

## Mentor Group White Paper

# The sales management system of the future

In these times of Big Data, where increasingly sophisticated technology is generating growing levels of customer, sales and market information, today's sales managers have never had so much business intelligence at their fingertips. It also means that the sales profession is going through an unprecedented period of change as sales managers try to get to grips with this information, while training their teams to put it to best effect to boost performance levels.

All this intelligence should make the sales process more efficient and effective, from more accurate forecasting and pipeline identification, to better customer relationship management and streamlined sales processing. It should mean that senior sales professionals have more control over their operations than ever before. However, in many cases the reverse is true, with such huge volumes of data instead leaving sales managers confused and bewildered.

The findings revealed that, on average, just over half (54%) of sales professionals achieved their targets. Surely with all this rich data that companies currently have at their disposal, this figure should be far higher.

This is borne out by a recent report from leading research group CSO Insight, which surveys thousands of sales managers and professionals globally. The findings revealed that, on average, just over half (54%) of sales professionals achieved their targets. Surely with all this rich data that companies currently have at their disposal, this figure should be far higher.

### A possible solution

Similar research was also carried out recently by OMG group in the US, which not only confirmed the same problem, but also suggested a possible solution.

Of the 650,000 sales professionals and 100,000 managers surveyed, only 65% were making their quota – an improvement on CSO Insight's findings, but still highlighting a major issue among global sales teams.

What the research also found, however, was that when a formal, process-driven, sales management system was implemented, combined with a coaching programme, this number increased by 16.5% to 81.5% – a much healthier figure.

The research also found that organisations that used a combination of technology, training, coaching and psychology were able to increase their sales wins by 24% and reduce their deals lost by 26%.

This statistic alone should justify the costs of implementing such a system backed by a coaching programme, but the OMG survey dug deeper to reveal that there was another key factor involved. The research also found that organisations that used a combination of technology, training, coaching and psychology were able to increase their sales wins by 24% and reduce their deals lost by 26%.

Improving sales performance by as little as 10% can have a major impact on a business, whatever its size, so the figures suggested in OMG's research, which are down in a large part to the effective combination of technology, coaching and psychology, could be truly transformational and significantly boost revenues and profits.

### **Forecasting failure**

One of the most important metrics in sales management is forecast accuracy. In fact, sales leaders and managers worldwide are often judged on their ability to accurately forecast their funnels and pipelines. In some cases, it makes up a significant portion of their goals and/or bonuses.

Worryingly, the OMG research also found that the average forecast accuracy within a sales organisation globally is just 46.5%. Such a high level of inaccuracy can cause major problems within an organisation, particularly where the manufacturing process is tightly aligned with forecasting.

The answer to this problem is arguably more about inter-personal relationships than simply crunching through data using the latest technology. It can be dealt with most effectively through a regular focus on reviewing the current sales pipeline, forecast and funnel, where the manager and the sales professional get together and explore the reality of the data produced. This key point of interaction is frequently overlooked in organisations, yet forms a key element of effective coaching programmes.

### **The right sales management system**

Although implementing the appropriate technology can help mine and analyse the growing levels of business intelligence generated by organisations today, research indicates that a truly successful sales system also incorporates a carefully developed coaching programme.

Despite the technological advances in today's commercial environment, the sales manager is still the critical link to driving team performance and ultimately business success. Therefore, to implement true transformation, sales organisations need to consider a coaching-centric sales management system that connects the sales manager, the sales team and the technology together to maximise the use of business intelligence, improve forecasting and boost sales.

## About Mentor

Founded in 1996, Mentor Group is now recognised as a leading global people and performance company that focuses on Sales Transformation and Organisational Leadership.

We create integrated coaching programmes that use no-nonsense tools and metrics, incorporate outstanding technology and are delivered by over 200 instructors and coaches considered to be the best in their field.

We enjoy long-standing relationships with our clients and work with over 70 active businesses, including FTSE100 companies, such as BP, British Standards Institution, Cisco, Computacenter, Dell, IGT, Microsoft, Skype, Amazon, Vodafone and Aon. Currently, we are operating programmes in over 57 countries worldwide in 20 different languages. Over 20 years, we have retained 90% of our clients through continually developing their core competencies.

To download more of our white papers please visit [www.mentorgroup.co.uk](http://www.mentorgroup.co.uk)  
email us at [solutions@mentorgroup.co.uk](mailto:solutions@mentorgroup.co.uk) or call **44(0)1442 849999**