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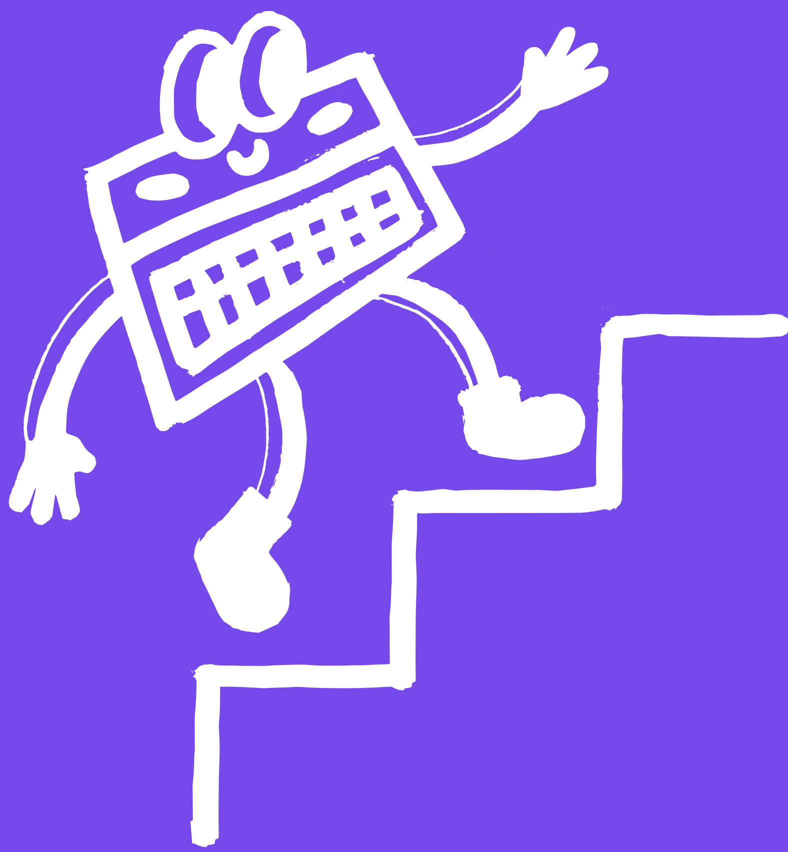

The 90-Day Inside Sales Success Plan

For Newly Hired & Transformation-Minded Inside Sales Managers

A book for you by ringDNA

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What's the most important strategic advice you'd give to help sales managers make transformative changes within 90 days?

We spoke to 20 of the world's top sales trainers, executives, and thought leaders and compiled their responses for you.

Intro

For any newly appointed sales manager, the first 90 days are make or break. You need to earn the trust and respect of those working for you, while simultaneously demonstrating to top-level executives that you have what it takes to deliver transformative results.

Leading a sales team to success can be challenging. But with the right plan, you can deliver sweeping results within a short period of time. Whether it's your first time leading a sales team or you've simply been given a mandate for change, we want to help you succeed.

Your 90-day plan is bound to differ based on your company size, target market and other factors. But no matter what it is you're selling, these proven sales strategies can help you hit the ground running. Think of these expert sales tips as shortcuts that you can use to not only meet, but exceed your goals.

Build a Sales Culture Based on Trust

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Dennis Burggraf, an early mentor as I moved into a managerial role, gave me this fabulous advice about becoming a manager: "when you become a manager, your staff will give you 75% effort because you're the boss. If they think you're competent, they may give you 80%. And if they really like you, they'll give you 85%. But if they truly believe you have their best interests at heart, they'll give you 110%."

Advice for Transitioning into a Managerial Role

1 Get to Really Know Your New Staff

Not the person on the surface, but the person underneath, the one who will decide whether or not you are worth following. How can they trust you unless they feel you know them and have their best interests at heart? And because you haven't yet earned their trust, they aren't going to divulge the inner person right away.

Consider using a behavioral assessment such as DiSC, to give you the scientifically-proven insights into the inner person. Link this to a shared learning experience about DiSC and you have an excellent team building opportunity to forge lasting relationships with your new team. Then use the assessment findings to adapt your own approach to what works best with each member of your staff.

2 Extend Trust

You cannot expect to be trusted if you don't first extend it. So extend it. Your staff will value this and be more willing to follow someone who trusts them. That is not to say extend trust blindly. Ask questions about how things are going with the area(s) in which you extended trust. Ask questions instead of offering opinions to show you value what each team member is thinking.

Humility is Paramount

Jim Keenan

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Act as if you don't know shit. Recognize that the sales people have a lot of institutional and situational knowledge that will be invaluable to you. Spend the first 90 days learning the world from your direct reports' perspective.

Acting as if you're the know-it-all will bury you. Humility is key for a new manager. It is paramount.

Perform a Gap Analysis

Learn, learn, learn, learn everything you can about the team, the environment, the objectives, your boss, your boss' boss, the customers, the systems, etc. Become a sponge and build your knowledge base as much as you can about everything in your sphere of influence and your sphere of control.

Read, read, and read some more. Be as objective as possible, dig for information. The goal is to absorb as much information as possible without a filter or bias. Take the data in as cleanly as possible.

Once you've gotten all the data, then put it through a filter:

- Is this the team I need to hit my goals?
- Does the current strategy support the goals?
- Is the structure adequate?
- Do I have the resources I need?
- Do I have all the right processes to be successful?
- Do I have the right people in the right roles?

Break your observations down into 4 sections: **Strategy**, **Structure**, **People** and **Process**. Look at the data you acquired from every angle. The objective is to complete a robust gap analysis. If you can determine what that gap is between what you currently have and what you need for success in the first 90 days, you're in great shape.

For bigger companies and bigger roles (CSO/EVP Sales/CRO) a complete gap analysis in 90 days isn't realistic. In that case, have the analysis structure and plan completed in the first 90 days, so it can be executed in the next 90 days.

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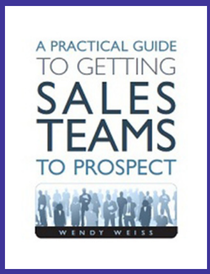
Know the Numbers

Wendy Weiss

THE QUEEN
OF COLD CALLING™

PRESIDENT
ColdCallingResults.com

AUTHOR
A Practical Guide to Getting Sales Teams to Prospect



@wendyweiss

Peter Drucker very famously said, "What's measured, improves." It was true when he said it, and it is still true today. Inside sales managers need to know all the metrics associated with their team's activity. That means dials, conversations (with the right people), appointments scheduled or opportunities uncovered. Knowing the numbers means that you know what works – or what's not working, so you can fix it.

Follow the Process

OR DEVELOP ONE OF YOUR OWN

There may already be a specific process in place for the calls that members of your team are making. If there is, lucky you! If there is not, you will need to develop the process. Having a specific process in place will make your team more efficient and more effective.

Your process should include (but not be limited to) answers to these types of questions:

- What are the parameters that define a qualified prospect?
- What is the goal for each type of call an inside sales representative is making?
- How many times should reps call any one contact?
- How to handle the call – and what to say – when a prospect answers the phone
- What to do with a contact who is never reached and who never responds to a voicemail message or an email
- Should inside sales representatives leave voicemail messages?
    - If yes, what should they say?
    - If yes, how many voicemails should they leave?

Be a Servant Leader

Kevin Gaither

SENIOR VP OF SALES
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Begin work to understand the meaning of "Servant Leadership." Most newly hired managers were most recently in an individual contributor role. They think mostly of themselves, their needs, and their goals. The servant leader thinks mostly of their reps.

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Begin with the End in Mind

To quote Robert K. Greenleaf, "[The Servant Leader makes] sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and most difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"

If you can become a servant leader, your reps will trust you and respect you. This will help you attract more high-quality reps, which will allow you to hit your goals.

Start from the result you want and work backwards. Stephen Covey writes in his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, "begin with the end in mind." As you create a new team or take over an existing team, think about what you'll want to accomplish.

- What kind of reps do you want to hire?
- What metrics improvements do you need to affect?
- What problems do you need to solve?

Next, work backwards with your solutions, strategies and tactics. Too often, new managers get immediately caught up in the day to day minutiae of being a new manager and forget to raise their head up and ask "What's the goal? What's the target?" If new managers begin with the end in mind, this will help them focus and prioritize their activities.

Sit, Sit, Sit, & Sit Some More

Alice Kemper

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Your sellers are not you. You probably got promoted because you could sell well. That doesn't mean you are to create a team of mini-clones. Big mistake #1 will be to tell your team to do it like you, or repeatedly say, "this is how I did it."

Observe, Monitor, & Coach

Your first month is observation time. Schedule sit-withs – my term for call monitoring – for 20 to 30 minutes with each seller to set the stage that you monitoring and coaching.

If you wait to do this 6 to 12 months into your position, that's a change that may be resisted, and although that can be worked through, it may take longer to be advantageous to your building a team of top performers. Plus, that's six months of lost time that you have no real clue as to how they really sell. Besides, your team is looking to see what you are going to do as their manager, how you are going to lead and help them earn more money.

Now of course they are going to know that you are monitoring their conversations, which means immediate feedback is important. For the early go-rounds of monitoring, meet with the seller immediately after your 20 minutes of listening. The last 20 minutes of calls will be fresh in their minds. The point of this conversation is to hear from them.

Begin with praise and then ask:

- What did they think went well on the last 20 minutes of conversations?
- What did they think was particularly challenging?

- What did they think went well on the last 20 minutes of conversations?
- What did they think was particularly challenging?

- What will it take to remove or overcome the challenges?
- What actions are they willing to commit to?

If you are going to offer a suggestion on what to improve, or a particular way to respond differently than they currently are selling, word to the wise – select one and only one suggestion. You are going to observe and 'hear' many. Yet, select only one. People are better at adjusting one behavior or skill at a time. Select the one behavior or skill that, if improved, will immediately influence future sales conversations and results, and coach towards that skill.

Remember sit, sit and sit again to build a team of top producers!

Use Socratic Management Techniques

to Maximize Buy-In & Employee Engagement

Bennett Phillips

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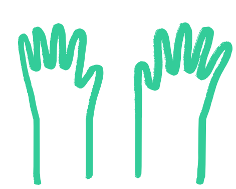
Take the time to get to know your direct reports. Learn what motivates them and what their aspirations are. Motivation comes from within, so as a manager you cannot make someone be motivated. You can, however, create an environment in which they will thrive and thereby will be inspired to contribute their discretionary effort (i.e. the work people do that is above and beyond what's expected of them).

Empower Your Team Members

Once you have gotten to know your people, make sure you adjust your management style with each one of them. Everyone has different motivations, ideas, communication preferences and hot buttons. If you manage all of your people the same way, you will end up alienating at least a few of them, if not everybody.

When you meet with your team members for 1:1 or coaching conversations, let them drive the conversation. Ask thoughtful, open-ended, guiding questions to help them figure out solutions on their own. You will be tempted to fix all their problems for them and close deals for them, but by doing this you are encouraging indecisiveness, uncertainty, and low confidence. You are also hindering their ability to grow and improve their skills. Start these conversations off with broad-sweeping questions like “how’s everything going?” and then go more narrow into specific issues as the conversation continues.

Focus on asking great questions rather than just doing a lot of telling. When they come up with solutions on their own, accountability increases. This is due to the fact that in general, people will tolerate the conclusions of others, but they are far more likely to act on their own conclusions.

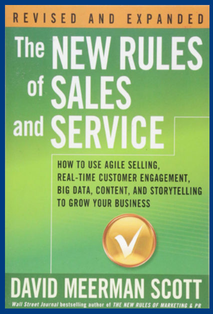


Build the Social Selling Process into Your Team

David Meerman Scott

AUTHOR

The New Rules of Sales and Service: How to Use Agile Selling, Real-Time Customer Engagement, Big Data, Content, and Storytelling to Grow Your Business



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Just like individual salespeople now require new competencies that build social personal branding, sales managers and senior sales leaders must learn new skills and manage a new set of metrics. Be active on social networks to understand the new tools of selling. When salespeople are interacting on Twitter or updating their LinkedIn profiles, this activity is more likely to contribute toward eventual sales than cold-calling a buyer.

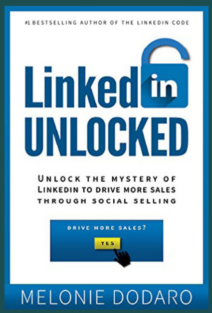
At some organizations, using social networking services during work hours is banned.
This is ridiculous. Even in organizations where this isn't an outright policy violation, many sales managers don't allow time for social networking or give credit to people who use social media effectively to build business.

Provide Your Team with Social Sales Training

Melonie Dodaro

CEO
Top Dog Social Media

AUTHOR
LinkedIn Unlocked



@meloniedodaro

First, managers need to make sure their team is representing their company's brand well with completed profiles. A complete, professional looking profile that has been optimized for search engines not only creates a better first impression, but also allows your reps to be found more often by your ideal clients and stand out from your competitors.

Second, managers need to train their team in social selling to improve their lead generation. Providing your team with social selling training ensures that they have the tools and the plan to effectively and efficiently find and connect with your ideal clients. Then, nurture the relationship so that when they are ready to purchase, your company is the only choice.

Do Nothing – Until You've Figured Things Out

Dave Brock

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Too often, when new managers come onboard, there is a tendency to want to jump in and start changing things. That's probably the worst thing you can do!

The most critical things you need to do in your first 30 days as a new manager is to figure out what's going on, how things get done, what people think, why the organization is where it is. Until you do this, you don't know what actions are right, what needs to be done, or which are the highest priorities.

Your best action is to do nothing, until you've figured things out. Even if the hiring manager has told you, "You need to fix these problems!"

So How Do You Figure Things Out?

1 Frame of Reference

It's important to look at things through fresh eyes, as if you are the new kid on the block even if you've been with the company for some time.

2 Don't Prove Yourself

This is related to your frame of reference. You already have the job! So resist the temptation to try to prove yourself by taking quick actions, or by any kind of posturing you might do. It doesn't help you—in fact it probably hurts you.

3 Learn Everything

Now, focus on learning everything you can from anyone that's willing to talk to you—yes, I mean the receptionist in the front and the janitor too! I'll provide you a checklist for your first 30 days, but here's a starting point:

- Visit 30 customers, prospects, past customers
    - You aren't there to sell them, you are there to ask them their views: What do they think about your company? What do they think about your competitors? There are a lot of other questions. Do most of these without the sales people so the customer can be open.
- Spend good quality time with each of your people
    - Ride along with them, go on calls, and get to know them as human beings. Learn how they do their jobs. Get into the weeds with them, look at details—how they think about deal strategies, use the CRM system, prepare for a call, and prioritize and manage their time.
    - Don't critique or try to correct anything you see going on, just ask lots of questions, listen, ask more questions, observe, and ask more questions.
- Repeat
    - Do the same with other functions in the company. Learn how things get done. Get to know the people and let them get to know you.

For more on this topic, see "Slow Down, You Move Too Fast" on the Partners in EXCELLENCE blog.

From Price to Value

Darrin Fleming

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Train your salespeople to move conversations with prospects from price to value.

Every day, salespeople face two common challenges: Indifferent prospects who have a “we’re fine with the status quo” mentality, and prospects who demand deep discounts. Help your team develop bulletproof responses to these challenges. Start by teaching them how to inspire the customer to care about how your solution helps customers solve real business problems.

Give your salespeople tools to help the customer justify the cost of investing in your solution. Salespeople who understand how to help stakeholders gain budget approval are in a better position to consistently meet or beat quota every month. When the customer is able to measure the business impact of their investment, research shows that 65% of such purchases occur in six months or less.

Give Your Team the Confidence They Need to Succeed

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The first piece of advice I would give to any new sales manager is something that I have learned more from being a father than in any sales position. Your teams are lot like children. You want them to do things the right way and with confidence. How do you do that?

Get to Know Your Team on a Personal Level

Know their personalities, selling styles, likes, dislikes, etc. Conversely, they should get to know you on a personal level too. It will allow the manager to instill a higher level of confidence in them.

When things go wrong or they fail, they feel more comfortable in coming to the manager for help and guidance. The manager is not there to hold their hand, but to ensure their success and the team's overall success. I call this approach "Wings & Roots." Give them confidence for them to soar with their wings, but enough instruction and guidance to allow them to be firmly rooted in their role.

Another tip is what I call the "pre-mortem." As in any team environment, success is typically tied to some sort of goal. Unfortunately, in reality things can and do go wrong. If you can foresee as many possibilities of failure, you can better deal with them. For example, a team member that continually falls short of his or her goals. Having an action plan to identify and overcome problems before they become systemic to the whole team.

Embody Integrity, Intelligence & Intensity

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I think that there's a big temptation to go for quick wins for newly hired inside sales managers. They want to make a splash quickly, and sometimes that means compromising long-term results.

The greatest leaders develop and mentor their team members, enabling each team member to grow as much as they can, and foster trust, respect, and intelligence by embodying the values of Integrity, Intelligence, and Intensity. Doing these things will ensure that your teams will be engaged and passionate about what they're doing and for whom they're working.

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Keep it Simple, Keep it Focused

Jason Jordan

PARTNER

Vantage Point Performance

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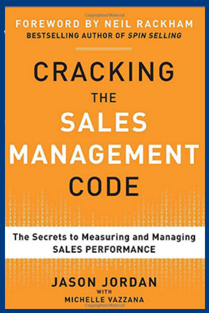
Cracking the Sales Management Code: The Secrets to Measuring and Managing Sales Performance



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You will succeed in your first 90 days as a sales manager the same way you will succeed for the rest of your career: by identifying the activities that are most critical to your team's performance, and focusing relentlessly on the execution of those few critical tasks.

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Drive Success

Sales management is not as complex as we tend to make it. In reality, there is a handful of things that drives success in any given sales force. Your challenge is to identify those high-impact activities, elevate their importance within your team, and eliminate of all the other noise. Don't be distracted by the newest technology, methodology, or trend – your salespeople will succeed by doing fundamental things fundamentally well.

In other words, keep it simple and keep it focused. If you can accomplish those two things, you and everyone around you will have long, happy, and productive careers in sales.

Listen More than You Speak

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Listen, be a sponge, realize that what worked at your last company may not work for this one. Your new team are people, and they are different than the people on your last team.

Listen, Learn, & Evolve

You will not be able to manage your team before you get to know them: what motivates them, what peeves them and which environments they thrive in. You certainly will not know that your first day. But assuming the person who hired you was realistic, they will understand that it will take time for you to get up to speed. You will fail if you come in on your first day and start barking at your team. As hard as your first few days/weeks might be, listen much more than you speak and schedule individual meetings with your new team getting to know them.

As a newly hired manager, you will most likely not have the opportunity to completely revamp the existing processes. Be prepared to evolve your solution set to accommodate that possibility. Once you know your team and understand the existing processes you will be able to recommend necessary changes or enhancements. At the end of the day, if you must evolve and live with the existing processes and personnel, embrace them.

Lead by Example

Ben Sardella

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During the first two weeks, It's critical for new managers to roll up their sleeves and get on the front lines. Without a true understanding of what it takes to sell successfully as an individual in an organization, it will be difficult to identify team-wide inefficiencies and best practices, as well as give reps proper guidance and coaching.

At the heart of any good relationship is good communication. To build a successful team, a manager must communicate what the goals are for each employee, and how they will be measured over a specific period of time. Unless those that report to you understand your goals for them, you are setting yourself as a manager and your employees up for failure.

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I'm Promoted. Now What?

Steven Rosen

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52 Sales Management Tips: The Sales Managers' Success Guide

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As a sales rep, you relied on yourself to get things done. If you were successful, it was a result of your efforts. Now that you have joined the ranks of management, you realize that you must rely on others to get things done.

Sales management is a great job except that you now have to deal with multiple sales people who all have their idiosyncrasies and baggage. It's not just about you anymore. Now you have to learn how to inspire success in other people.

Find ways to help your people shine instead of whine.

Create a Hiring Profile for New Reps

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First, figure out who you want working on your team. Creating a hiring profile is the most critical (yet most neglected) thing that a new sales manager must do.

New Hire Requirements

Here's a cheat sheet. Any new hire must be a "yes" in these three categories:If they get a yes in all three categories...hire them.

- Can I train them to do this job?
- Will they love doing this job?
- Can I tolerate working with them (operative word is tolerate..not love)?

Know Which Metrics You'll Be Measured By

Second, know how you are going to be measured before you even take the job. Many companies are incorporating activity and behavioral stats into their sales manager comp. It's imperative that you understand if this is the case before you get into any new gig.

It's not a bad thing. Companies do it because measuring good behavior tends to lead to more good behavior. It's critical that you know what matters to your new boss right out of the gate so that you can set up your analytics to always show how well you are doing. For example, if your new boss cares about talk time, dials, conversions, and closed business, but you just talk about closed business when you meet, you are losing an opportunity to differentiate yourself in his or her eyes.

Build a Sales Playbook

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First, put a system of procedures and processes in place and have them documented in writing. A playbook, or rules of engagement that shows a clear path for the team to reach and exceed their goals.

Building the Playbook

This should be a process that includes the team's input. I would not recommend just rolling out your plan and saying, "this is the way it's going to be." Instead, sit with your team and present your ideas, share your experience and past wins. Then walk through how following the plan will ensure success. The discussion should be open for input and adjusted where necessary. It is critical to get buy-in. A plan which is created and agreed to by the entire team will ensure team members take ownership. It needs to become their plan, versus your plan. This is critical.

Second, let them know you are there to help them succeed. Like any good coach, you will push them, and be there to ensure they are adhering to the playbook. But above all, you are a part of the team. Show them that their success, not yours, is what's most important to you.

Balancing Act

Whit Gaither

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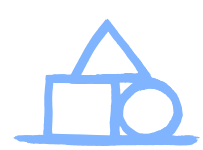
Focus on revenue, but don't lose track of the people and processes you need to achieve sales velocity. Every sales manager knows they need a solid plan, the right people and a pipeline to be successful. Successful sales managers learn to balance the three.

Ingredients for Sales Velocity

A thoughtfully designed and well-articulated plan, with buy-in from stakeholders, is critical. It's also essential to embrace best practices while stretching to meet emerging trends.

When recruiting the right candidates and setting incentives, we need to consider the balance between execution ability and creativity. Has this type of product been sold before, or are we still "cracking the code"?

While a sales leader's track record for success carries weight and inspires the troops with confidence, nothing beats demonstrating success at the new company. While it may (and does!) surprise prospects to reach the VP of Sales on the occasional inbound call, it's essential. That kind of front-line duty keeps you aware of what your customers want and the challenges your sales reps face.



Elevate Your Team to New Heights

Automate Routine Tasks & Optimize Great Processes

Howard Brown

FOUNDER & CEO
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Assembling the right team, creating an incredible sales playbook and ensuring that your sales reps always preach the right sales values are all essential. But even the best sales team won't be competitive without the right sales tools.

Evaluate Your Needs

Whether you're the new head of sales or have been in the role for some time, you should evaluate your needs at least every year, and preferably every six months. I recommend that you look at your target KPIs, and work backwards from there to discover which technologies can help drive them.

Here are the questions to ask internally:

- How do my top sales reps prioritize their daily tasks?
- What sales processes work best for my top performers?
- How do my top performers reach good prospects most often?
- What predictive data insight do we currently get from marketing data, and at what sales stages?

Once you've done that, ask your sales reps what their biggest frustration points are, and where they think they are least efficient.

Specifically ask them what they think the biggest wastes of time are.

When you've collected that feedback, ask yourself:

- Which routine tasks or processes should be automated?
- Focus not only on the frustration points, but also things that are working really well that should be institutionalized.
- Which things should all my present and future reps be doing to reach more qualified prospects?

Now that you know what your needs are, take a fresh look at the sales technology landscape. Look for new or existing solutions that can help. And most important of all – don't slow down to speed up. If you adopt new technologies, make sure there is little or zero downtime. Painful and slow integrations will ruin your week, your month and your entire quarter.

ringDNA Sales Acceleration

ringDNA is an inside sales acceleration engine that helps sales teams prioritize, connect with and convert more customers.

In a world where only 58% of sales reps make quota, we offer a complete inside sales engine that enables Salesforce customers to boost sales productivity and close deals faster, transforming sales reps into rockstars. Automated call metrics provide sales managers with deep insight into individual and team performance, while reps get critical insight into the prospect data they need when they need it.

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ringdna.com/sales-strategy