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# ANALYSIS

## **BUILDING YOUR SALES TEAM TO MAXIMIZE PERFORMANCE**

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# contents

## Document

Introduction .....	2
Creating Motivation.....	2
Maximizing Performance.....	3
1. Your Message .....	3
2. Team Sharing.....	4
3. Team Rewards.....	4
The Bottom Line .....	5

## Figures

Figure 1: Strategies Used for Attracting New Customers.....	3
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## Introduction

In today's complicated business climate, even more discipline is required to ensure that your sales team is set up for success. Your sales team—often considered the backbone of an organization—plays a critical role in uncovering new business and keeping your customers engaged and loyal. Even so, when owners or sales leaders are asked about the personality of their sales team, their descriptions frequently leave much to be desired. All too often, the manager of a print service provider will admit that he has some great reps, some good reps, and some reps that just show up. Imagine a world where everyone on your team could be classified as "great," and all of your reps operated in sync with one another.

Without a team mindset, you are simply left with a sales group. Conversely, the speed of sales can be accelerated when your entire team works toward a shared interest rather than individual goals. Your company will also be better positioned to expand its business opportunities. This article explores how print service providers can establish a team mentality within their sales teams to drive better business results.

## Creating Motivation

Many sales organizations make a habit of evaluating and promoting individual contributors. Each sales rep is personally held responsible for a goal or quota—often revenue-based—that he or she is measured by. Setting sales goals can play an important role in managing a business. When implemented correctly, these goals can enable a sales leader to evaluate behavior vs. results, assess project revenue, and determine a salesperson's effectiveness. Individuals who make a living as salespeople understand the importance of meeting individual goals, and they won't shy away from jobs that require high levels of performance. After all, risk can bring reward, and most salespeople are motivated by monetary compensation.

In his book entitled *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Daniel Pink argues that there is a different way to view the things that motivate people. Pink's book contends that motivation is built on three principles:

- 1. Autonomy – the desire to direct our own lives:** This runs parallel to the mindset of many salespeople, who are commonly self-directed and opposed to micromanagement.
- 2. Mastery – the urge to get better and better at something that matters:** This is another natural characteristic of a great sales professional. It is often reflected in the competitive nature of the sales field, which typically attracts people who enjoy "going for the win."
- 3. Purpose – the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves:** This is where the "team" in sales team takes hold. Your sales reps want to believe



that what they are doing has a greater purpose. Although doing something larger than oneself is rarely a metric in assessing sales performance, it is still a critical element in the success of your team.

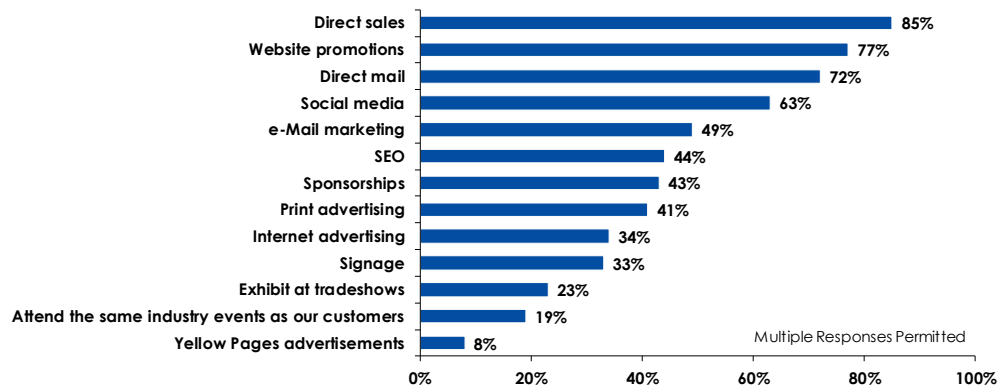
## Maximizing Performance

Establishing a purpose is one of the most important factors of building your sales team to maximize performance. Why is doing something for the greater good such a vital element to your team's success? Michael Jordan perhaps said it best when he stated, "Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships." The bottom line is that your sales team must work toward a common goal to truly maximize its performance.

When it comes to attracting new customers to their businesses, print service providers rely heavily on direct sales. In fact, recent research from KL Kimerer & Associates identifies direct sales as the top strategy for attracting new customers. PSPs clearly understand that an optimized sales team is key to maximizing performance.

**Figure 1: Strategies Used for Attracting New Customers**

*Which of the following methods do you use to attract new customers to your business?*



N = 155 Total Respondents

Source: *Marketing and Sales Best Practices*; KL Kimerer Research 2020

As such, encouraging your sales team to work effectively with a purpose beyond their individual contributions establishes a path to unparalleled sales results. Here are three solid practices to leverage teamwork and help even your best performers achieve more.

### 1. Your Message

Within a sales organization, purpose begins with your messaging. If you leave your sales reps to their own devices, the messages that are ultimately delivered will likely be all over the board. It is important to specify how you want your reps to communicate your company's value to prospects and customers. When there is clarity around your organization's vision, what you do, who you do it for, and why you do it, you will achieve alignment and the makings of a cohesive team.



Messaging does not have to be force-fed from the top down. In fact, creating a team exercise that everyone is expected to follow can improve the message itself and also help ensure individual buy-in. The process also provides an opportunity to develop and exhibit organizational pride and ensure that every sales rep in your organization is telling your best story.

## 2. Team Sharing

If you ask any salesperson what they like best about an industry event or sales training, the answer will usually be almost unanimous—best practice sharing. The ability to connect with other colleagues to show each other what great looks like can be invaluable to your team's performance. All too often, sales meetings are filled with revenue reviews, opportunity updates, or housekeeping items that ultimately deliver little value to the team.

Sharing best practices is a great way to build trust and strengthen the individual relationships within your team. Once these relationships have been established, collaboration feels good and people are not afraid to ask for help when they need it. Commit to the practice of sharing, and establish a process that enables team members to share precisely how your products and solutions solved a real customer concern or problem. If you can achieve this goal, your company's purpose will never be called into question.

## 3. Team Rewards

Most great salespeople are not overly interested in team compensation. After all, there is no guarantee that their teammates will work as hard or effectively as they do individually. This means you must find a way to reward team performance by setting organization-wide success metrics. When you include elements that communicate purpose and give workers a more profound meaning, you can create an environment where performance flourishes. For example, reward your salespeople for learning something new. By adopting an appetite for continued learning, you can keep your sales reps engaged, motivated, and loyal to your organization. Rather than limiting learning to anticipated sales or product training, seek topics that offer your team the opportunity to learn about a specific client or industry. Afterward, have them share their new knowledge with the rest of the group. Team rewards can then be delivered once each individual contributor on the team has provided a meaningful teach-back.



## The Bottom Line

In describing the value of a team, many will state that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. View the practice of building your sales team as a process, not a project with a hard and fast end date. The fundamentals of building a team should remain constant, and adjusting to business climates and buyers' changing behaviors means that you must remain nimble. Although it is healthy to create a little friendly competition within a sales team, the through-line of a high-performing team will discourage "me only" recognition. The point is that when a sales team can work toward a common goal, complement each other's actions, and look out for each other's success, your organization will likely experience higher revenue growth, lower employee churn, and—most importantly—happier customers.



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As Director of Keypoint Intelligence's Business Development Strategies Consulting Service, Karen Kimerer has experienced the many challenges of expanding current market opportunities and securing new business. She has developed a systematic approach to these opportunities, addressing the unique requirements of becoming a leader in our changing industry.

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