



Increase The Amount Of Time That Your Sales Team Spend Selling By 48%

Before

- Average selling time across the team: 29%
- Minimum selling time within the team: 11%
- Maximum selling time within the team: 66%

After

- Average selling time across the team: 43%
- Minimum selling time within the team: 32%
- Maximum selling time within the team: 66%

Impact

- 48% increase in average selling time across the sales team
- 290% increase in the minimum selling time
- Equivalent to increasing size of sales team by 48% at no incremental fixed cost

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

In most sales organisations, the amount of time that the members of the sales team spend with customers and prospects actually 'selling', discussing sales opportunities is not measured and as such it is difficult for the sales leader to know what proportion of their time is actually wasted on poorly executed sales activities or non-sales, non value-add activities.

When the level of "selling time" is measured and understood across the sales team, it often provides sales leaders with a significant growth opportunity. Not only is there a significant difference across team members, the overall average across the team is surprisingly low. In fact, it is not uncommon to be able to increase overall sales by more than 10% just by optimising "selling time" and focusing the team on those activities that positively correlate with increased sales. In this particular example, sales increased by 30% as a result of a 48% uplift in average selling time.

THE APPROACH

We work with our client to identify the key activities undertaken by the members of the sales team as part of their role. Most sales and non-sales activities can be categorised in to between 12-15 clusters, some of which are classified as sales activities, such as prospecting and sales calls, whilst others are classified as non-sales activities, such as travel, record keeping or administration.

We then work with sales leadership to design and train the sales team to record how they actually spend their time for a four week period, relative to the 12-15 agreed activities. One critical step in the process is to assess the sales team's ability to accurately capture the time spent on the different activities during the measurement stage. In our experience, without this step, the data that is collected can be less than 70% accurate, making any later analysis meaningless.

Once we are confident that all members of the sales team understand the activity codes and how to accurately capture how long they actually spend on each activities, the measurement commences. At the end of four weeks their diaries are collected and analysed to determine five things:

1. How much time each sales executive spends on each of the 12-15 activities.
2. Which activities correlate most closely with increased or decreased sales.
3. Any activities that should correlate with increased sales, such as prospecting, or pre-call preparation, but do not indicating a competence gap.
4. The actual time profile of the highest performing 10-20% of sales executives which can be considered the 'best practice' against which the team is coached.
5. Specific improvement opportunities, targets and actions for each and every member of the sales team in terms of what they can do to maximise their personal selling time and so increase their sales.

THE FINDINGS

For most of our clients this will be the first time that they data to understand how their sales executives spend their time and more specifically what percentage of their time they spend on selling activities. What is often a surprise for our clients is how little of their sales people's time is actually spent on selling activities. The average across most B2B sales teams is typically between 30-40%, with some members of the team spending as little as 10-15% and others spending as much as 65%-70% of their available time. In other words, a 500%-600% variation across the team.

Equally surprising is that many of the sales people spend significant amounts of their time on activities that should generate sales, but do not, indicating that they have capability gaps that need to be addressed.

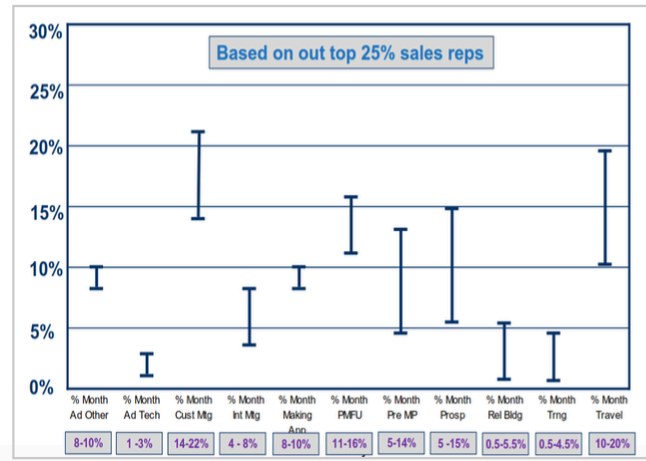


Figure: Time Profile Of A High Performing Sales Executive

With this data, sales leaders are able to confidently identify three things:

1. Those activities that individual team members should spend more time on.
2. Those activities that individual team members should spend less time on.
3. Those activities where individual team members need to work on their competence because they are not realising the benefits that they should

In this way it is possible to achieve significant increases in both individual sales executive productivity and total sales organisation revenue, without a major increase in costs.

THE BUSINESS IMPACT

Because the average selling time of most B2B sales teams is typically only 30-40% of total available time, most sales teams have a significant opportunity to improve their productivity and total sales revenues by a focus on how they spend their time.

One client was able to increase the "average selling time" across their national B2B sales team of 36 sales executives by 48% within 4 months. In achieving this, there was no change in the average selling time of their top performers, but some of their lower performers were able to more than double their selling time.

In terms of business impact, the increase of 48% in total time spent selling across the team was equivalent to increasing the size of their national sales team by 48% with no additional fixed costs for salaries and no delays or lead-times for recruitment and training. The business impact they achieved represented a R.O.I. well in excess of x200 in the first 12 months alone.

The top performer time profiles that were developed have also proved to be an excellent aid to help new members of the sales team get up to speed and full productivity significantly faster than was previously possible.

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