous table shows, sales managers think individual rep KPIs are actually the most effective sales training. They are based on the performance indicator data that can be found in most B2B companies' sales automation system.

Performance data are able to identify the specific areas in which reps are underachieving, such as poor lead generation and conversions, a high percentage of proposals that aren't closed and returning with contracts that generate lower revenues.

B2B companies exacerbate the paradox by spending more money on training formats that they consider least effective, such as virtual and modular.

Most Effective Sales Training Formats

Format	Percent
Classroom training	45%
Real-time manager coaching	39%
Modular online training	9%
Embedded job aids and templates	5%
Mobile apps and games	1%

Corporate Visions, 2016

Corporate Visions suggests that, ultimately, online training is better than no training if sales managers still want their reps spending most of their time selling and/or companies don't want to spend the money to send reps to a classroom location.

The March/April 2017 Sales Management Insights Report will explore a better way to address sales training for reps.

How to Survive the Sales Rep Apocalypse

Apocalypse is a strong word, but Forrester has forecasted one million fewer B2B sales positions by 2020 – and who wants to be a "walking-dead" sales rep for eternity.

Ryan Estis, former chief strategy officer for the McCann Worldgroup advertising agency, offers these 5 recommendations to be a survivor.

1. Know thy prospects.

Take the time to research every prospect and his or her company thoroughly; and do so until you identify the company's pain points and that you have one or more solutions to alleviate the pain.

2. Be specific with your solutions.

Don't just tell prospects that you can solve their problem; provide each of them with a detailed explanation, so it appears you created it just for him or her.

3. Sell through teaching.

The sales reps that will succeed into the next decade are those that business owners perceive as teachers and expert guides, not salespeople.

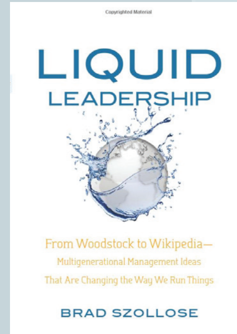
4. Focus on individual cultivation.

Stop with the constant stream of irrelevant communications. Use what is learned during #1 above, and then limit sales communications to highly valuable information that will identify you as a problem solver and a teacher.

5. The human element is still powerful.

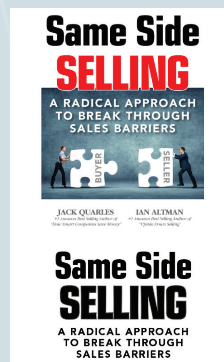
All the digital technology may help to reach more prospects faster, but that is why connecting with them on a human level is so refreshing and appreciated. However you connect as humans, try to surprise prospects with a new idea or insight every time.

Three More Good Reads



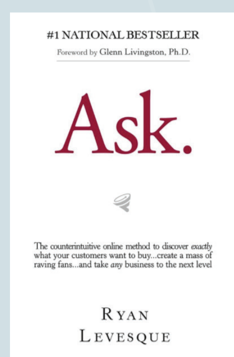
Liquid Leadership: From Woodstock to Wikipedia—Multigenerational Management Ideas That Are Changing the Way We Run Things by Brad Szollose

Having four generations in the workplace is nothing new, but the perspectives and life experiences of the current four can make it challenging to forge them into a highly productive team.



Same Side Selling: A Radical Approach to Break Through Sales Barriers by Ian Altman

Sales can no longer be an adversarial contest with a winner and loser. A more productive approach is working with prospects and clients towards a common goal.



Ask: The Counterintuitive Online Method to Discover Exactly What Your Customers Want to Buy by Ryan Levesque

A time-honored technique to determine what your customers want to buy is to ask questions, but it's time you learned the right questions to ask.