

SALES EFFECTIVENESS IS YOUR COMPANY'S LIFELINE

Insist on Meeting Top-Line Goals Instead of Cutting To Make the Bottom Line, Says Prosen in *Kiss Theory Good Bye*

Sales are the absolute key to success for business leaders because a healthy revenue stream can solve lots of problems within a company, Bob Prosen says. “And the great thing about sales is, there’s no mystery about the path to success,” he says. “Everything is measured by numbers.”

Here’s how Prosen expects readers to embrace the crucial importance of sales in making their companies successful:

Create new, profitable customers for life. What you want, Prosen says, is to continually grow the number of profitable customers you serve. Salespeople need to identify those kinds of customers and knock themselves out to win their business.

Establish strong quota and ethical standards. Worship your quotas and adhere to the highest ethical standards regardless of competitive pressures, the author advises. Meet quotas consistently, not in fits and starts. Don’t rationalize failure but, instead, remove roadblocks to success for your salespeople. Then you’ve got a “no excuses” culture.

Weed out poor salespeople. This is one of those few areas in business that is virtually black and white. If they’ve been trained and have the necessary tools and support, and still aren’t achieving their quotas – remove them from the sales organization immediately, Prosen advises.

Focus on and post results. Track these critical metrics by individual salesperson and watch your sales improve: number of sales calls with decision makers; number of proposals delivered; number of signed contracts; year-to-date revenue compared with plan. Visibly post how everyone is doing compared to quota and review performance regularly. Focus on closing orders with the highest probability of winning.

Don't miss your first-quarter sales plan. Far too many companies project next year's revenues off fourth-quarter volumes without taking into account holidays, the short month of February, and the impact of winter weather. And once you fall behind, it's very hard to recover, Prosen says. Beware of "hockey stick" forecasts. Expecting most of your sales to occur toward the end of the year seldom works either!

Reward your winners. Hold onto the best sales people no matter what! It's impossible to grow without them, so reward them handsomely. The best compensation systems allow top performers to earn a lot of money, the author says. When rewards are tied to both revenue and margin, there should be no cap on sales compensation, Prosen believes – *period*. Successful salespeople are primarily motivated by one thing: money. Although they also like being publicly recognized.

Communicate your expectations. If price weren't an issue, anyone could sell. But selling value is a much different proposition, Prosen notes. To do so, a salesperson must ask the right questions, know when to be quiet and be able to close. So leaders must communicate to the sales organization that they expect them to be able to differentiate and sell value, minimize "one-offs," only go after business they can win, report accurate and timely sales data, understand both their clients problems and the competitions solutions – and, under-promise and over-deliver. Top salespeople know how to get clients to like them, trust them and do business with them.

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(Taken from ***Kiss Theory Good Bye: Five Proven Ways to Get Extraordinary Results in Any Company*** by Bob Prosen - Gold Pen Publishing, August 2006)