INSIGHTS, LEADERSHIP, MATT CRABTREE, SALES & MARKETING

Sales for non-sales leaders
3. Getting to the coal face

In the third of our series especially for leaders who don't have a sales background themselves but are leading sales leaders we focus on the time you need to spend 'in the field'.

You can attend all the QBR's, monthly business reviews and win/loss meetings you like but nothing at all beats observing your sales professionals in their natural habitat.

But how to make sure that you get an accurate representation of reality from this critical endeavour?

1. Beware the red (or ruined) carpet.

Sales leaders can be skilled at controlling which salespeople and/or clients senior executives get access to. For obvious reasons they can be inclined to send you into either the best client they've won or the client most suffering because of issues caused by other departments. You'll certainly be rarely invited to accompany a failing salesperson that they recruited!

2. Observe more activity at the top of the funnel.

Understanding how the sales team is creating new opportunities or responding to leads in the early stages of the sales cycle is crucial. Too often senior executives are only deployed at the very end of the sales cycle or with the 'show pony' client who is just about to sign up for more. Observing sales people in the 80% of regular working time will be highly instructive.

3. Spend time with salespeople one-to-one.

Senior executive time with sales teams is often pre planned and highly choreographed with the result that what is observed is only ever the sales organisation at its very, very best. Asking to spend time one-to-one with chosen sales people and at very short notice is sadly more necessary than it should be.

4. Focus

Focus equally on how what you learn tells you about the effectiveness of your leaders, as opposed to your business overall.Senior executives by nature want to help to grow revenues and will often get closely involved in client opportunities in order to assist the business in winning. As laudable as this effort is, it distracts from the real purpose behind spending more time at the sales frontline: namely understanding how well your sales leaders are recruiting, coaching, motivating and performance managing their teams

Key routines:

1. Observe sales team meetings

Twice per year

2. Observe one-to-one coaching sessions (between sales leader and salesperson)

Once a quarter

3. Skip-level, one-to-one sessions

Once a quarter

4. Observe customer sales meeting*

Once a month

5. Listen in to calls/video meetings*

Once a month

* In addition to the key client meetings you're no doubt involved in routinely.

OUR INSIGHTS

Practical advice on common business challenges
direct from our International team of business experts

Matt Crabtree
Partner

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