

Strategies: Sales team not cutting it? Here are 10 reasons why

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David Letterman may have retired from the Late Night Show; however, his infamous Top Ten list will probably never retire. It's half-way through the year and sales organizations are either celebrating or starting to panic. You're either on plan to hit your sales goals or scrambling to figure out why your sales team isn't closing business.

Here are 10 reasons why companies miss their revenue goals.

No. 10: Lack of emotional intelligence. Sales organizations are still buying into the myth that the best salespeople are lone rangers, high-maintenance and self-centered. Look at those words. Do they describe people that are going to take your company to the next level? Great salespeople are competitive and collaborative. They are emotionally intelligent and recognize that it takes a sales village to win and retain clients. Emotionally intelligent salespeople check their ego at the door and make a concerted effort to thank other departments in the company for their role in helping them close and keep business.

No. 9: No defined hiring process. Yup, sales organizations are still relying on the old 'wing it' hiring process. A no defined process leads to company's hiring people who are good in interviews, not good salespeople. No defined processes result in hiring people that defaulted to the profession of sales. These individuals have no intent of making sales a career and won't work on honing their selling and influence skills. They are amateurs, not professionals.

No. 8: Lack of clarity about the company's ideal client. The sales team is working hard at business development. They are busy calling, emailing, networking and meeting with —the wrong prospects. The well-intentioned sales manager teaches more hard selling skills when she should step back, slow down and ask one question: Who do we best serve?

No. 7: Ineffective value propositions. A fairly predictable question asked by prospects at the start of a sales meeting is, "Tell me about your company." The company hasn't taken the time to craft customized value propositions so the salesperson responds with a generic, one size fits all value propositions —one that sounds just like the competition. The prospect doesn't hear any differentiator so is forced to ask the question, "What's your price?" Not a great way to start a value added sales meeting.

No. 6: Not creating expectations for a partnership. How you start an engagement with a brand new prospect is an indication of how well the relationship will progress. Most salespeople aren't trained on how to set expectations to be treated like a value added business partner, rather than a vendor.

As a result, they end up in chasing prospects that don't value their time or expertise. They end up writing practice proposals for prospects that have no intent of moving their business or acquiring their service.

No. 5: The proverbial show up and throw up. Salespeople have heard the mantra, “God gave you two ears and one mouth for a reason.” They’ve heard the mantra, but have trouble applying it. The prospect shares a need and the salesperson gets excited thinking, “I’ve got one.” Emotions start running the meeting rather than effective selling and communication skills. The salesperson gets excited and jumps to solutions too soon. He loses the business to a more disciplined competitor who manages his emotions and asks all the questions to uncover key decision criteria.

No. 4: Meeting with non-decision makers. Why do salespeople talk to non-decision makers? The answer is simple: Because it’s easy. Non-decision makers have time on their hands and are open to meeting with salespeople. On the other hand, busy decision makers are often running short on time. Meetings with busy decision makers is a more direct, focused conversation with a lot of questions being asked and redirected. Salespeople get intimidated, feel uncomfortable, so they continue meeting with comfortable, non-challenging, non-decision making prospects.

No. 3: Money scripting. Your company sells a high-end product that provides high value. The problem is the salesperson thinks your price point is a little too high. Translation: They take their own checkbook or money scripting into the sales meeting. When the prospect voices concern over the investment, this salesperson buckles and quickly offers up a discount. Subconsciously, she agrees with the prospects concern over the high price of your high-value product or service.

No. 2: Ineffective sales management. The top producer gets promoted to sales management and has no clue on how to transfer the knowledge that made him a top producer. As a result, he is still the main rainmaker and closer. His bandwidth runs out and so does consistent sales growth.

And the No. 1 reason sales teams don’t reach goal: You. It’s your company, so if you don’t like what you are seeing or hearing it’s time to apply the emotional intelligence skill of reality testing. You’ve hired the people and created the culture. It’s up to you to get serious about addressing specific areas of sales that are affecting your company’s ability to scale and grow. Face the enemy of stagnant sales and the enemy might be you!

David Letterman made a lot of money on his Top 10 list — but you aren’t. Get busy eliminating this list at your organization. Then get ready to scale and grow your business.

Good Selling!

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