

What is Sales Enabling?

Why is it essential for increasing sales...

Introduction

There are five factors that influence how well the sales team will perform and sales enabling is just one of them but an important factor.

Effective sales

As Sales Directors and VPs know only too well, many factors effect how a sales team perform. We'll leave aside the external factors such as market conditions and brand image and examine here five factors that sales leaders and marketers can influence, focusing on those that are important in a high value solution selling environment.



1 Motivation

As with any group, salespeople are influenced by the way they are led and managed as well as by peer group pressure, pride and passion. Although other factors such as the correct use of incentives influence motivation, much research has shown that leadership and peer group pressure can be great motivators.

2 Incentives

Few sales teams operate without a monetary incentive scheme. Used correctly they ensure that salespeople are rewarded for success. The tricky part is ensuring that targets are set correctly, ensuring that reward is proportional to achievement and that incentives don't impact negatively on positive behaviours that can benefit the whole organisation such as team work, customer satisfaction and the promotion of new product and services.

3 Sales Tools

Good salespeople need few sales tools; better salespeople use sales tools to make them more effective. Materials such as good, scripted presentations, demonstrations, and case studies can all help salespeople to communicate the right messages about the product in a professional way. Sales management tools such as CRM and SFA can, in theory, make them more productive, but the application of these need careful consideration and a good knowledge of the specific sales process; otherwise it can become just a management reporting tool and sales overhead.

4 Sales Skills and Methodologies

Sales training will often focus on two areas: sale skills and use of sales methodologies. Sometimes these are interlinked by the methodology providers, but they are not the same. Understanding how to build relationships, identify problems, define solutions, negotiate and close deals are key skills. These could be applied more effectively using a standard methodology, which should enable to sales person to manage the sales process more proactively, identifying issues with the relationship, blocks to progress and being able to understand the true probability of success across multiple sales engagements with the management benefit of better forecasting.

These four factors ensure that the salesperson is skilled, motivated and equipped to sell. What they don't ensure is that they are enabled to sell a specific solution. The fifth factor is Sales Enabling.

5 Sales Enabling

Most sales people who have been trained in the selling methodologies such as *Solution Selling*, *The Complex Sale*, *Miller Heiman TAS*, or any of the many other methods, know that there are certain processes they need to do prior to engaging with customers or prospects so that can understand:

- The solution and its key attributes
- The customer's commercial environment, their pressure and 'hot buttons'
- How to select the right prospects
- The decision making unit in the customer's organisation, the roles and 'pains'.
- How the solution helps those individuals
- The competition, how they stack up, our strengths and weaknesses.
- The key facts that support our strengths
- What success stories are available, how we really made a difference
- The financial business case for our solution
- How to address specific objections
- The overall sales cycle, who to involve and what is the potential value of a total sale.

This is not information that is generic to any sales engagement but specific to this solution.

This is the type of information that would be known to salespeople who had sold the solution but not necessarily to the whole of the salesforce, or other customer facing staff.

So Sales Enabling is about taking good sales people (what other salespeople would you have) and enabling them to sell a specific solution through giving them the key business information about the solution and the sales process.

In some simple selling situations this is done routinely, as part of the product introduction process, but for complex solution sales this is rare, perhaps because its seen as part of the

salesperson's role, or the solution is too complex, or...

Typically, this is solved by:

- Product Briefing sessions: often presented by technical experts, these are often avoided by salespeople who see them as too technical.
- Marketing Materials: which give more product details than customer facing materials but tend to be light on information that can be used in the sales process. These may include presentations, but often with no notes or targeting information.
- On the job training: working with salespeople who have sold the solution, effectively doubling up on the sales resources.



A more effective approach to Sales Enabling is through creating of specific materials designed to communicate the specific information that the salespeople need to sell the solution. The materials need to be:

1. Business orientated. A key part of a solution should be the communication of the business benefits
2. Succinct. Salespeople don't have time to read dense, long documents. They need to get the key information in an easily assimilated format.
3. Full of information that can be readily used by sales people. No end customer marketing messages.

For this reason, Expertek works with Solutions for Sales Ltd to deliver the *Strategic Sales Program*. This uses a workshop technique to extract the key information from the product marketing, marketing, sales and commercial team members and condense it into a Sales Guide. The process adds external facilitation and mediation, ensuring that assumptions are tested against a real sales process. The program also enables the delivery of scripted

presentations that embed the key information in customer-ready materials.

Sales enabling is an overlooked aspect of ensuring the salesforce is effective.

By implementing an external program the information can be quickly brought to the whole of the sales team, and if appropriate, partners, without salespeople spending their time trying to understand the proposition and developing strategies rather than selling.

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