

Sales Planning for 2014 (and beyond)

Sales planning in most organization consists of managers setting revenue goals for a team and then creating a quota for each person that contributes to the overall revenue goals. It's purely a math problem. It can work.

But it misses the 'possibility' factor that is present in most of your team.

It shortchanges managers and stifles employees.

It's time to use a different approach. For managers, this plan encourages a team goal setting effort to enlist the desire and personal goals of the producers into the overall process. The team members get to share their numbers with you while developing their plan in a way that both motivates them and meets the team goals.

If you are producer without a plan of your own, you get to work for someone else's plan by default. Sales is one of the few professions where you can truly take control of your destiny and earn what you are worth – good or bad. I had a boss who once told me, I'm doubling your compensation – this becomes effective the moment you do. That stung just a bit, but it brought home that in commissioned sales, I controlled my compensation. Use that as a reminder this year when you set your own goals: do what you are capable of not just the minimum that is expected.

With those thoughts as a backdrop, let's talk composition of your plan.

The Framework

Your sales plan needs to have the components that any good story does: **who, what, where, when, why and how.**

- **Why** – we ask this first as it relates to your personal motivations and goals. Without tuning into your 'radio station WIFM' you miss out on a lot of the fuel to overcome adversity throughout the year.
- **Who** – this refers to your target client profile. You spend 2/3rds of your life at work, shouldn't it be with people you enjoy doing work you love to do? The first question you ask is what type of client do you want to serve? Then the where to find them becomes much easier. In this instance, the narrower you can be, the easier it is to define your market. And by defining and being specific about your market – they can also recognize you as a resource due to your ability to serve their industry/specific need.

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- **What** – this refers to the problems you will solve for your clients. Focus on the problems you want to solve in 2014 for your ideal client and this helps with understanding how your prospecting and marketing need to be structured to engage their interest.
- **Where** – this refers to the organizational structure of your potential client. You need to understand how market and economic conditions continue to influence the decision making process within your potential clients. We are not talking about geographic ‘where’ but more **where does the influence live** in your prospect’s business.
- **When** – here we recognize there is a ‘life cycle’ in our prospect’s business that creates urgency for your solution. Perhaps it’s a renewal date, stage of growth or seasonal business issue your prospects experience. This may create more stability to your own pipeline efforts to avoid the ‘feast or famine’ effect that takes place in a lot of sales people’s pipeline. Also by considering this you can focus your efforts on multiple industries and ‘recession proof’ your business.
- Now for the biggie – **HOW**. Prospecting can be compared to building a personal marketing plan. This requires we look at every opportunity to generate leads/opportunities and develop a diversified approach. We do not want to rely on sole sourcing our leads as a single source can dry up and leave you starving for business. Here are just a few sources you might use:
 - *Cold market*
 - *Social media*
 - *Networking*
 - *Public speaking*
 - *Client Referrals*
 - *Center of Influence Relationships*

The best strategy in the world is worthless without execution. Now that we have looked at the strategy behind your sales effort let’s take it step by step to arrive at the tactical plan.

1. **Draft a personal vision statement.** In one sentence explain why you do what you do. What purpose do you serve through your professional efforts?
2. **Write your personal goals in all areas of your life:** financial, career, relationship, health, social/contribution, fun and business. Make sure all areas of your life are represented and equally balanced.
3. **Determine income required** to reach personal goals
4. **Set dates** to each of the professional goals to establish your timeline for the year

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5. **Evaluate your current clients** to determine average income per account. If you have more than 10% of your total revenue wrapped up in one account, you need to focus on acquiring more accounts to distribute the risk.
6. **Look at prospecting activities** and estimate the number of and account profile of leads per source.
7. **Estimate closing percentages** of leads per source.
8. **Calculate total number of leads** needed to reach your goal – this will tell you which areas to focus the majority of your prospecting resources on.
9. **Divide this total to get to your monthly, weekly and daily objective totals.** Utilizing a tool like the SalezWORKS 20 point card will help immensely in measuring your progress. Just send us an email to concierge@salezworks.com and ask for your own personal copy of this highly useful tool.
10. **Use your CRM or calendaring system to track** high payoff activities which will lead to success in your sales effort. If you can't measure it, you can't manage it.

These are the basic steps to building a sales plan. Simple, yes, but not necessarily quick. The key is realizing how a relatively small amount of time invested now will pay off over the course of the coming weeks and months.

Still not sure how to proceed? Join us on January 22nd for a complimentary webinar on **Goal Setting: Game-Changing Strategies for 2014**. You will get more details on each of the above steps and learn how they apply to you – whether you are just getting started or are an experienced manager with a team.

Register for this complimentary webinar <http://salezworks.com/your-2014-goal-setting-webinar/>