Sales Plan Checklist

As a sales leader, do you know the secret to crafting a goal-focused, bottom-line-boosting action plan for your sales organization? It's simpler than you might think. To develop plans of action that can truly help you and your sales team achieve established goals, you have to ask the right questions about your sales organization, your customers, strategy and processes. Here are some key elements to incorporate into an effective Sales Action Plan.

Know Your Customer and Define Your Value

Develop your industry positioning

Tip: Positioning is all about what makes your company unique or better than your competition. This is why the business you are in was created, so leverage the "why the company was started" message.

Outline your competitors

Tip: What are your strengths and weakness against your competitors? Do a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis on yourself against them. Now, train your sales team on how to deal with the competition.

Clearly define your value proposition and points of differentiation

Tip: Summarize why a customer should buy your product or use your service. This message should be what your sales team is using in their pitch. Be sure everyone is in agreement and telling and selling the same story.

Define your target customers/markets

Tip: Collect all historical sales performance data by rep, territory and account for at least one year, preferably up to three years. Assess the total potential market by collecting market data, including information about current and prospective customers.

Have Clear Tracking and Team Focus

Hold your team accountable

Tip: Before holding your team accountable for their goals, set agreed-upon objectives that are in SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) goal form. It is also important their compensation is clearly tied to meeting those goals.

Track and measure your sales team performance with a CRM

Tip: There are a variety of affordable sales tracking tools on the market. In fact, some are free until you hit a certain volume. Track both leading and lagging sales metrics and build reports and dashboards that capture key information. Performance against goals, average number of days an opportunity is in each stage, stage-to-stage conversion ratio, sales cycle length, average deal size and close rate are examples.

Develop Clear Territories

Outline a current customer relationship management plan

Tip: Assign customers and prospects to territories, seeking to balance potential across territories. Evaluate proposed territories for workload (e.g. travel time, time required to service existing accounts and prospect for new accounts) and customer relationship disruption.

Brought to You by Authorized Sales Xceleration Advisor Don McMahan: don@flycloudconsulting.com.