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Motivating Your Sales Team Making more sales with fewer calls

By Jeff Mowatt



As a manager or sales professional interested in boosting revenues, you've no doubt heard the expression, 'selling is a numbers game'. The idea is that the more potential customers you contact, the more likely you are to make sales. Makes sense in theory but in the real world this belief often *reduces* revenues. Here's why...

The Problem with Quotas

For decades, well meaning sales managers have established sales quotas that don't just measure a sales representative's monthly sales; they also include measuring and rewarding the number of sales calls the rep makes. But frankly, its irrelevant how many *calls* your people make – what really matters is how many *sales* they make. The problem with setting up 'prospecting' quotas is that they encourage sales people to rush through sales conversations. It happened to me as a customer when I was interviewing sales reps from two moving companies.

My wife, Lydia and I had concluded that my 40-year-old life long pals could no longer be bribed to spend a weekend helping us to move residences. At this stage in life, they know that we can afford to hire movers. And we know that they can afford their own beer and pizza. In fact, we're pretty sure that if we promise to hire movers, my buddies would even buy *us* the beer and pizza! So, when we were scheduling our move, I set up appointments with two moving company sales reps for estimates.

The representative from the first company seemed willing to take his time. He was interested in hearing about the home we were moving into and the special requests we had for handling certain pieces of furniture. He walked us through his presentation binder and shared tips that we could do to make the move go more smoothly. The impression I got was that he genuinely wanted to help.

On the other hand, the sales rep from the second company seemed rushed. He dashed through the house checking items off on his clipboard, answering my questions in clipped tones. He also went

though his presentation binder – which coincidentally, looked almost exactly the same as that of the first rep. And he provided packing tips. I felt like as far as he was concerned though, I was basically an interruption.

Both sales reps had spent over 20 years in the industry, so experience was not the issue. The services offered were more or less the same. When it came to price, the second rep's - who was in such a hurry – was actually lower. Yet, as you might have guessed, the first rep got the business - because he took his time. In other words, he got better results by going slower.

Keep in mind that shopping for a moving company is not something most people relish. For most of us, even if we love the new home we're moving into, the thought of the actual move itself is about as welcome as undergoing amateur eyeball surgery. It's a chore that we want to get over-with as quickly and painlessly as possible. Ironically though, when it comes to the face-to-face time spent between the customer and the company employee, speeding up the process is not necessarily going to be perceived as providing better service.

What's bizarre is that often times, it's not that the sales representative wants to rush. Rather, it's that the company's quota system -requiring sales reps to make x number of calls per week or month - *encourages and rewards* this kind of hurried behavior.

The Training Solution

A sales conversation with a potential customer is like romance ... the recipient doesn't necessarily think the best thing about it was that it was quick! As was the case of the moving company reps, there are advantages to literally slowing down. When real money is involved, the buyer needs to process the information, and more importantly, believe that the seller thoroughly understands the customer's needs. That's why most of the seminars I do for sales teams are about enriching the *quality* - not necessarily the *quantity* - of sales conversations. The quality approach results in sales reps recommending products and services best suited to customer needs. Customers are therefore happier with their buying decisions. They in turn refer other potential customers. In other words, new customers end up looking for you rather than the reverse. When that happens price becomes less critical in the ultimate buying decision.

Bottom line, you'll get better results by providing a training session for your reps on how to have a more effective sales conversation, than by merely prodding your sales people to make more calls.

About the author:

This article is based on the bestselling book, Becoming a Service Icon in 90 Minutes a Month by sales & service strategist and certified professional speaker Jeff Mowatt. To obtain your own copy of his book or to inquire about engaging Jeff for your team, visit www.jeffmowatt.com

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