



Recipe to Outside Sales Success

Do You Have the Recipe for a Successful Outside Sales Force?

Sales Success

There are 10 ingredients to a successful sales team. Read the following 10 items to see if your sales force measures up.

1. Think First—Plan

Your thinking capacity is one of your greatest assets. Read through these 10 thoughts and think about your overall approach. Ask yourself, “What makes you better or different from your competitor? What advantages do you have, and how will you use them?”

2. Plan of Action

Most people don't plan to fail, they just fail to plan. If you are not happy with the result you presently have, then work on a new complete plan. It has to look good on paper first before you implement it. It's amazing how many dealers don't have a marketing plan, and they will suffer for it.

3. An Ounce of Screening Is Worth a Ton of Training

Why do so many dealers hire any warm body? Two rules to follow are never hire anyone with just one interview and don't hire them unless they have potential. Some dealers actually try to talk people into a job. Follow the opposite theme, let them talk you into the fact that they can do the job.

4. If It is Not Definable, How Can It Be Obtainable?

Seems simple, but lots of people fail to communicate the results expected. I am referring to how many people to solicit, demo's done, closing rate and income dollars required by the dealer to please the salesperson. People always perform better if they know what is expected of them. If you do the work, the results will follow.

5. This is Basic Training—Presentations, Credit Applications, Orders

Some professional trainers miss the obvious. When your salespeople leave your training they need to be able to make a presentation, fill out a credit application and write up an order. Managers should make certain a presentation has a built-in close. Just ask yourself this question about your existing sales presentation, “Why should they buy tonight?” If there is no reason to buy today, then why should they buy at all? Also make sure the presentation is based on questions and not on a lecture.

6. Take Time to Tell Them About Fishing

If you look around, you can see lots of examples of excellent training with outside salespeople going down the drain because the trainers give them a kit and shove them out the door with words such as “go sell.”

1. Ask yourself, “How is our company better than our competition?”
2. Develop a plan of action.
3. During the hiring process, make the potential sales team member tell you why he can do the job and why he wants it.
4. Define your expectations.
5. During sales training, emphasize the importance of presentations, credit applications and writing orders.

6. Specify where the sales team can find leads and how to secure them.
7. Take your team into the field and let them see first-hand what you expect from them.
8. Track all activity, not just final sales.
9. Prepare assignments and projects for sales staff to make sure they are busy doing their jobs.
10. Reward your team's successes.

Failure is predictable. Take time to tell them where and how to secure leads. When you look at your outside sales training program, at least 50 percent of your training time should be on how to do effective prospecting.

7. Take Them Out Fishing

We like to hear about how to fish, but we love even more to have someone take us to where the big fish are. A good guide will explain the lure, presentation and where to find the big fish. If you do not take these people into the real world and door knock (as an example) or call on accounts, it will never happen. The first six things you did right are a waste of time.

8. Track Their Activity, Not Just Their Sales Dealers and trainers always are good at tracking salespeople's sales results, but what about their activity? Try planning their time. This is hard but necessary work. When a salesperson has done the activity right—this includes demos without results—you will begin to take a look at their ability to sell. Your plan either is to fire them or to improve their presentation and closing skills.

9. Busy People are Happy People

Again many dealers fail to understand why they are so busy while their sales force is sitting around looking for things to do. People who are kept busy are happy. Remember, activity is what brings results. Meeting with your salespeople everyday to give them things to do. When you see salespeople standing around, it's your fault not theirs.

10. Reward Success

Your weekly sales meetings must not be a time to set people straight. It is a time to let certain successful salespeople share their success. Rewards and awards are very important. Most people love to be complimented and given recognition.

Working on all 10 ingredients in this article will bring successful results. Working hard at the basics is the road to a good sales team. Take a good hard look at your present team and compare. If you do the work, the numbers will come. **WQP**

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