

6 strategic ways to plan and implement sales success in your business

Bonus

A 9-step process for a highly effective sales call

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Foreword | 3 |
| 1. Set your sales goals and plan | 4 |
| 2. Identify your ideal target market | 5 |
| 3. Map out your sales process | 6 |
| 4. Create an accurate pipeline management and forecasting system | 8 |
| 5. Develop KPI's & Dashboards | 9 |
| 6. Strategic messaging | 10 |
| Bonus A 9-step process for a highly effective sales call | 12 |

Foreword

After evaluating your sales team and processes to understand key areas of inefficiency and performance issues, the next step is to use best practice techniques to develop and improve all functionalities of your sales department.

This includes sales strategies, target markets and identifying critical sales metrics that need to be challenged and re-defined. It is also imperative that you develop a strong value proposition to support your company's competitive advantage.

These six topics are quick bites for you to help plan for sales success in your business. Of course if you would like any assistance with implementing them, [please get in touch.](#)

1

Set your sales goals and plan:

Understand the numbers which drive top line growth and contribute to gross profit.

Imagine if professional athletes set out each day to train without any idea of what they needed to achieve – they thought “oh well, I’ll just run as fast as I can and hopefully that will get me into the Olympics.”

It really just wouldn’t work – and this is exactly the same for those responsible for sales in an organization. If you don’t know what results you need to work towards, how will you know if you get there, or if you actually fall short of what is required? It also provides clarity around what tasks need to take place in order to work towards those goals.

“The purpose of setting goals is to inspire action, not predict it.” – John H Clark

But on the flip-side, there is no point in setting goals if there is no understanding around the numbers that produce results, and are actually required by the business for profit.

So, as a business or sales leader, do you know what kind of sales activity the team need to achieve to be deemed a successful month or quarter? Or your conversion rates for prospecting, phone calls and face-to-face meetings? These are the numbers you must know, so that you can accurately determine goals, and plan the actions required to reach them.

For example, if for every 10 calls your sales team make, you get two meetings, and will get one new customer – with a sales worth of \$1000 – then you’ll need to make 100 calls to get 10 new customers and \$10,000. If these numbers aren’t clear, then it is very hard for anyone to work towards a specific goal or KPI.

And, perhaps most importantly, numbers provide accountability. If everyone is aware of what they need to do to get results, sales goals should be predictable and achievable. This will also mean business leaders can manage their sales team in a more accurate manner, just by following clearly defined numbers.

It is also important to understand that reviewing your sales team isn’t about playing the ‘blame game’. Things might not be working because everyone is still using selling tactics from 10 years ago, and it is just that no one has the knowledge to bring the sales process into 2022. Or perhaps the sales manager was promoted from being a successful sales rep, but they don’t have the skill base to coach their team. The main thing is, it’s only by looking at sales as a whole that you will be able to identify those issues, and that the right strategies can be put into place where needed.

Once you have spent time reviewing your sales team performance, you should then be able to answer these four critical questions:

- Why aren’t we more effective?
- How much more effective can we be?
- What will it take to accomplish that?
- How long will it take to accomplish that?

A business cannot expect to grow significantly without sales goals in place – and behind these goals needs to be the right numbers backed up by data.

2

Identify your ideal target market:

Create a profile of the ideal target customers and perform an analysis of your existing customer profiles.

Every business should have clarity on their ideal target market – and before you say that your customer is anyone who will buy your product and/or service, this isn't best practice. We often see salespeople targeting the wrong prospects, they spin their wheels wasting time and bringing on business that is not conducive to reaching their targets. The more laser-focused we are on our target market, the more quality meetings with the right people, the quicker we get to our growth objectives.

And it isn't enough for the sales team to have a rough idea in their head of who it is they need to be approaching. This needs to be a top-level discussion, with clear, recorded findings around who your business's target market is, and how there will be a shift in focus to these individuals/organizations.

According to [this article](#) from Forbes, you need to consider three main factors when putting together a profile of your target market:

- Geographic (location)
- Demographic (age, budget, size)
- Psychographic (personality, values, opinions, attitudes, interests and lifestyle)

And we would also recommend Identifying:

- Industry Sectors i.e. building and construction, business services, logistics etc.
- The title of the: decision maker, influencers, economic buyer, end users, and what part they play in the buying process.

Then, to start working out the above, imagine your ideal customer and describe them under the three headings.

While doing this also ask yourself - who are they, what do they do for a job, why would they need your product and how do they typically find out about products like yours.

Profile existing customers

Sometimes the easiest way to work out your target market is to analyze your existing customers. Who are your top 20 per cent?

By understanding the journey they took to reach your company, and what it was that made them choose you as the provider, you can define more particularities around target market identifiers.

By also looking at the captured data of who your customers are, you will probably see some patterns around those that make up the majority of your client base. This is helpful insight into who your target market is/should be.

After carrying out the above session around target markets and ideal customers, you should have a very thorough insight into who would be the best prospects for your business. You might also find that you have more than one particular target market, and this means you need to adapt your sales process to cater for the different journey each potential customer will take to get to you.

3

Map out your sales process:

What steps are required to successfully complete a sale, from prospect through becoming a customer.

According to Objective Management Group's statistics from evaluating more than 850,000 salespeople in 10,000 companies, 91% of salespeople still don't have, or don't follow a formal, customized sales process.

And the fact is, if there is no sales process in place, then there is a very high chance that your team are not working as effectively and efficiently as they could be – which of course, in turn, affects profitability and growth for your business.

Not convinced? There are eight reasons why mapping your sales process is a must;

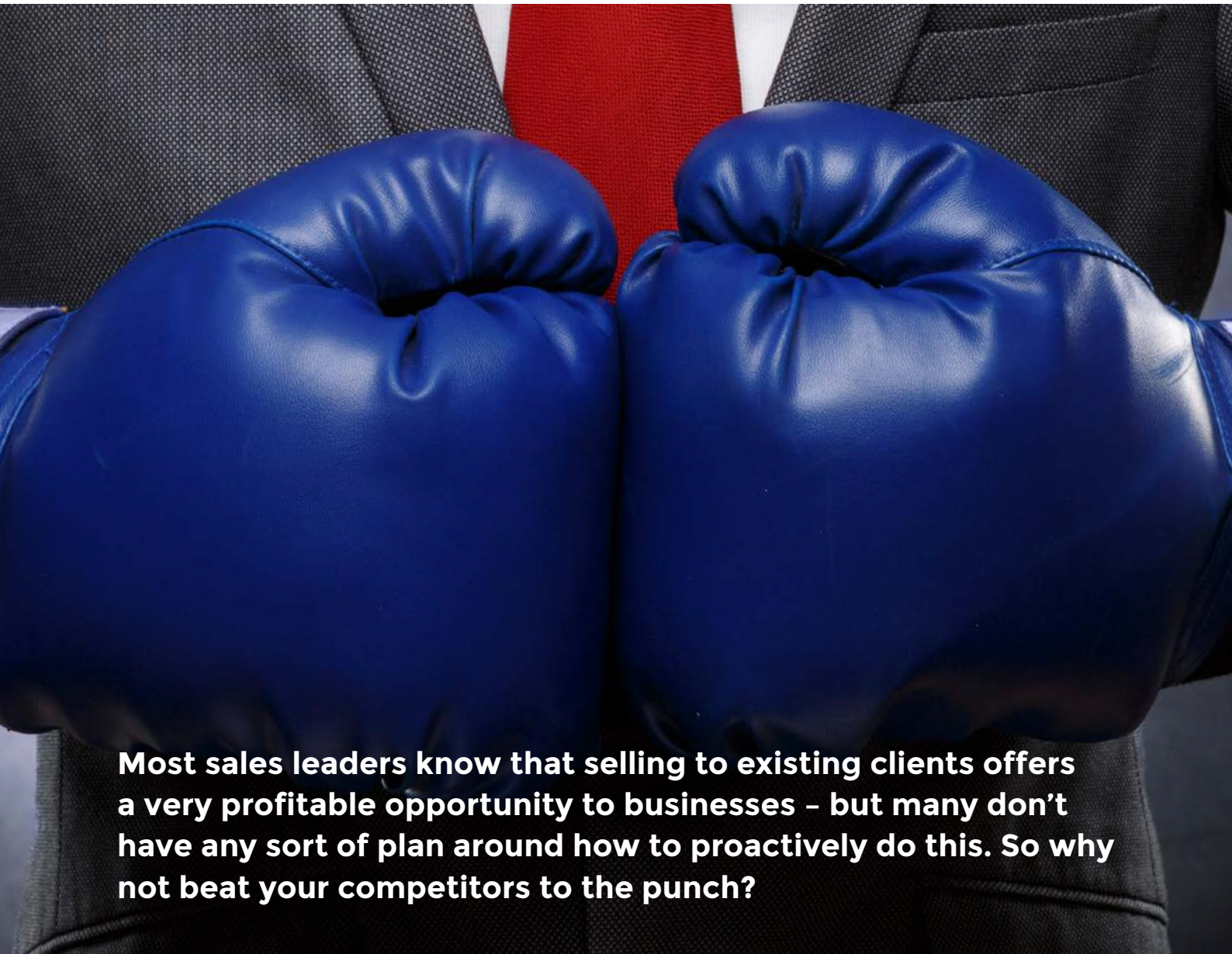
1. Creates visibility around where your leads come from and how do they turn into customers
2. Allows you to qualify or disqualify opportunities early in the process
3. Enables accurate predictive forecasting
4. Means the team can sing off the same song sheet
5. Provides Sales Managers the ability to coach and hold salespeople accountable on one process - there are not 101 best ways to make a sale
6. Your team can make their own discoveries around where they fall short
7. Road blocks are easily identifiable
8. Helps scale your business, and to ramp up new salespeople

So if you don't have a sales process, or you haven't reviewed it in a long time, you must revisit it and spend time documenting the way you want the sales team to prospect and nurture leads through the sales funnel.

If there is no sales process in place, then your team will not be working as effectively and efficiently as they could be.

Here's a few insights into how world-renowned sales leader Dave Kurlan works on creating sales processes with his clients:

- First, I collect all of their steps, milestones and to-do's.
- Next, we divide the sales process into four-to-six stages and place each of their existing steps, milestones and to-do's into the most appropriate stage. Stages can be as simple as: suspect, prospect, qualified opportunity and closable opportunity.
- Then, we identify all of the steps and milestones that are missing from their process. When we get to this point, most clients are missing anywhere from 6 to 15 important milestones.
- Next, we need to optimize by identifying the proper sequence. This is a very crucial step because the sales process must build upon itself.
- Then we identify ideal time lines for each stage of the sales process.
- We weight the most crucial milestones in order to calculate the likelihood of closing - the accuracy of your sales forecasts is in direct proportion to nailing the proper weighting.
- Then we enter the sales process, time lines, weights and underlying rules into a spreadsheet that an integrator can use to customize a CRM application.



Most sales leaders know that selling to existing clients offers a very profitable opportunity to businesses – but many don't have any sort of plan around how to proactively do this. So why not beat your competitors to the punch?

- (We also map the four stages and steps onto a baseball diamond, so that we can introduce it to a sales force visually, and they can understand the flow.)

Then of course there's another process required after a new customer comes on board – is there an opportunity to upsell, and if so, how is that quantified – and by who. Most sales leaders know that selling to existing clients offers a very profitable opportunity to businesses – but many don't have any sort of plan around how to proactively do this. So why not beat your competitors to the punch.

Have you set aside some time to create your sales process? Don't forget to make it collaborative – sometimes outside viewpoints can offer new perspectives. At the end of creating your sales process you should see these benefits:

- A framework to produce consistent results
- All sales people are playing by the same rules
- People are held accountable to the right activities
- Increased productivity
- A clear coaching framework
- Greater pipeline accuracy
- Shortened sales cycle

4

Create an accurate pipeline management and forecasting system

If you don't have pipeline management in place, you will never be achieving maximum sales for your business. And there is basically no point having a forecasting system if you can't even accurately plan for what sales will be closing, and when.

Previously we discussed about the importance of a sales process – a map showing the journey from someone being a prospect to becoming a customer. And while this is vital for every business to have, without proper management of the pipeline, growth outcomes will be minimal.

There are really only two reasons a pipeline fails – not enough opportunities, and poor quality of prospects in the pipeline. But that is what a proper sales process should rectify. And as a business or sales leader, once the sales process is set, it is your responsibility to ensure it is adhered to by your sales team.

And because the process is about being as effective as possible to achieve top line growth and profits, the Objective Management Group has a list of [10 ways to ensure salespeople](#) follow your pipeline:

1. It isn't voluntary
2. No exceptions
3. Live it and breath it
4. Hold them accountable to it
5. Coach to it daily
6. Reinforce it
7. Point out what happens when they skip steps
8. Show them what happens when they execute
9. Non-compliance has consequences
10. Practice daily

Further to the management of individual salespeople, [this article](#) from Forbes provides six more ways to manage a pipeline:

1. Finding the magic metric
2. Dangling carrots
3. Measuring results
4. Overcoming objections
5. Knowing what buttons to push, and
6. Analyzing wins

And what it basically comes down to is continually refining it to be as effective as it can possibly be, and of course this will change as new information emerges from data, or an external factor influences particular tasks.

Measuring results and analyzing them, are two of the most important tasks you, as a business leader, can take responsibility for when it comes to pipeline management, as this then leads to being able to accurately forecast.

For CEOs, the inability to predict sales results is their number one sales headache – particularly when they aren't reached (time and time again). But with effective management of a sales pipeline, as well as a solid understanding of what works and doesn't work, will allow business leaders to have greater visibility over future sales, making forecasting an easier, more accurate process.

5

Develop KPI's & Dashboards:

Based on the above, determine and agree on what the right activity means in terms of KPIs.

In some sales organizations, KPIs are seen as the enemy – something that only brings negative feelings with them, particularly when they aren't achieved.

But KPIs are an integral part of the sales process, and on an individual basis they set in place the action required for salespeople. If set up correctly, they should provide clarity and clear structure around the tasks that result in moving prospects through the pipeline, to ultimately become customers.

This means they should be something salespeople enjoy having as part of their job scope - but more often than not they are unrealistic targets or inaccurate guidelines set in place without proper management. There are five common mistakes that sales leaders often make when setting KPIs, and while these have been covered before, to quickly recap they are:

1. Focusing on just financial KPIs
2. Too many KPIs
3. Measuring activity without effectiveness
4. No pass or fail criteria
5. Lack of visibility

The above points are real barriers to KPIs being effective targets for sales performance, and so it is important that business leaders take these factors into account when setting up individual KPIs.

Another factor is to ensure KPIs are regularly reviewed to ensure they are still appropriate and relevant – and this will be particularly appropriate after measuring and analyzing results from the sales pipeline (which should also be done on a regular basis for the most accurate and up-to-date activities required.)

If set up correctly, KPIs provide clarity and clear structure around the tasks that result in moving prospects through the pipeline, to ultimately become customers.

Once KPIs are set, they then need to be managed, and the easiest way for business leaders and CEOs to do this is through a dashboard. This is about having visibility over the sales process and pipeline, to be able to monitor and manage activities, and to provide a real-time view of the overall aspects of current opportunities.

[Membrain is a powerful tool](#) that brings your sales process and dashboard to life - giving your management team the ability to hold your sales people accountable to the right activities.

From lead funnels, to forecasting, sales activities, keeping track of KPIs and up-to-date results from the sales team, dashboards provide an important functionality for all business leaders, and it is difficult to manage these metrics without a central point for the information.

Are your current sales team KPIs helpful, or a hindrance to performance? Don't set KPIs just for the sake of it – understand how they play an important role when it comes to profitability for your business, and how creating the right ones will result in success for your sales team, and overall greater trackability for your dashboard management.

6

Strategic messaging:

Why your customers should buy from you (create your value proposition, positioning statements and unique selling proposition).

Amongst all of your competitors in your marketplace there is only one who can offer their product and/or service for the lowest price point.

This means all other business needs to sell on value – and if you don't have a rock solid value proposition, how can you expect your sales team to sell effectively? Sure, some sales might make it through the pipeline due to other outside influences, but you'll never be achieving your maximum profitability.

So the next step is ensuring your strategic messaging is regularly reviewed, and time is spent ensuring it is working efficiently and effectively in your marketplace.

To be successful in sales you need: a value proposition, a positioning statement and a unique selling proposition.

On the face of it, these may appear to be the same thing. But they actually aren't – and used at different times, they produce different results.

Value proposition

Your value proposition is a clear statement of the tangible results your customer will enjoy from using your product or service. It needs to focus on the specific outcomes to clearly demonstrate the value that you provide to your customers. The more specific you can be with your value proposition, the greater your ability to get in front of busy decision makers that will buy your product or service.

Your value proposition is a description of how your ideal target market (customer) will materially benefit from your product or service. It is a statement that demonstrates clearly defined and measurable outcomes

that your customers can expect from dealing with your company.

Examples of this include a quantifiable return on investment, improved productivity or efficiency, reduced costs or attracting more customers. Cut through the clutter and make it a compelling offer.

In business today your value proposition needs to cut through the noise and stand out from the crowd. To achieve this it needs to be specific and compelling. A weak value proposition will simply get lost and won't get you in front of busy decision makers whereas strong value propositions will open doors and create opportunities.

Strong value propositions speak in business language, using terms such as:

- Increased revenues
- Decreased costs
- Improved operational efficiency
- Reduced cost of sale
- Faster sales cycles
- Increased market share
- Decreased operational costs
- Faster response time

This also creates a strong sense of urgency, as there are tangible costs or losses in a delay to resolving those situations.

Positioning statement

Positioning statements are a short statement (typically 10 seconds or less) intended to capture the attention

of potential customers and prompt further discussion. Often referred to as your 'elevator pitch,' they are ideal to use at networking events where you only have a brief opportunity to create a first impression that motivates people to want to know more about your product or service.

Positioning statements are intended to position both you and your company in the eyes of your customer in a range of situations, for example:

1. Prospecting when attempting to make appointment
2. At the first introductory meeting
3. In any situation that you want to introduce yourself and explain what you do in 10 seconds or less, such as at a networking event.

They are used to quickly differentiate your products and services to help you stand out and get noticed in today's crowded market place.

Why they work:

- Grabs attention by hitting potential hot buttons
- Demonstrates credibility
- Directs conversation away from features and benefits
- Focuses attention on current or future pain or gain
- Differentiates you from the competition
- Provides a frame work for sales people to engage in conversation

It starts with you knowing about where the prospective customer is likely to have business problems you help solve, and connecting with the personal (emotional) problems the prospect may have as a result of the business problems. If you can achieve this, it is like hitting the HOT BUTTONS.

Unique selling proposition (USP)

Your USP is a statement describing what sets you and your company apart from the competition. Although it's vitally important that you have the ability to differentiate yourself from your competitors, it's also important to understand that your USP has little, or no impact, with customers that are satisfied with their current situation or supplier, or aren't ready to make a purchasing decision.

You only get one chance to make a good first impression and, if you're going to have any chance of getting to second base, you better make it a good one.

Your USP is a statement describing what sets you apart from your competition. The primary value of your USP is to create competitive differentiation and is typically used in presentations and conversations with customers who are ready to buy.

Here are some examples:

- We have the exclusive rights for the world's leading sales assessment tool – methodology
- We specialize in recruitment for sales professionals only – specialty
- We guarantee being on site within 2 hours or your money back – guarantee

Where are you truly unique?

Now we need to develop the area that makes you unique and will make you stand out from the crowd. We need to take some time to understand what makes your solution a better choice than the alternative.

So, why do we need them?

Today, more than ever before, decision-makers have less time to spend on the decision-making process. The current economic climate has meant corporate restructuring and downsizing with buyers having way too much to do and simply not enough time to get it done.

With constant pressure to deliver 'results' they are not interested to simply 'learn' about new products, are fiercely protective of their time and, with a bombardment from other vendors trying to get their attention, it's more difficult than ever to get face time with them.

You only get one chance to make a good first impression and, if you're going to have any chance of getting to second base, you better make it a good one.

Bonus

A 9-step process for a highly effective sales call

The sales call is the moment of truth – it's the time where growth will occur with a sale, or not.

Grant Holland – Head of High Performance at SalesStar – shares his expert tips on how to achieve success with your sales calls.

As you work your way through these steps, make sure to ask yourself if you actually do each point, and whether you do it well.

Research

Understand a little about the organization and individual(s) you will be speaking with. Consider some insights they may not be aware of, or are currently underestimating. It is also important to focus on possible pain points. Unless a salesperson is very experienced, they won't be able to provide valuable insights on the fly, so it is imperative to review insights and areas of pain – as well as have some objectives for the call.

Rapport

When it comes to those early moments of meeting people during their working day, it's so much more than 'how's the weather or the sport' – it's about reading and observing their behavior, especially if you want to make best use of their behavioral style.

Meeting setup

If you want to have a quality conversation and get outcomes from a sales call, set up the meeting objectives, understand both parties' expectations and make this collaborative. Yes, this doesn't sound like rocket science, but it I've seen it work so well I absolutely recommend it.

Drivers

This is about understanding your prospects' business drivers and why it is that they do what they do. Focusing on this can give you some really good insights into their thinking, and done well, can uncover a layer of their emotion.

Aspirations and plans

What do I mean here? It is about understanding what they are hoping to achieve in the future / what their growth plans are / what their strategies are, and an absolute must: How are they going so far with achieving their plans and aspirations?

Challenges and... Opportunities

You have to be able to talk about and uncover challenges and opportunities – not only what they are, but getting into the pain that the challenges are causing, then getting into the gain that particular opportunity may provide.

Then there is the impact this is having on the business (as well as personally on the prospect) and for this they have to attach a dollar value to it. It is important that prospects see themselves personally in this story, as then you have a consultative selling method and an increase in buyer motivation by over 400%, which means you can move to offering a solution.

Resolve

Next comes such a good opportunity to summarize – especially around the pain & gain areas you have uncovered – and check to see that the customer sees themselves in the story mentioned previously (as opposed to distant numbers that don't affect them.)



How do you know when a customer's true motivational drivers have been identified?

It is about attaching a dollar value to the gaps, and this should be a moment of truth to establish how motivated they are to fix the problem and get permission to move to a solution.

And here is a key insight - how do you know when a customer's true motivational drivers have been identified?

Well, actually, here is the reverse - how to know when it hasn't. How many times after presenting a solution or closing do you see a customer close up their book and say, "Thanks very much for your time, I will have to get back to you."

And the salesperson says, "OK, sure..."

To me this indicates that the customer's true motivational drivers have not been identified, and it will probably never lead to a sale. So here is an example of a recent exchange with a potential client:

I said, "I've got some insights for you, but you have to give me 15 minutes." He agreed.

At the end of our discussion, he said he would have to get back to me. So then I said:

"I've heard about your reasons and why you want to grow your business. I also understand that you say you need to go to others to get approval, as a lot of our customers say the same thing.

"But the fact is, you've got a \$5million problem, and I've found that when people go to others to try and get sign-off, those other people push back and have questions that you may struggle to answer.

"Then there's no sign-off, and very quickly you can find your growth doesn't start, and your problem doesn't start getting fixed.

"So wouldn't it be better to seek forgiveness rather than permission? This is your business and your money, so how motivated are you to realize your goals and to fix a big problem?"

He agreed to go ahead...

Way forward:

My message is simple, but so often not done - you must gain commitment to a way forward.

One more time: gain commitment to a way forward.


Those are the 9 steps around sales call capability that will massively increase sales performance and increases buyer motivation - so the next question is: How are you doing in comparison?


Want to know more about creating an end-to-end sales strategy for your business?

Feel free to give us a call, send us an email, or request a free consultation with one of our sales development experts.

We're a friendly bunch but we are very serious about helping businesses achieve better sales results. We'll even calculate your ROI to ensure that working with us makes financial sense in every respect.

Frank Niekamp

 614-551-9858

 frank.niekamp@salesstar.com

www.salesstar.com/us