GOAL/PLAN

HOW TO HELP STAFF SET CHALLENGING BUT ACHIEVABLE SALES GOALS

Goal setting is an integral part of improving performance in any industry; athletes perhaps set incremental goals for increasing speed, SaaS companies set goals for securing more recurring revenue, and retailers set goals for better conversion rates. Goals are necessary as benchmarks for future results so that we are constantly striving to be better tomorrow than we were today. But if it's such an inherent part of driving progress, why are so many sales organisations struggling with their sales goals? It could be that management isn't helping their staff to find the *right* goals.

Sales goal setting for individuals
In large sales organisations, it can be difficult to carve out regular one-on-one time with each of your sales staff, but it is a crucial part of the sales goal setting process. Often sales teams dread the sometimes tedious sales meetings, and individual goal setting and personal accountability can do wonders to boost the morale of sales staff.

- **Take a look at historical data** - what is the employee's current growth curve? Where are there opportunities for improvement?
- **Have the employee self-evaluate** - what do they believe to be their strong suits and weaknesses?
- **Look for immediate opportunities for coaching and training** - could there be a way to strengthen their weaknesses now or over time?
- **How is the employee's self-motivation** - does this employee feel that they need external motivators for performance (like incentives), or are they self-motivated?
- **What are the company's minimum expectations for contributing to growth** - a sales employee's main purpose is to help customers and drive revenue for the business; their personal

sales goals need to contribute to those positive numbers.

- **Is the team member willing to go out of their comfort zone** - good sales goals push the limits of what feels safe. Without placing expectations higher and higher for your sales staff, results will stagnate.
- **Give them the lead** - have your employee's make their own goals, it's an important part of owning and accepting sales targets. Then guide them when you believe they are too high or too low.

When you take a look at all these factors, you should be able to come up with a percentage increase in sales, or a number for their target. Try to understand their individual needs when it comes to making improvements, and strengthening their skill set. If you find that you have a sales team member who isn't self-motivated, or isn't interested in coaching opportunities to increase their sales tactics - you may find the goal setting process to be difficult altogether.

In sales, team members need to be held individually accountable to contribute to the overall performance of the organisation. If they don't believe they can hit targets that are at least above the minimum needed for profitability, you may need to reconsider hiring practices and the culture within your organisation.

Sales goal setting for teams

Once you have individual goals in place, you can take a look at the bigger picture. While you probably want to start with knowing what the entire organisation is looking at for expected revenues month-by-month, you need to have a solid grasp on what each of your team member is bringing to the table. By understanding which percentage of the overall sales results each team member will be responsible for bringing in, you can then address goals together as a team so that everyone can feel supported in the strive for positive results.

- **Are there areas where the whole team struggles - or succeed** - it might not be an individual problem if everyone on the sales team has the same or similar weaknesses or soft spot. You can use this information to formulate team building exercises, invest in technology that can assist them in their performance, or do group coaching. If there is an aspect of sales that the whole team is good at, such as returning customer support, you might not need to focus on it in the short term.

- **Is there a major discrepancy between high performers and low performers** - team dynamics may play a role. It could be beneficial to experiment with staffing and positioning to have different employees working together.
- **How do the goals embody the overall mission and vision of the company** - staying true to brand and reputation is important for company sales tactics. Keep these in mind when setting team goals.
- **Use company projections to set KPIs and benchmarks for success** - if you've set responsible individual goals, you should expect to meet or exceed company projections, but it's good to understand what metrics to look at overall in understanding the success of your sales team. This way it's easier to report progress to regional managers and executives of the company who may not want individual details but rather an evidenced picture of total results.

Goal setting for individuals and teams need to be done together in order to be successful. When you hold each of your team members accountable, but relate their personal goals to the overall contribution of your sales team, you'll foster a more supportive mentality where staff feels challenged but safe in achieving their targets.

Want to get your staff on board with setting, monitoring and achieving their own sales goals? Take the next step in employee self-evaluation with our handy checklist.

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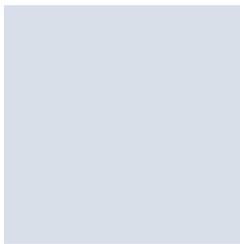
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