# How to increase the productivity of your sales team

**TEAM**

## "Make sure you are continually learning and adjusting."

A guide to getting the most out of
your team - includes 15 top tips.

# Introduction

When it comes to your sales team there are all sorts of reasons why you may find productivity has taken a bit of a nose dive. From a lack of quality leads, to feeling bogged down in admin, or other aspects of the working environment, there are many influencing factors that can quickly become a sap on motivation. Being able to spot the triggers and work through them is a vital skill for any manager, as the last thing you want is to risk seeing your sales figures drop. To help you, in this short guide we've pulled together some top tips on ways to focus your sales team and increase their performance.

Building and managing a strong, motivated and driven team that has its eyes firmly on the prize is going to be the goal of any good sales manager. You will also want to ensure you are working smart and that means keeping hold of talent when you find it and helping your reps to grow and develop. If you're spending all your energy on continuously hiring and training up new recruits then you're not going to get far, as a high churn rate is just not good for business.

Another important step for driving up productivity is to make sure you are continually learning and adjusting. Analyse all the data you have at your fingers tips, with regards to customers and leads, and use it to strength your entire process. This will often be very revealing and help you guide the sales team to find new ways of engaging with clients and closing those deals. The competitive advantage that your sales team has lies within the information they have available – from who they are engaging with, to insights learnt about behaviour patterns and preferences over interaction – be it digitally or face-to-face.

We're going to focus here on four key elements that can help you streamline and strength the productivity of your team. They are: Process; Equipment; Team and Management.

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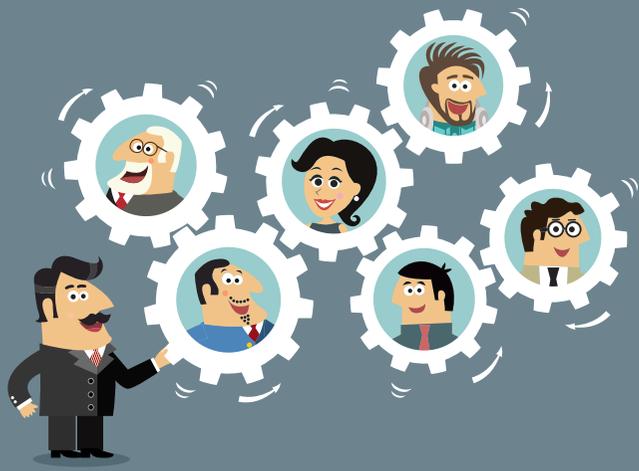
# Process

Even if you are satisfied with your statistics, it is good practice to regularly scrutinize your existing sales process. People, technology, the market, buyers..... basically everything(!) is changing all the time, so your sales process needs to adapt accordingly.

Here are some questions you should regularly be asking:

- How well do you know the companies and people you are targeting?
- Is your marketing attracting the correct type of leads?
- How do you keep leads warm and nurture them through relationship management?
- Have you involved your marketing team in the nurturing of not-yet-ready-to-buy leads?

- How are leads passed along? Is your setup of who gets which leads still working?
- Are you feeding the marketing team information from the field in order to improve the content they provide?
- Is your sales material up to scratch?
- Is your hand-off to customer on-boarding and customer service working?
- In a long sales cycle, do you enlist the help of people with specialist knowledge from your organisation in the sales process?

The bottom line is: To be effective you need to attract the correct type of leads; pass on only highly qualified leads to sales executives; eliminate administrative burdens; make sure communication at every point is working; and keep checking all stages to make sure they are sleek and fully optimised.

*"To be effective you need to attract the correct type of leads."*

# Equipment

Technology is advancing at a rapid pace. Keep on top of it and make sure your team has the best tools available to help them do their job efficiently. Be mindful not to just dump tools on them though, make sure they know how to use them and are properly trained. Often it is not so much the software itself that needs learning, but rather the process of using it and getting into the habit of using it.

In sales, knowing your customer is critical. Observing the behaviour of your leads and clients in real-time, as they interact with your company in any way – for example by browsing your website, liking your Facebook page – gives you a competitive advantage. Modern technology and software tools can now make this fairly simple to accomplish. Being able to call a prospect within minutes of them looking at your pricing page has the potential to massively increase your conversion rate.

Among the sales executives in your team you will find those who are early adopters and love technology, but also others who are not so keen. As sales manager you need to know how to help your team overcome any hurdles in terms of technology; either by using too much or too little of it.

Here's one quick tech test: if your sales reps still have to add a company's phone number manually into your CRM, you've got the wrong CRM.

# Team

Ensure you have the right team for the right job - depending on your company, products, sales cycle, etc. the composition of your team may need to be very different. For example, in longer sales cycles you are likely to need more specialists on the team, accompanying the sales executives at times in order to provide custom made solutions for clients. In faster moving sales cycles, quickly finding out which products your client most likely needs is a top priority and requires quick thinkers.

Good sales representatives come in all shapes and sizes, and more importantly, personalities. Which ones are the ones you need for your particular setup? Are you better off with a group full of lone wolves, or will a collaborative effort as a team land you more results?

**Motivation** plays a key role in any sales organisation, however money isn't the only motivating factor. Is your compensation plan up to scratch? Are your incentives and bonus schemes working effectively?

**Training** is a key element of a successful sales team. Keep in mind that it isn't only product training and sales training, such as objection handling, that will help people achieve their goals. Soft skills are equally important and will play a role in the overall productivity of your team.

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# Management

Are you leading or managing your team? In most cases letting your team just get on with it and being the encouraging force that 'has their back' is a route to success. Being a coach and a role model are universal characteristics what make a good sales manager. You will be looked at for how well you manage your own productivity and can in turn teach your team.

Do you have the appropriate tools in place to manage the team's pipeline and produce accurate forecasts? What's true for your team is also true for yourself: Evaluate your personal process, tools, training and motivation.

A modern sales manager uses data driven planning to increase output. Technology can help you analyse many points along the sales journey and help you identify ways to improve the process.

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# 15 Tips for sales managers to improve productivity countdown

15. Have every one of your team, as well as marketing and customer services, on the same page with regards to the entire sales process.

14. Lead, don't (micro) manage.

13. Replace individual goals with team goals and encourage collaboration.

12. Teach things like: time and priority management, avoiding distractions, using Excel shortcuts.

11. Be a role model of personal productivity; show how you learn, try something, fail, try again, and improve.

10. Develop a positive sales culture.

9. Make sure you have the right people in the mix.

8. Let communication flow freely and appropriately.

7. Have the right tools in place and the right ongoing training so people know how to use them.

6. Speak to marketing and work together to ensure you're attracting the right, high quality leads.

5. Do not have your team waste time on dead leads, send them back to marketing to work with those.

4. Decrease administrative burdens wherever you can, for example by hiring help if needed.

3. Constantly focus on helping your sales teams save time and be more efficient.

2. Have a comprehensive resources library at hand for the sales team.

1. **Celebrate all wins.**

# Increasing the productivity of your sales team is just the beginning...

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