Motivating Your Sales People to be More Productive

Leveraging sales to your existing customers

How can you motivate your sales people to be more productive? Isn't that what every sales manager and every business owner would like to know? Well, if you fall into this category, then listen up. In order to motivate your sales people to do anything, you have to help them. And to help them be more productive, you have to show them how they can leverage more sales to your existing customers. And, to show them how to do this, you must first find out a few things about your customers.

Many of the companies I visit with have the same problem. They don't know jack about their customers. All they know is that they somehow fit into their targeted profile, which they have only a very high-level definition of what that is, and that their sales people somehow knew how to close them. Another problem they have is even scarier – they don't do any follow up after the sale to try to retain them. In fact, very few companies actually pay their sales people as much for selling to existing customers as they do for acquiring new ones. When it costs many times more (sometimes up to seven to 10 times more) to find and sell to a new customer, you would think a business would reward their sales people even more for selling to existing clients since it is costing them much less. I do understand that businesses also need to acquire new clients, so there has to be a balance. But please don't be one of those companies that don't pay their sales people ANYTHING for selling to existing customers. At least have a separate sales team that sells to them, perhaps even junior sales reps who earn less because they are farmers instead of hunters. Not only will this motivate your sales people, but it will help retain your customers.

Anyway, back to the topic of finding out more about your customers. In order to do the best job of servicing your customers so you can maintain a relationship, build loyalty, and continue selling to them for a long time, you need to know about their business, their industry, their interests, buying styles and habits, what they buy, when they buy, how much they buy, and more. From this you will learn their purchasing behavior and can better target your services toward their specific needs, not to mention more accurately find up-sell and cross-sell opportunities.

You also need to know about the sales cycle and other sales-related issues regarding how your clients came to be clients. For instance, you should know some of the following:

- Where your successful leads came from. In other words, what's your best source of leads?
- Your close ratio. How many sales do you close as a percentage of total leads acquired?
- Profiles of your best, ideal customer, and your worst customer.
- How many sales calls it takes to close an average sale.
- The average size of a sale, in revenue.
- Your average profit from sales, by product or product line.
- Your goals for the year; in revenue, number of new accounts, number of sales calls per rep, customer retention goals, customer satisfaction ratings, etc.

Using a good CRM system that will help you collect, track and measure this information will be a huge help (Call me at 702-655-5652 if you'd like to discuss some options). From this information you will start to see some patterns and trends forming such as, you close most large deals after three appointments. Beyond that, they get harder and smaller. Or, you may find that your most profitable leads come from seminars you run and when you follow up with the attendees with mailings, emails, and a visit, all within a two month period. This information and the resulting analysis will allow you to begin to focus on more profitable and higher probability accounts. Once you do that, you'll be able to leverage more sales to those existing accounts, which will result in more motivated sales people. Since you will point them in the right direction with the right messages, your sales people will be more productive, sell more, and be more motivated with their newly derived success.

In order to leverage more sales to these profitable accounts, you should also do the following:

- Cross-Sell and Up-Sell more products, more services, maintenance agreements, training, support options, and anything that will benefit the customer while keeping them coming back for more.
- Train everyone in your organization to cross-sell and up-sell, even the receptionist but especially customer support and customer service. They don't need to actually "sell", just recognize an opportunity, plant the seed, generate some interest, and pass it on to the sales person for that account.
- Make sure you have a good on-going relationship with the client (or create one if you don't). Nothing is worth than pretending you have a good relationship after you've been persona non grata for the past year.
- Keep in touch on an on-going basis with newsletters, training information, and valuable knowledge (i.e., news about their industry) that your customers will appreciate and from which they'll benefit.

- Align your sales compensation plans with a strategy that encourages customer retention. Pay them for additional sales made to existing customers. Give, or hold back, bonuses based on customer satisfaction ratings.
- Align your marketing strategies with your sales plans. No sense marketing just to new prospects when your sales people are paid to also retain existing customers who don't receive any of your marketing campaigns.

Once you learn about your customers and their purchasing behavior, figure out what the sales metrics were to acquire them in the first place. Then you can start leveraging additional sales to your existing customers because you'll be able to target the right messages to the right audiences. This is how you can motivate your sales people to be more productive.

Good luck and good selling!

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Russ Lombardo is President of **PEAK Sales Consulting** (www.peaksalesconsulting.com) and an experienced CRM and Sales specialist, consultant, trainer, writer and speaker. Russ works with businesses to help improve their customer acquisition and retention for increased revenue and success. Russ is author of the books, "CRM For The Common Man", "Smart Marketing" and soon-to-be-released "CyberSelling." He can be reached at **702-655-5652** and email at **russ@peaksalesconsulting.com**.