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The SalesPulse™



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The Monthly Sales Briefing for Directors Issue 47, December 2008

We wish all our readers and clients a happy, healthy and prosperous 2009.

Quote of the month:

New Year's Day: Now is the accepted time to make your regular annual good resolutions. Next week you can begin paving hell with them as usual.

~ Mark Twain

THE ONE THING EVERY DIRECTOR CAN DO TO INCREASE SALES

To sell effectively sales people need a deep understanding of their customers:

- their business plans and strategies
- their key people
- their challenges
- their competitors, and
- their partnership and buying processes.

Without this knowledge it is really quite difficult to build solutions to customers needs and to provide the proactive approach that many customers want. It is not just the buyers of complex product and service packages that want this type of relationship: even hard nosed buyers of price sensitive products understand that there is value in the right type of seller/buyer relationship. To build relationships and to develop the understanding that will yield long term business benefits takes a significant amount of time and effort. Every sales manager knows that this is a good investment of sales time, and in the current economic environment it is even more important. So why is it that less than 20% of salespeople's time is spent on customer facing activities?

This horrifying statistic comes from SiriusDecisions in the United States. Of course it is not that extreme here is it? It may not be but salespeople in the United Kingdom do suffer from traits that indicate a lack of customer knowledge and understanding (Source DDI 2007/8 Global Sales Perceptions Report) which means they are probably not spending enough time on customer facing work.

Let us assume that this "less than 20%" figure is wrong, and that sales people spend double that amount on customer facing activities. If one can reduce the non customer facing work to one day a week the size the sales force is doubled at no extra cost. So the one thing that directors can do to increase



Steve Rowe
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*Sell More, Sell Better
and Sell Faster*



the sales improvement people

sales is to liberate their sales people from inward looking activities. This will allow your people to focus on value adding activities such as:

- undertaking customer research
- account and campaign planning
- customer call planning
- structured and planned customer meetings
- providing advice through concept papers
- preparing and giving customer presentations and proposals
- follow up work from customer meetings
- focused relationship building
- customer care, and
- appropriate sales training and learning

We are sure that whatever sales people do other than selling is really important. The sign of a good leader is that they understand not only the "what of performance" but also the "why". If you want to do one thing to increase sales in 2009 make a New Year's sales resolution to really understand what your people do, and then do something about it.

Regards

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