



Four Key Business Development Mistakes Sales Teams Should Avoid

1. Resist the temptation of fragmenting your sales resources.

We often find that business-to-business (B2B) focused sales teams are responsible for juggling multiple tasks in conjunction with the sales cycle. This can include activities around prospect list building efforts, lead generation and management activities, servicing existing customers, executing upon the active sales cycle, preparing, managing, and closing proposals/quotes, networking, preparing for and participating in trade shows. It is important that all of these sales-related tasks are executed consistently over time, to develop new business. But how effective and focused can these sales resources be, considering their individual capacity to manage and execute so many different activities of the sales cycle? The key question really is, how much more effective can sales resources be if they simply focus on the active process of selling and have access to a dedicated infrastructure, (resources, process and tools) that is focused on the execution and management of the administrative, front-end sales tasks and activities, to consistently feed the sales pipeline? Could division of labor in the sales process provide greater productivity and results?

2. “What you can’t measure, you can’t improve” - The importance of internal tracking processes.

Do you know how many touches (mailers, e-mails, phone calls) it takes to secure a qualified lead? Tracking these metrics is extremely important in understanding the front-end sales process and sales cycles. When developing new opportunities within B2B sales environments, our internal experience has found that it takes an average 15-20 touches, per contact, over 4 to 6 weeks to secure a qualified relationship. Do you know how many touches it currently takes your sales team to convert a prospect to a qualified first step in your sales cycle?

3. False assumptions: Farmers (Account Managers) can effectively “hunt” new business.

Its natural to believe that sales reps can mine new business, as well as service and retain existing customers. Primarily because that is the role of a sales person. But why then are some sales reps better at new account development than others? Is it hard work, is it luck, is it the ability to sell value? Maybe its all those things, but I think there is probably a much larger question to ask of this situation. Does selling to new customers require a different approach than that of existing customers? If they are different, then could we not assume that the two approaches might require a different focus and skill set that not all sales resources possess, prefer, or are capable to execute? If this assumption possesses some truth, then why do we continue to pretend that every sales rep can effectively do both?

4. Failure to consistently nurture relationships in long sales cycle environments.

Short-term leads or low-hanging fruit are always preferred, but not always realistic. Decision makers in complex B2B sales environments are not impulse buyers. Long-term relationship development typically requires the nurturing of relationships until they are ready to actively evaluate and eventually purchase. It is most important that you understand and follow-up at the appropriate time in the prospect’s buying decision process. Failure to consistently touch and build future relationships could mean the loss of opportunities or leads slipping through the cracks. Do you currently have a systematic approach for executing and managing one-to-one nurture touches, consistently across your sales pipeline with the required follow up due dates, to convert future interest opportunities?



Athena SWC LLC
100 Corporate Parkway
Suite 200
Amherst, NY 14226

Phone: 716.929.2711
Fax: 716.929.7201
info@athenaswc.com
www.theleadgencompany.com