

Good assessment of sales



JOHN DONOHOE
BELIEVE

With financial demands to meet targets, multiple management priorities, tight deadlines and limited funds, few ICT businesses now have the luxury of running by the seat of their pants, writes John Donohoe, partner at sales training specialist Believe.

With a good assessment process in place, improved efforts can be focused on activities that deliver the highest ROI for both the supplier and especially the customer. We have found that few business leaders have been introduced to the benefits of using continuous assessments to quickly implement sales improvements within their sales and customer support teams.

With the ICT sector in a constant state of growth, convergence of services, delivering content to multiple devices and, not least, key security fears, the skillset of the modern salesperson needs to be rich and diverse – not just a hard close or as low a price as you can sink to!

A cornerstone of a winning sales system is the examination of management, staff and sales processes. We have worked with ICT clients who have NO measure of activity to generate prospects, set up meetings, create proposals or even how many sales they get!! These customised assessments give you the required baseline information to identify strengths and weaknesses of existing processes, strategies and skills and to prioritise on areas that will give you the levels of professional performance.

ICT companies need to shed light on potential areas for improvement with the quality of your teams pipelines and how they properly qualify this, the effectiveness of your sales management capabilities, whether all of your teams are on the same page and if your salespeople are capable of executing your strategies for growth and success and identify business opportunities lost as a result of weaknesses among your existing approach.

The key purpose of the Believe sales system is that you'll learn who is trainable, how much development they'll need and the kind of help from which each will benefit. This could be improved product knowledge, questioning skills, understanding how to create powerful business needs, financial awareness and many more.

And if you are attempting to transition your company from good to great, you need to know which of your existing people should be on the bus, which seats they should be in and who, maybe, should be off the bus! As the great multi skilled American sportsman Herschel Walker stated " If you train hard, you'll not only be hard, you'll be hard to beat."



ROB DOWNES
9 GROUP

DO YOU REVIEW YOUR SALES PROCESSES REGULARLY?

Absolutely. We need to reflect the agility and speed of change in our market, so inertia and any comfort with the status quo would be prohibitive. Effective managed service sales demand a much more involved and sophisticated approach.

ARE YOU TRAINING SALES TEAMS DIFFERENTLY TODAY?

Yes. Successful sales are now far less transactional and much more consultative in nature, so our training has had to address that. The emphasis must be on teaching an informed, but flexible manner.

DO YOU TRAIN IN HOUSE OR USE AN EXTERNAL AGENCY?

Entirely in house. We have a team of technically proficient solution sales specialists. They share specific product knowledge and expertise between themselves, as well as cascading information to our field sales team, who manage our partners and can engage directly with their end users, if requested.

WHAT ATTRIBUTES DO THE BEST ICT SALES PEOPLE HAVE?

The best ICT sales people must be able to tell our story in a way that the customer can relate to, translating jargon into meaningful and attractive language. Being comfortable with describing concepts and alternative scenarios is now vital.



NIKI FOOTE
FIDELITY GROUP

DO YOU REVIEW YOUR SALES PROCESSES REGULARLY?

Yes, we do reviews constantly. Sales is a cut-throat world, so we ensure our process is constantly developing to fit both our partners and customers' needs. We keep up to date with latest industry news and trends in order to adapt our approach.

ARE YOU TRAINING SALES TEAMS DIFFERENTLY TODAY?

Sales is constantly adapting. The basics no, but clients' needs and requirements change regularly, so we have to ensure the team know how to work with the likes of Brexit and the shutdown of ISDN For example.

DO YOU TRAIN IN HOUSE OR USE AN EXTERNAL AGENCY?

Both. We have an e-learning platform for developing sales techniques, commercial understanding and specifics such as GDPR training; we utilise our suppliers expert product knowledge to enhance our own; and department heads conduct formal and informal training.

WHAT ATTRIBUTES DO THE BEST ICT SALES PEOPLE HAVE?

An ability to understand the specific requirements of the customer and design the best solution; passion and knowledge about the products and services we offer; an understanding of the market and market trends; and a hunger to close deals!



SEAN BODSWORTH
INFORM BILLING

DO YOU REVIEW YOUR SALES PROCESSES REGULARLY?

We continually monitor active opportunities and flex sales processes dependent on the individual customer's circumstances. Where there are requirements outside of the 'norm' it's useful to discuss these as a team and agree a standard approach going forward.

ARE YOU TRAINING SALES TEAMS DIFFERENTLY TODAY?

Only to reflect changes in priorities and to adopt new technologies. The key with sales is to remember the basics - just because you can, doesn't mean you should jump straight into a screen-share and risk missing key elements of qualifying.

DO YOU TRAIN IN HOUSE OR USE AN EXTERNAL AGENCY?

Because our software and services are very niche, most of our training is completed in house through job shadowing. Knowledge of the industries we serve is best learnt externally and it's always beneficial to have an external mentor.

WHAT ATTRIBUTES DO THE BEST ICT SALESPEOPLE HAVE?

The best salespeople are skilled at actively listening, identifying pain points and relating these to appropriate solutions. ICT sales is very consultative, it's fundamental to build trust and respect and above all, to focus on benefits not features!



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processes will deliver ROI



SHAHRAM
BAGHERZADEH
LOOP VOICE & DATA

DO YOU REVIEW YOUR SALES PROCESSES REGULARLY?

Yes, we review our sales process every six months. This is mainly due to suppliers' requirements and customer demand.

ARE YOU TRAINING SALES TEAMS DIFFERENTLY TODAY?

Absolutely, today we are facing a new generation, faster technology, higher competition and higher demand from end users and we must move with the times and today is yesterday.

DO YOU TRAIN IN HOUSE OR USE AN EXTERNAL AGENCY?

Both, it is important to have regular in-house training about the process and products, and time to time we use an external agency to improve our knowledge and learn new ideas.

WHAT ATTRIBUTES DO THE BEST ICT SALES PEOPLE HAVE?

They should be able to translate ICT into very simple terms to the clients and make sure they are ahead of the game.



VINCENT DISNEUR
UNION STREET

DO YOU REVIEW YOUR SALES PROCESSES REGULARLY?

Absolutely. We actively encourage our team to try new things and bring ideas to the table. We hold regular sales meetings to review progress on key accounts and discuss all aspects of the sales process.

ARE YOU TRAINING SALES TEAMS DIFFERENTLY TODAY?

Our approach is always evolving. Social media and content-based marketing has had a particularly transformative impact on the way buyers research products and the sales cycle, so naturally we've adapted our sales tactics accordingly.

DO YOU TRAIN IN HOUSE OR USE AN EXTERNAL AGENCY?

External trainers will often, not always, have a 'one-size-fits-all' approach that doesn't allow for the different personalities, strengths and weaknesses of your people. Knowing your team, understanding their challenges and coaching them accordingly produces the best results for us.

WHAT ATTRIBUTES DO THE BEST ICT SALES PEOPLE HAVE?

Charisma, personability, work ethic and the ability to listen. Fully understanding a customer's challenges and requirements are key to any solution-based sales role. When it comes to ICT, you must know the product and technology inside out.



TOM MAXWELL
NIMANS

DO YOU REVIEW YOUR SALES PROCESSES REGULARLY?

We constantly review and monitor our sales processes. Customer service first and foremost is paramount, but just as important is the ability to meet customers' needs as technology continues to evolve.

ARE YOU TRAINING SALES TEAMS DIFFERENTLY TODAY?

Back in the day it was pretty much more about products and how to configure them etc., but today it's about the wider technology and the bigger picture such as around end point devices. It's about staying one step ahead of the game.

DO YOU TRAIN IN HOUSE OR USE AN EXTERNAL AGENCY?

We have a multi-tier approach. We work closely with manufacturers and also have our own in-house training academy that provides knowledge and skills as well as unbiased feedback on call quality and wider service levels.

WHAT ATTRIBUTES DO THE BEST ICT SALES PEOPLE HAVE?

The ability to listen and consult is essential. Remain open minded and see the bigger picture. Give customers options and a broader perspective of the solutions and options available. Make recommendations based on benefits to the customer.



DEBBIE ELLIOTT
WINDSOR TELECOM

DO YOU REVIEW YOUR SALES PROCESSES REGULARLY?

In essence, yes. It is impossible to remain rigid in an industry that moves so fast. Whilst a structured approach is always practised, we are the trusted advisor to our customers and prospects alike, so fluidity is important.

ARE YOU TRAINING SALES TEAMS DIFFERENTLY TODAY?

Without a doubt. Old clichés such as 'it's a numbers game' are just out dated. We are providing a solution that eases the pain of our customers. Trust is everything.

DO YOU TRAIN IN HOUSE OR USE AN EXTERNAL AGENCY?

Both. We believe in adopting processes that work for other key players in the industry. Those mixed with our knowledge and techniques allow us to push forward with our company ethos always being promoted. Being the best needs constant work.

WHAT ATTRIBUTES DO THE BEST ICT SALES PEOPLE HAVE?

The ability to listen. Really understand a customer's needs and question their motives. Challenging customers and making them understand what will really work means that we don't take what is on the table, we rebuild the table.



MICHAEL O'DONNELL
OPUS

DO YOU REVIEW YOUR SALES PROCESSES REGULARLY?

We regularly review our sales processes to ensure they are aligned with changes in strategy, focus and marketplace buying decisions. This is particularly important as we launched a new sales academy and are training graduates in their first sales role.

ARE YOU TRAINING SALES TEAMS DIFFERENTLY TODAY?

Yes. With both applications and services becoming more integrated, our customers are having to consider and manage a wider ICT landscape meaning we are often presenting to larger, more role diverse groups of people who are invested in buying decisions.

DO YOU TRAIN IN HOUSE OR USE AN EXTERNAL AGENCY?

We have adopted a mixture of internal and external training modules particularly in the case of our sales academy. Less experienced sales staff are also mentored by the senior sales managers and directors, partnering on opportunities where needed.

WHAT ATTRIBUTES DO THE BEST ICT SALES PEOPLE HAVE?

Communication skills, both listening and speaking are essential, along with ambition, motivation and strategic thinking. Specialist knowledge of products and services is also key, along with alignment to our core values of keep learning, working together and never giving up.



RHYS BAILEY
FOCUS GROUP

DO YOU REVIEW YOUR SALES PROCESSES REGULARLY?

Yes, all parts of the sales process are reviewed regularly. We often change proposals and presentations from the feedback that we receive.

ARE YOU TRAINING SALES TEAMS DIFFERENTLY TODAY?

It is more about the access to resources for them to feel empowered with knowledge. We have team leaders and presales specialists walking the floor and attending appointments to ensure salespeople have all the knowledge and support they need to be a success.

DO YOU TRAIN IN HOUSE OR USE AN EXTERNAL AGENCY?

Both, however the most impact we see is side-by-side coaching, utilising people that have been with us a long time that can help coach and nurture newer staff. This eradicates bad habits and keeps sales people engaged.

WHAT ATTRIBUTES DO THE BEST ICT SALES PEOPLE HAVE?

They need to be innovative and adaptable and good listeners. The market is full of a vast variety of buyers and salespeople must be able to act quickly and decisively on the needs of the person in front of them. And they must be accountable and do what they say they are going to do.

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