

# Leading the High-Performance Sales Team

Traditional thought may lead us to believe that high performing sales teams are exclusively driven by quotas, refuse to take 'no' for an answer, or are manipulative smooth talkers.

While this may be true in some cases, high performing sales teams are most often characterized by a sales leader who possesses:

- A clear understanding of the overall business objectives
- An eye for trends in their industries and profession
- A concrete strategy for optimizing technology usage amongst the team

## Aligning KPIs with Overall Business Objectives

As the firm's senior leadership sets its strategic priorities for the firm, sales and marketing leaders too should begin to map out complimentary metrics that will actively work to support those priorities. Some areas that sales and marketing leaders must consider<sup>1</sup>:

- **Make sure sales and marketing is involved in the strategic planning process from the beginning.** Of course, you can't align with corporate strategies if you're not at the table.
- **Pick meaningful metrics and continually track progress.** Make sure your metrics are simple, relevant, and can show results through the evolution of awareness, engagement, qualified opportunities and eventually closed deals.
- **Be realistic about what you can deliver.** One of the common mistakes made when building a sales or marketing plan is not accounting for the actual capacity available on the team to complete it. If you are being too optimistic about doing the impossible, you set yourself up for failure. It's important to understand and map out your capacities based on the work required before finalizing your priorities. You need a clear view of the people, budget, time and resources needed to execute and achieve your goals.

## Leveraging Tech for a High Performing Sales Teams

As with every other industry, the technological revolution has had a tremendous impact on the way sales and marketing professionals conduct their business. There are literally hundreds of software options available on the market today, ranging in capability from online meeting tools, to database services, to pipeline management software.

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<sup>1</sup> Align Marketing Goals with Your Business Strategy - Randy Fougere, Think2Grow Marketing

38% of CEOs note that they are concerned about the rapid speed of technological change in today's landscape<sup>2</sup>. With overwhelming selection available in the market, it is often sensible to obtain the help of technology specialists who are skilled in identifying the unique needs of your business and can offer informed recommendations and implementation. Below are the broad categories in which the many technology fall however, sophisticated offerings such as Salesforce often combine many of these functions in one solution.

- **Engagement.** These are the tools which enable our sales teams to engage with prospects and clients. This includes products that allow sales representatives to conduct online meetings, manage email, and engage over the phone or via instant messaging.
- **Productivity & enablement.** These digital tools allow sales representatives to streamline their administrative duties and frees up time for them to focus on core responsibilities. Software in this category refines the processes of content enablement and sharing, scheduling and appointment setting, distribution of quotes/proposals, and partner management.
- **Sales intelligence.** Sales intelligence software allows sales teams to gain clarity on client needs and offer informed recommendations or proposals to prospects. Software in the category can further be segmented as database & list services, company intelligence and buyer insight tools, and prospecting tools.
- **Pipeline & analytics.** Perhaps the most common use of sales technology, powerful CRM tools such as Salesforce allow us to manage pipelines and nurture leads through the sales cycle. However, these tools also allow sales leaders to perform forecasting and performance management tracking, predictive analytics, data visualization, and even price optimization & revenue management.
- **People management.** Importantly, sales leaders and managers must be able to quantify and measure the daily efforts of their teams. Technology empowers everything from the on-boarding and training process to territory & quota management, while also allowing for painless commission tracking and performance appraisals.

### Trends in the Sales and Marketing Industry

Salesforce has identified some of the most significant trends in the industry, which include<sup>3</sup>:

- **Understanding social selling.** An effective sales organization needs to explore every avenue in its quest to truly understand the customer. It's important for sellers to understand who the individual customer is, who the buyers are, who the decision-makers are, who the influencers are, and who owns the budget — and what their perception of their organization is. A lot of that can be learned through what they

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<sup>2</sup> Frost and Sullivan, CEO Insights

<sup>3</sup> Sales Trends that Differentiate Best-in-Class Sales Leaders – Maria Valdivieso De Uster, Salesforce

share online on different platforms and in different ways: expressing opinions, asking for help, and general discussions.

- **Adopting automation and AI.** Even with CRM systems in place, many leads are never followed up on. When organizations begin using marketing automation for their lead generation qualification and followup, the results can sometimes reach a 100% touch rate. Automation and AI can keep these leads warm for months, sometimes even making the first introduction.
- **Closer collaboration between sales and marketing.** It's important to align sales with marketing so that both understand precisely whom they are targeting and the journey those buyers are making. This may sound obvious, but the two functions often work in a vacuum, each with different views of which customers to pursue. Both functions generate enormous volumes of valuable data on customer segments and preferences, but the flow of those insights tends to be one-way: from marketing to sales. At outperforming companies, the front-line reports back to help marketing refine its offerings, and datasets are integrated to create more accurate pictures of selling opportunities. At the most basic level, chief marketing officers and heads of sales need to engage with each other on an equal footing.

In summary, much is expected of our sales and marketing leaders. While many leaders produce results that meet targets, exceptional managers lead sales teams who consistently exceed goals, nurture pipelines, and reliably move customers through the sales funnel. These high performing sales teams often succeed because they possess a clear understanding of the overall business objectives, an eye for trends in their industries, and a concrete strategy for optimizing the use and adoption of technology throughout the organization.

Are your sales and marketing functions optimized and aligned to your strategic road map?

Do your KPIs measure and incentivize activities that will drive revenue growth?

Does your business deploy the most efficient technology available to achieve your business goals?

We would love the opportunity to talk further and explore how we can help.

[Contact Mark Magee](mailto:markm@growthpoint.io) (markm@growthpoint.io) to learn more.

## About GrowthPoint

At GrowthPoint, we help our clients increase revenue, grow market share, drive efficiencies and accelerate overall business performance by harmonizing their sales and marketing functions.