

5 golden rules of successful selling

Key findings:

Why listening to the customer is a fundamental ingredient of a closed deal

How to effectively diagnose customer pain points to offer them the most relevant offer they couldn't resist

How to enable effective data sharing across the organization thus bridging the gap between marketing, sales and customer service teams

How innovative technologies can empower sales reps with the tools to sell more and better engage with customers



01

Telling is not selling: talk less and listen more

The key rule for a successful sale is not talking as many might assume, but listening to customers' needs and their 'voice'. Selling is 60% listening and only 40% talking. During a conversation with a customer, a sales rep can identify and understand customers' needs, find buying signals and close the deal. In the digital era, sales reps employ various communication channels to begin a dialogue and listen to prospects, including phone calls, emails, social media, or website tracking.



57%

of salespeople believe buyers are less dependent on salespeople during the buying process. (HubSpot)



29%

Only 29% of people want to talk to a salesperson to learn more about a product, while 62% will consult a search engine. (HubSpot)



38%

of salespeople say getting a response from prospects is getting harder. (HubSpot)



97%

of consumers factor online reviews into their purchasing decisions. (BostonCBSLocal)



94%

of respondents believed the following statement: "Listening to customer feedback is increasingly critical to the bottom line." (Forbes)

PRO TIP

Today's customers use various communication channels to talk to a brand and find information about the product or service. According to State of Sales 2017 study, remote selling by sales reps has increased to 44.5% in 2017, therefore, sales reps need to employ smart CRM technology complete with a mobile app to be able to meet their customers and listen to their needs and preferences, and store this data in a single repository, accessible for all sales reps regardless of location.

02

Diagnose pain points before offering the solution

At the core of a successful sale lies the deep knowledge and understanding of a prospect's real problem. For this reason, it is of a paramount importance to look deeper and diagnose what the prospect's situation is. Prior to offering/ providing a solution, a sales rep will need to get at the root of the problem by asking the right questions to identify the pain points behind the buying decision. Prepare an exhaustive checklist of questions for your prospect:

- ☒ Ask open-ended questions (who, what, where, when, why, how, how much, tell me about it, describe for me)
- ☒ Ask about the prospect's role at the company
- ☒ Ask what's important to them
- ☒ Ask what's interesting to them and then focus on that
- ☒ Ask what risks they perceive
- ☒ Ask how we can help solve their problems
- ☒ Ask what they like and dislike about their current vendor
- ☒ Ask how industry trends are affecting them
- ☒ Ask "what if?" questions
- ☒ Find out their specific needs
- ☒ Ask if they could change something about their product or service, what would it be? (Entrepreneur)

When the real pain points are identified, now a sale rep can present a solution to a problem that the prospect is struggling with. To win a deal every sales rep needs to provide customers with the solution to their problem and their reason for buying your product. The offered product should always be focused on answering the problem they have by justifying their buying decision with the value, features, benefits, etc.

03

Leverage technology to make the most out of your customer data

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Data has become a valuable asset for every business. Roughly 2.5 quintillion bytes of data is being created every day. Therefore, it is of important for sales reps to efficiently work with this data and be able to act upon it quickly and efficiently. For this reason, customer data has to be clean, up-to-date and accessible to the sales force so that they are able to extract the important chunks of information from all the 'noise' and gain the level of customer insight that sales reps need. 'Data hygiene' is an important enabler of better decision-making and deeper customer insights. In addition, the ability of sales reps to visualize necessary customer data is an important ingredient to a recipe for a successful deal. Visualizing data can reveal meaningful insights, which sales reps can incorporate into their decision-making process in order to make data-backed decisions in real time and increase the likelihood of a won deal.

Good-quality data ensures that your sales force won't miss any opportunity, will make better decisions, and achieve higher productivity.

84%

of CEOs are concerned about the quality of the data they're basing decisions on. (Forbes)

32%

of respondents are overwhelmed by data, and while 81% agreed that data should be at the center of decision-making, only 31% have adjusted their operations accordingly.(Forbes)

75%

of organizations believe that inaccurate data is undermining their ability to provide a good customer experience. (SharpSpring)

PRO TIP

Leveraging CRM technology provides sales reps with the tools needed to synthesize customer information gathered across channels and platforms, and turn it into insights that can be translated into actions, practices and processes. Intelligent CRM technology with AI-based algorithms can smartly keep track of the entire history of interactions, enrich customer profiles, search and merge duplicates, allowing sales reps more effectively segment customer data, gain valuable insights, while smart dashboards visual important customer analytics.

04

Align with
your marketing
and customer
service teams
to get joined up
across all your
customer touch
points

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Today, as the customer journey becomes increasingly complex and non-linear, it is of critical importance for key organizational departments to work together to meet the needs and demands of the modern customer. It becomes increasingly challenging for sales reps to identifying key journeys, since defining the journeys that matter requires both top-down, judgment-driven evaluations and bottom-up, data-driven analysis and demands the contribution from various teams from marketers to back office and technical support.

Working together as a well-oiled machine enables all teams to build business processes around a customer and gain complete visibility of the customer journey at all touchpoints. There are many ways for sales, marketing, and service departments to support and strengthen one another. For example, if your organization has a field service team, don't overlook what front-line service personnel can tell you about how current products – and branding – succeed or fail, and what new types of products customers might need.

38%

Companies with aligned departments enjoyed a 38% higher sales win rate and become 67% better at closing deals. (Forrester)

87%

of companies missing their revenue targets report poor alignment of marketing and sales. (Forbes)

32%

Companies that optimize their marketing / sales relationship increase revenue 32% faster. (Aberdeen Group)

75%

of top-performing organizations have strong alignment between sales and marketing. (Forbes)

208%

Companies that aligned sales and marketing generated 208% more revenue from their marketing efforts. (MarketingProfs)

PRO TIP

To capture every interaction and every touch point with your customers, empower your core teams with a shared technology platform and business automation tools to enable them to map out the entire customer journey – from lead generation to deal closure. Using a single tool for managing a lead-to-revenue pipeline is the first step towards getting marketing and sales on the same page.

05

Take advantage of mobile technologies to reach customers and data at the most suitable moment

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Speed and agility have become core characteristics that define the efficiency of sale reps. This implies that sales reps need to be quick, effective and responsive meeting customers at the most suitable moment, with the best offer and through the most suitable channel. In addition, more and more customers turn first to their mobile devices to engage with sales reps and brands, and complete various transactions. As a result, modern organizations massively employ mobile apps to provide more personalized omnichannel customer experiences. The age of the digitally savvy customer drives the need for sales reps employ mobile application to provide customers with products and deliver seamless customer experiences.

With the help of a mobile application, time-starved sales reps are able to access customer information on the go and close a deal no matter where they are, from any device.

35%

Organizations that had achieved their business mobility goals were able to bring new revenue streams online 35% faster than companies that only focused on individual productivity needs. (VMware State of Business Mobility Report)

90

A mobile-first reinforcement program makes it easy and convenient for reps to participate, does not cut into selling time and is proven to drive adoption rates of 90 percent or better. (TrainingIndustry)

2.6

There are 2.6 billion smartphone users globally and by 2020, there will be 6.1 billion. (TechCrunch)

82%

82% of smartphone users say they consult their phones on purchases they're about to make in a store. (Google)

85%

Consumers spend 85% of time on their smartphones in apps. (TechCrunch)

PRO TIP

When the sales industry is constantly on the go, intelligent mobile app puts the portability and sales intelligence at sales reps' fingertips. Employing mobile application allows the sales force to access all the needed information about customers, easily work with accounts and contacts, plan activities and schedule meetings, explore the prospects needs and preferences, receive push notifications and reminders with valuable updates and information, and with the help of smart dashboards and filters to keep track of key indicators on the go.

06

Measure every move to eliminate possible bottlenecks

Keeping a tight focus on the metrics that affect both revenue and customer satisfaction is another important ingredient of the successful selling. It is essential to measure the sales reps performance against the set goals and predefined KPIs. The golden rule here is to realize that everything that can be measured can be improved. However, not all organizations today track the number of calls, emails, response and reaction time or other actions the sales reps perform. With this data in place, companies could become more successful in expanding their sales pipeline and reaching their goals.

Besides measuring the performance of your sales reps, it is crucial to pay close attention to your customers' satisfaction. In the age of the customer, measuring customer satisfaction has become one of the key indicators of your sales force's success. Therefore, it is important to set the framework for measuring customer-centric process improvement by adding new metrics that translate the operational metrics into customer metrics and provides insights into how sales reps performance is affecting customer satisfaction and experience. Among key customer satisfaction metrics are Net Promoter Score (NPS), customer expectations vs perception, likelihood to recommend to friends, customer experience vs ideal experience, overall satisfaction, repeat purchase intention, etc.

PRO TIP

It takes careful analysis and a clear understanding of important factors to make progressive changes to your sales process and ensure successful selling. Use sales metrics as a base for creating a dynamic and flexible sales process that will help you improve results, reach your sales goals and keep your customers satisfied.

Conclusion

In the age of digitally native customers, selling has become more challenging while companies spend billions of dollars on sales teams. To close a deal, sales reps need to uphold to golden rules of successful selling. Savvy sales pros know that real sales success is achieved only when fundamental principles are applied. The way for sales reps to succeed in such a highly competitive and ever-changing business environment is to unite people and innovative technology.

The synergy of talented people and cutting-edge CRM technology will help sales pros to achieve the most ambitious sales goals, deliver personalized experiences, and grow.

1 Gain the agility to
change processes in the
CRM faster than ever

2 Align marketing, sales
and service on a single
CRM platform

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