White Paper:

How to Build & Develop a Highly Productive Results-driven Sales Team

PREPARED FOR:

BUSINESS OWNERS & SALES EXECUTIVES

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Introduction

When building and developing any successful sales team, a leader must focus on the three primary components that provide a model for sales success: 1) people; 2) process; and 3) automation. It is also necessary, whether building a team from scratch or improving the current team, to address the three components in the order of which they are presented.
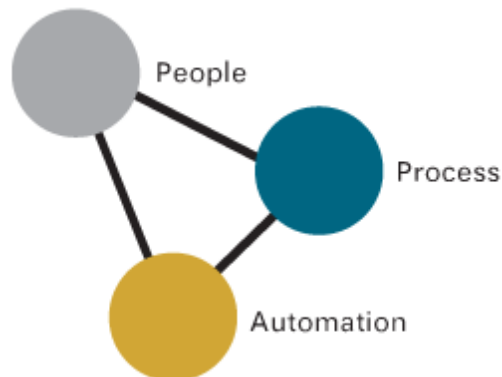

Figure 1: PPA Model for Sales Success

Component #1: People

As it relates to sales people, there are very few eagles – the absolute superstars. These eagles are self-sufficient individuals who will succeed and be the best despite any structured guidance, management or leadership provided by the organization of which they are employed. Most sales people fall into the "A" player or "B" player categories, or below. The key to building and leading a successful sales team is to hire and retain one or two eagles (if you are lucky – there is no science unfortunately to finding and hiring these individuals), then employ a strategy to attract, select, and hire "A" players and "B" players. THEN you must provide a systematic approach to cultivating, training, coaching and motivating the "A" players to continue performing at a high level while enabling the "B" players to ultimately perform like "A" players. Easier said than done! This "systematic approach" is known as a "Prescriptive Framework for Sales Success". Let's look at how to implement such a process:

Prescriptive Framework for Sales Success

1. Hiring Sales People

a) Identify what past experiences tend to predict future success, and consequently, determine a more effective and efficient **sourcing strategy** based on your findings (i.e. where are these "A" players right now?).

b) Determine the hard skills that are most important and develop a **screening process** with the appropriate benchmarks for these hard skills.

c) Determine what soft skills / core competencies are most important, and build a **behavioral interview** to consistently identify them in potential candidates.

d) Develop a **customized assessment test** for benchmarking the sales position, which will be used in the sales recruiting and hiring process. This assessment should be automated as an online assessment test if possible.

e) An ongoing **sales recruiting strategy** should be employed by all key leaders and sales people within the organization. This strategy should be supported by a formal **sales recruiting process workflow**, of which every member of the sales leadership team is involved in at least one step in the process.

2. Preparing Sales People for Success

a. A formal new sales rep **orientation program** should be developed to indoctrinate all new sales people into the organization within the first week (Day 1; Week 1). The focus should be on quality as it relates to information provided and the fastest rate in terms of time it takes to get all new sales reps to a proficient level of selling.

b. Following the orientation program, a new sales rep should then shift into a formal 90-day **on-boarding program**. This program is supported by a **sales success reference guide**, measurement of a new sales rep's progress against **Sales Performance Indicators (SPI's)** and **Key Performance Benchmarks (KPM's)**, and a formal process involving **30-60-90 day reviews** with **formal coaching sessions** provided by your organization's sales leadership team.

3. Cultivating & Supporting Sales People

a. Most companies refer to this process as "managing sales people" or "sales management". However, if you hire the right sales people and provide a Prescriptive Framework for Sales Success as the sales management structure, then you will really be *cultivating, supporting* and *motivating* these high performers versus managing them.

b. The cultivation process is really an extension of hiring and preparing sales people for success. It is important that once guidelines and a structured indoctrination process are incorporated, that **the sales leadership team hold both the sales team and themselves accountable** to what has been mutually agreed to up front in the process in terms of expected results.

c. **At least one weekly team meeting should occur**, specifically where the emphasis is on learning and improving. The topics should revolve around products/services/solutions in addition to fundamental and advanced selling skills and strategies.

d. **At least one weekly one-on-one meeting should occur between the sales manager and each sales rep**. During this meeting such topics as a review of actual performance versus benchmarks should occur, in addition to addressing any challenge areas to be improved. "What's working well" should also be reviewed during this meeting.

e. **At least one weekly coaching session should occur for each individual as a personal sales coaching session that is private and between coach and coachee**. Under no circumstances should management topics (such as reviewing their sales pipeline or where they stand versus quota) should occur during these sales coaching sessions. The sole focus should be on helping the individual address Challenges-Issues-Goals (CIG's). If a sales manager doesn't have it in their DNA to distinguish between managing and coaching then an outside organization who specializes in sales coaching should be brought in to facilitate the coaching sessions, thus freeing the sales managers to focus on what they are really good at: managing.

e. Finally, **goal-setting and career-pathing should occur between the sales rep and the sales manager**. It is important that the sales rep is always striving to accomplish personal and professional goals – the manager should be tied into these goals and hold the sales rep accountable for achieving such goals. These topics can be addressed during Quarterly and Annual Reviews.

Component #2: Process

In order to get the most out of a successful sales team, it is necessary to have sound processes supporting the sales team's efforts. This is where a lot of organizations make a mistake – they assume sales people know what to do and how to do it. They leave their ability to succeed to chance or luck. The reality is that processes are different at every organization. Although a sales person knows inherently how to "sell", including basic processes to follow in general, they need to be trained on *your* organization's specific processes to be most effective.

Without the initial overview of clearly documented processes and expectations, sales cycles will be lengthened (and even lost) as a result of mismanagement of the process. Documented processes that are easy to follow and understand should be implemented and adhered to by all members of the sales team in order to improve the growth rate of the business. Processes can also be in the form of programs that support the sales team's

efforts. Processes and programs should be developed for the following key aspects of the business as it relates to the sales force:

1. Lead & Opportunity Generation (all facets including Networking, Social Media, etc.)
2. Buyer-Seller Dialogues (all critical messaging involved in all possible selling scenarios)
3. Client Meeting Management (who plays what role in such meetings?)
4. Ongoing Prospect & Customer Message Management (including tools to enable this)
5. Sales Opportunities – Assessment, Qualification & Management
6. Proposals – Development, Management & Presentation
7. Negotiation & Contractual Paperwork (including how to "close")
8. New Customer Initiation (onboarding and launching new customers)
9. Customer Service & Support (i.e. revenue protection)
10. Cross-selling & Up-selling (i.e. profitable revenue growth)

Component #3: Automation

Where applicable, companies should evaluate the automation of certain processes and components of the sales organization. Companies should not implement sales-related technology for the sake of technology; rather they should **automate processes** to drive efficiency into the way they sell to and service customers. The goal is shortening cycles, improving quality of communication both internally and externally, improving "speed-to-information", and improving "speed-to-results".

Examples of specific processes that should be automated include:

1. Lead tracking via marketing campaign management
2. Account & contact management
3. Customer Message Management (CMM)
4. Sales opportunity management
5. Sales forecasting
6. Formal sales methodology adherence (i.e. Solution Selling, Strategic Selling, etc.)
7. Proposal development
8. Sales Knowledge Management (SKM)
9. Formal Sales Coaching
10. Reporting and analytics for all of the above processes

Summary

At the end of the day, **all sales people want to know what is expected of them** in terms of what they sell, how they sell, and specific measurable results they must deliver. Furthermore, they want to know they have the support of the management team and the necessary tools, knowledge and information to get the job done right. The more structured the support, guidance and processes – the better. Keep in mind that most sales people are not eagles, so they require this structured approach. As a result, **it is crucial to the sales organization's success that the leadership team provides a systematic approach with an emphasis on: Sales Talent, Sales Performance and Sales Management**.

Figure 2: Sales Operational Components

Sales Talent is addressed within component #1 of the PPA Model – People. Sales Performance is addressed within component #2 of the PPA Model – Process. Keep in mind that component #3, Sales Management, is really the cultivation, support and motivation of sales talent and the way that sales talent performs. This, of course, is dependent upon whether the Prescriptive Framework for Sales Success (described above and throughout this white paper) is successfully implemented as the system for Sales Management. All of these components make up the complete sales organization. Planning for these three primary components of the sales operation will go a long way towards building and developing a highly productive results-driven sales team!

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About Sean Piket & Sales Integrity, LLC

Sean Piket launched Sales Integrity in 2004 as its Founder & CEO. Sales Integrity helps sales professionals, leaders and organizations increase sales and earn more money. More specifically, Sales Integrity builds and develops sales teams for its customers through the company's integrated Sales Recruiting, Sales Coaching and Coaching Enablement services and solutions.

Company leaders turn to Sales Integrity to help them achieve three goals:

1. Shorten ramp up time for new sales hires
2. Turn around ineffective sales performance
3. Increase sales at a faster rate

Sean has 21 years of experience in sales, sales management, entrepreneurship and business operations primarily at emerging-growth IT services firms ranging from startups to mid-market national systems integrators prior to launching Sales Integrity. Sean has authored and custom-developed several sales-related methodologies including the ***Sales Operations Framework™***, which is comprised of three other methodologies he created: the ***Sales Achievement Framework™***, the ***Sales Coaching Framework™*** and the ***Sales Management Framework™***. Sean is also the founder of a SaaS-based Sales Coaching Enablement software platform, MyCoachSite, and an online sales coaching community, SalesCoachingLive.com, both products of Sales Integrity.

To contact Sean Piket or a representative from Sales Integrity, or to learn more about Sales Integrity, please visit Sales Integrity's website: http://www.salesintegrity.com.