



## How to make a Remote Sales Team achieve more!

Although the restrictions on Lockdown are starting to lift slightly. There is still no sign of life going completely back to normal. And it still seems that remote working is going to be with us for a while and maybe for the longer term. Companies and managers are having to adapt their styles to cope with new ways of operating.

In some ways this provides us with an opportunity to seize the moment. We have more time to plan, as the normal commute times can be added to our schedules. We can focus more upon lifestyle and let's face it our wits are honed when our businesses must fight to succeed. If we use this opportunity wisely Covid-19 may offer us a transformational opportunity. But it requires us to take a microscope to our business and to focus on things that matter.

So how do we do this? If this crisis began for you with a strong pipeline, you'll be ahead of the game, but it's still a challenge keeping remote workers on their toes when it comes to prospecting from home.

### *Focus – Focus on Activity*

They say that face to face interaction on screen is nearly as beneficial as a face to face meeting. So just because you can't get out to meet people it doesn't mean your meeting activity levels need to go down. Often in chatting to salespeople you hear them moaning about their product and in the current crisis the economy. But if you look a little closer you can see that their activity levels are shrinking.

Review sales activities with your team/s. Get them to compare one another's performance,

introduce a competition element if possible. Use the time at home wisely to increase your performance. Here are some hints & tips for you to share with your team: -

1. *Record what you did well after every call*
2. *If you struggle to make cold calls put together an action plan, detailing techniques that you plan to use to overcome this. Record how these techniques work and if applicable share them with your team*
3. *Make a note of how you deal with customer problems and the solutions you provide. Again, it's great to share these with the team*
4. *Make a habit of setting SMART objectives after every sales call – so that you can review them afterwards*
5. *Gather as much sales evidence and collaborate as much as you can – information is power especially shared. It also increases motivation levels*

If your team has to Cold Call. Set aside a day per week for a "Telemarathon" as we used to call it, or Cold Call day. It's a great way of getting appointments booked. You can include duffer prizes and goody prizes. It boosts morale and can get those who suffer with "telephobia" over some of their anxiety. It also breaks the humdrum of lockdown. Run a Zoom meeting throughout so that everyone can see what is going on and how everyone is performing. Run a review meeting with everyone afterwards to see what worked well and how everyone did.

As a Manager you need to ensure the goals you set are realistic and achievable. In the current climate the goals aren't necessarily revenue based. Instead they should be about raising activity levels. And boosting morale. Building a pipeline for the future when the workforce is less remote.

Stay in contact with the team. Perhaps organise a group get together over Zoom at the beginning and at the end of each day. Just to check out how everyone is getting along. Remain mindful of the fact that everyone's situation might be different. Some individuals may be home-schooling or looking after elderly relatives. So, it's important that your plans work for everyone. That's the art of being a good Sales Manager- work with your team and try to be as flexible as possible to achieve results. It may be that some staff need to be furloughed longer than others. Just try to get activity going and keep it going.

Work with your remote teams to establish when they can be more focussed. For some it works to get their sales calls done first thing and to save their admin for later. Obviously, this will vary dependent upon their commitments. Speak with your teams to establish the best individual plan. Although you are keen to be flexible you do need to agree a framework of discipline to progress and to be successful.

Let's not forget, it is very difficult to get hold of people now! It was tricky prior to the crisis. But because many potential customers are working from home, it's become even harder. The challenge requires persistence and creativity. Your salespeople may have dialled a hundred numbers and not got through to one person. Once they have mapped out who they are going to target they need to come at their prospects from multiple angles. They need to be creative and go into it with the objective of just been able to generate dialogue. Even if they get a conversation going through LinkedIn or via text. Or a quick phone conversation – they are doing well. The trick is then to keep that dialogue going. Persistence will generate results along with a system to record and measure everything they are doing.

## *Most importantly track and measure everything you do.*

If something is measured it suddenly becomes tangible and can be managed. Visualise your sales members results over Zoom so they can see how well they are performing. Your job as a manager is to ensure your CRM system has been set up properly to record key information that can be searched upon and re-used. This is where the value lays in this activity. Use this time, as Manager to evaluate your sales systems and make sure they are working at their peak. This will enable you to hit the ground running when the economy starts to improve.

Although folk are hard to get through to. When you do, you may find that they have more time to chat. Encourage your sales teams to find common ground with their prospects, discuss how they have handled the current crisis. Make sure this information is logged so that it can be referred to when they have their next conversation. The fact that it has been remembered will differentiate your salespeople next time around. Developing Relationships with your prospects will pay dividends in the future.

It's a sign of the times that there are long queues at the local dump. People are clearing out all their rubbish and having a good old sort out of their lives. In the same way use this time to improve your work practices to achieve maximum results in everything you do. Be it sales training or creating more sales opportunity for the future.

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