Ten Point Plan For Increasing Sales

A Plan For A Sales Manager To Win More Business
Ten Point Plan For 
Increasing Sales

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All sales teams at some point need a boost. When times are good and results are coming in there is less of an incentive for sales managers to demand extra effort. The problem we have is lead times.

Lead times

Our definition of lead times is the average time between a first contact being made by a salesperson and an order being placed by the customer. Given that some customers buy quite soon after the first contact, while it could take months or even years to sign up another the average lead time is probably several months.

What this means is that effort we put in today will pay off some time in the future. The problem is that many sales managers have a short term view and this can encourage bad habits in the sales team.

Targets

All salespeople should be targeted, both on the effort they put in and the results they achieve. They should have very clear objectives and a mix of short, medium and long term goals. Their results will come from existing customers and new customers. Depending on what you sell, the proportion of sales from these 2 sources will vary. In our business 75% of our revenue comes from new customers and 25% from existing. This is why we focus the majority of our sales effort on finding new customers, while making sure we don't lose contact with the existing ones.

This plan is designed to focus the team on generating new customers and begins with the sales manager setting some objectives for the team.

Ten point plan.

Point 1. Objectives

Work out your objectives for the team. Decide the overall objective. How many new accounts and what profile of account are you looking for? Don't just set a number. We want quality, not just quantity.

Objectives should be SMART.

Specific – Objectives should specify what you want to achieve Measurable – You should be able to measure your objectives Achievable - Are the objectives you set, achievable and attainable? Realistic – Can you realistically achieve the objectives with the resources you have and in
the time scale you have set?

Time bound – When do you want to achieve the set objectives?

So, an example of a SMART objective could be: To sign up 30 independent retailers with a turnover of more than £250,000 within 3 months beginning 1st July.

This is better than: To open as many new accounts as possible, which is not SMART.

**Point 2. Announce the objectives**

Get the team together and announce your objectives. Break down the target to individuals in the team, making sure each individual target reflects the potential on each area and the skill of the salesperson.

**Point 3. Personal sales plans**

Announce that each team member has to produce a personal sales plan for achieving his, or her new business target. This will be a plan of action for the period.

Typically the plan should be written down and include:

- **Sales Objectives.** What I want to achieve
- **Analysis of sales strategy.** How I intend to achieve it
- **Resources.** The resources I currently have that will help me achieve my objectives
- **Market Analysis.** Where is the potential in the market place?
- **Product Range.** What products am I promoting?
- **Activity Analysis.** What are my activity targets? How many phone calls and visits will I need to make to hit target?
- **Training Plan.** Have I got the right skills to do the job?
- **Resources Requirements.** Are there other resources I will need? For example a marketing budget, a database etc.

**Point 4. Present plans**

Team members present their plans. This is important because it gives a public commitment to their plan and an opportunity for the manager and the team to give feedback.

**Point 5. Train the team**

Train the team. Are there skills they need to learn or to practise that will help them achieve their objectives? These could be things like appointment booking, presentation skills, objection handling, negotiation, closing and so on. Give the team all the resources they need to be successful.
Point 6. Implement plans

Implement the plans. Agree how regularly you will need to review progress, both to individuals and to the team as a whole.

Point 7. Record and announce results

Record the results and announce progress regularly.

Point 8. Coach

Re-target as required and give individual coaching to team members. Check they are achieving both their activity target as well as results.

Point 9. Feedback

Give feedback both to individuals and to the team on their success. Announce individual successes and communicate good ideas that have brought results. Share best practice with the team.

Point 10. Reward and praise

Reward success. Have individual and team rewards. Salespeople have very strong achievement and recognition needs. Achieving target and being given recognition for it will motivate team members.

This process works and is highly motivational for the team. The important point is that team members produce their own plans and the manager’s role is to ensure the team achieves the objectives that have been set.