WHITE PAPER:
HOW TO MAKE YOUR SALES TEAM MORE EFFICIENT AND SHORTEN THE SALES CYCLE

C-Level connections

Adding a pre-sales program to your sales process can help your sales team be 35% more efficient with their time. They can now build a more robust pipeline and move qualified prospects through the pipeline faster.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR SALES TEAM MORE EFFICIENT AND SHORTEN THE SALES CYCLE

A key factor in shortening the sales cycle should take place at the beginning of the sales cycle, in the pre-sales phase. This phase is often overlooked or included as part of the sales team's responsibilities, leaving little time for high level sales professionals to focus on nurturing and closing sales with potential prospects.

Separating the pre-sales function from the sales function can help your sales professionals become at least 35% more efficient with their time. Your sales professionals no longer need to spend their valuable time gathering and qualifying leads, creating a qualified lead list and cold calling and emailing prospects. Instead, they are able to focus on higher level sales development and closing activities.

REACHING CUSTOMERS EFFICIENTLY

It typically takes a pre-sales professional at least seven hours of lead gathering, cold calling, and sending emails to schedule one qualified meeting with a decision maker. This means that if your highly paid sales professional's goal is to schedule just 12 new meetings per month, they will have to spend an average of 50% of their time (7 hours x 12 meetings = 84 hours) on pre-sales tasks rather than moving interested prospects through the sales process.

Pre-sales representatives can help their sales counterparts become more efficient with their time by:

- Ensuring that each lead meets pre-defined criteria such as revenue size of targeted

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company, decision maker's titles, and specific industry segment

- Updating lead lists with current contact information of decision makers, including email addresses and direct phone numbers
- Contacting prospects by phone and personalized email messages
- Tracking prospective leads in the CRM system

BUILD THE PIPELINE FASTER AND SHORTEN THE CYCLE

If you were able to give each of your sales professionals back 80 hours of their time every month, just imagine how much more effort they could spend on higher level sales activities enabling them to quickly build a more robust pipeline and move prospects through the pipeline faster.

With the additional time your sales team gains by working with a pre-sales function, they can focus on pipeline building and sales closing tactics such as:

- Effectively managing multiple prospects in the pipeline
- Moving qualified prospects through the pipeline
- Quickly identifying non-buyers
- Researching prospective buyers
- Identifying multiple decision makers in an organization
- Uncovering the buyer's goals and pain points
- Custom tailoring presentations and email communication to each prospect's needs

IMPLEMENTING PRE-SALES FOR YOUR SALES TEAM

Implementing a pre-sales function for your sales team is clearly beneficial. The next step in helping your sales team become more efficient and shortening your sales cycle is deciding on the implementation path that best fits your organization's needs. Whether you decide to implement a pre-sales program in-house or outsource this function, there are a number of factors to consider.

In-House

Investing the resources to build an in-house pre-sales program can be more expensive and time consuming than most sales and marketing managers realize. Requirements for implementing a successful in-house pre-sales program include:

- Investing in sales and marketing technology – a CRM system is a must
- Allocating office space and equipment for team
- Recruiting and hiring college educated pre-sales representatives
- Training pre-sales representatives on sales methodologies and sales process
- Hiring an experienced Inside Sales/Telesales Manager
- Managing the high turn-over rate for pre-sales representatives
- Ensuring that your marketing department creates messaging, including scripts and email templates, that resonate with prospects
- Creating and exporting up to date lead lists that meet your target market criteria

It is vitally important that your pre-sales team is utilizing a CRM system for tracking the status and activity about leads/contacts. To ensure efficiency and timeliness, it's necessary to make sure that all the leads are imported into the CRM system and that it is populated with follow-up email templates enabling the pre-sales representatives to simply click a button and send a personalized email to the prospect. After all, only 10% of C-Level executives today answer their own phones.

In addition, the manager of an inside sales/pre-sales team must be trained on multiple sales processes, metrics tracking and methodologies. This key role is vitally important to the success of your pre-sales program as this role is responsible for the hiring, coaching, mentoring, and monitoring of the pre-sales team.

Outsourcing

Increasingly, sales and marketing managers are choosing to outsource the pre-sales function. The benefits of outsourcing can far outweigh the costs and risk of creating an in-house program and include:

- No additional overhead required such as work space, computers, phones
- No additional investment in marketing and sales technology
- No additional investment in expensive lead source providers
- Seasoned marketing professionals who create messaging that resonates with your prospects and secures meetings
- No additional resources needed for recruiting, hiring, onboarding and training a pre-sales team
- No need to hire a "difficult to find" experienced inside sales manager
- Management gains insight from an outside perspective on any possible issues regarding sales personnel, messaging, or targets
- Performance-based model reduces financial risk
- Return on investment is compelling
- Can be easily scaled for your variable needs and requirements, including driving attendance to particular trade shows and speaking events and following up with leads after each event
- Augment current in-house pre-sales efforts

Outsourcing the pre-sales function can take the risk out of investing time and money to create a professionally managed in-house program. The ROI is compelling – in many cases, the program will pay for itself after closing 1 or 2 opportunities.

In assessing outsourced pre-sales appointment setting vendors, it is important to ensure that the pre-sales professionals reside onsite at the vendor's location. Many outsourced programs fail because the appointment setters are contractors and work on their own. There is little or no supervision to ensure professionalism, manage processes, and drive metrics. Additionally, you should ensure that the vendor's callers are degreed and trained in professional sales methodologies. After all, these callers are representing you and your company, and you deserve the most professional approach possible when your prospects are contacted.

SUMMARY

In summary, significantly shortening the sales cycle can be accomplished by implementing a pre-sales program to accomplish tasks such as lead gathering, lead nurturing, making outbound calls, sending personalized emails and setting qualified meetings for your sales team. This enables your sales team to better utilize their time building a bigger pipeline and moving prospects through the sales cycle to closing. There are a number of important factors to consider when evaluating whether to outsource the pre-sales function or develop an in-house program from scratch, and more and more companies are choosing the outsourced pre-sales approach.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bonnie Rodden's more than 20 years of sales and management experience, includes the design and execution of successful, company-specific sales distribution programs from inception, using Solution Selling, CustomerCentric and StoryLeader methodologies for numerous organizations in the e-discovery, information governance, technology, medical and legal industries. C-Level Connections was born through Bonnie's many years in various organizations implementing and building highly successful inside sales, business development, channel, and direct sales teams. Bonnie realized her proven programs could be implemented in other organizations to cost effectively help build and fortify their sales efforts and thus formed C-Level Connections.

ABOUT C-LEVEL CONNECTIONS

C-Level Connections delivers professional B2B metrics-driven appointment setting, lead generation, lead nurturing, and sales pipeline analysis services that guarantee your sales professionals will meet with qualified decision makers and your management team will receive valuable information regarding their sales initiatives and pipeline. Click here for more information about C-Level Connections services or complete the form here to have C-Level contact you about our services.