



Different thinking
for **changed outcomes**

Sales Management - the Missing Link!

Sales Management can be a challenge. You have a great product, your team has been through a sales training program, you have set targets, incentives are in place, but the results are still well below expectations!

In business we can spend a lot of time and effort training our people, putting together elaborate incentive plans only to end up with results still falling well short of target.

Sales Management - What is the missing link?

If training has been provided and all other key marketing elements are in place, we invariably find the reason for the shortfall, is that no effective processes have been developed to measure & monitor implementation of behaviours learned!

Without this, the full potential of any training program will never be realized – particularly those that relate to sales!

In Sales Management we believe in the truism - “What gets measured, gets done!” This means measuring and rewarding the *behaviours* needed to ensure success!

The key point being that whilst targets are important, they are only ever achieved if key behaviours are performed in a regular and disciplined way.

Sales teams need to be given specific *behavioral* targets in order to achieve the desired *financial outcomes* of an organisation.

Whilst the behavioral targets will differ from business to business – in broad terms they may encompass:

- The number of phone calls per week to clients and prospects.
- The number of client visits per week.
- The number of visits or presentations to prospects per week.
- The number of cross, or up-sells per week.
- A set number of meetings per week with other team members, to discuss how offerings to clients could be improved.

In order to drive the right sort of activity, targets need to be set for each key behavior – and linked to the financial outcomes needed.

Sales Management - The Sales Cycle

To reinforce the behaviour and learning's, the next step is to establish a weekly sales cycle. For example on Monday the Sales Team need to commit to specific actions for each behaviour.

- How much?
- What?
- By when?

Note: It is important when recording the number of activities they are linked to specific client or prospect names.

On Friday, the results need to be reviewed. Ideally, all commitments and results should be shared with the whole team.

The value of the short sales cycle is that:

- Successes can be acknowledged & celebrated.
- Learning's can be reinforced.
- Best practices shared.
- When something hasn't worked, it opens the opportunity for discussion. Allows the team to work develop alternate strategies.
- Facilitates early intervention where additional coaching is required.

A key benefit of the weekly sales cycle is that knowledge is quickly built as to what works, what doesn't and where the focus needs to achieve the best outcomes.

Where to start

The first step is to work out, based on experience:

- The *key behaviours* that lead to sales outcomes in your business.
- The "how many" of each behavior is required in order to achieve your financial goals. (This initial calculation may be a little problematic for some businesses – however if a disciplined approach is taken to the weekly sales cycle, more accurate information will quickly be revealed).

For example:

- Calculate the average sale in \$ terms achieved in your business. Divide this into your annual sales target. This will then tell you how *many* sales you need to achieve over the year to realize your full year objective.
- Think about & record the specific *behaviours* that lead to a sale.
- Identify the *behaviours* necessary to facilitate the cross sell of other products or services to your existing customers.
- Calculate how many contacts you usually need to achieve a sale. i.e. how many telephone contacts does it usually take to get in front of a new prospect?

Other thought starters:

- Analyze your existing client base to identify those who provide the highest % of sales. What are the characteristics of your top 20?
- Consider where you might find customers with similar characteristics.
- What are the normal steps that ultimately lead to a sale – How long is the sale cycle? What action could be taken to shorten the sales cycle?
- Investigate if you have other clients not in the 20% but who have like characteristics – Ask what you need to do to move them into the top 20%?
- Consider also the *behaviours* that are needed to gain referrals, warm leads
- Consider the specific behaviours you could adopt that would increase customer loyalty.

Once you have identified the behaviours, the number of contacts needed to make a sale, the average \$ sale, you can then set down weekly behaviours needed to achieve the financial outcomes you are seeking.

These could be:

- The number of follow up service calls to existing clients each week to build customer loyalty.
- The number of calls to clients to on-sell other products or services.
- The number of calls to prospects.
- The number of visits to existing clients.
- The number of visits to prospects.
- If appropriate, the number of referral requests you will make to existing satisfied clients.

Summary

Whilst the sales management approach outlined in this paper is relatively simple in terms of its concept – it is powerful in practice – but it requires discipline to be effective! No one can be excluded, senior management included.

While the above process may seem daunting at first, it does work and is worth the effort involved. Importantly, once you have done it for a month, the process is simple, doesn't take a lot of time & will produce results!

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