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## Efficient sales force

One in the field ...

How many have seen, in most Russian companies, the head of the sales department independently ensures the implementation of a quarter to a third of the revenue plan. Is it good, and from what is this happening? If the sales service is not recruited immediately, but is formed in stages, by the method of improvement and optimization, usually the best seller becomes its head.

Such a leader's logic is quite acceptable: this person sells the most, which means that he knows better than anyone how to do it, let him teach the others.

This situation is quite viable and can bear fruit for the time being (see the stages of the company's development). After a while, we notice that, for example, if the head of a department goes on vacation, this means that the entire sales department is going to rest.

Besides, too obvious successes of the head of the sales department against the background of low sales of the rest should alert the manager. This suggests that his time is spent not on organizing the work of subordinates, but on "plugging holes" in the implementation of the revenue part of the budget, or distribution of excessive preferences of one's own (head of department) clients.

As already wrote in another note, "On Politics and Spade": not every tiler can be a good foreman, because the tiler's tool is a trowel, and a foreman - estimates and plans. Guided by this, the head of the sales department should be the manager-administrator, not the best seller.

If it so happened that in the absence of a leader, the head of the department, he became such a good salesman, let us learn his management skills as quickly as possible. He should be able to plan and organize the work of the department, motivate employees for feats of labor, as well as monitor the implementation of plans and current orders. But let's accept that even so "not every cook can manage the state" .. even if you teach her this.

About the system

The main task of the head of the sales department is to create such a system, to maintain which in "combat readiness" it takes no more than 20% of the working time. At the same time, a good system can function effectively even in the absence of its developer or creator.

If the sales service is functioning normally, then only point tactical interventions by the leadership are required, and not the regular adoption of fateful decisions about changing the "strategic course". A good sales system is like a good engine. It is only required to fill in the oil regularly, and not to go through every six months.

Plan

Attitude to planning for all managers is different. Some believe that the plan must be executed, no matter what. Perhaps for sales staff motivation should be based on this principle. But management must understand that a plan is not an end in itself. A plan is a derivative of dozens of factors, but not a constant.

Others are confident that sales planning is not a useful thing. Proponents of this point of view argue that, firstly, changes in the market make serious adjustments to the plan, and secondly, sales managers are difficult to force to fulfill their obligations. However, these arguments are controversial. Many consider the most productive approach when the plan is perceived as a guideline. The same as a buoy for a swimmer, a fairway for a pilot or a compass for a tourist. In this case, planning allows you to predict how the company will develop in the next month, quarter or year. And also, as well as what earned money will be spent. At the same time, it is not the concrete figures that are important, but the conclusions that can be drawn from them.

#### Plan - Prediction

In all the above views on the plan there is one system error associated with attempts to put the whole system of views, requirements and work to achieve a result under one concept of "plan". I always say that you can plan the execution of tasks, as a result of which the required sales indicators are achieved. So: the plan - the sequential execution of work; result - performance indicators for profitability, turnover, etc.

What we set for the sales department before the execution of the work plan (and each manager sets himself the task - as part of the overall task of the department) - the forecast figures of the very indicators of profitability, turnover, sales forecast.

Thus, all the contradictions are removed when the manager does not understand (due to ignorance, not menii, not possessing managerial tools), in a way fulfilling the planned work: calling, dealers control, mastering new segments, he will fulfill the predicted profitability indicators with 80% probability.

#### Before planning

In drawing up the work plan, it must be borne in mind that, first, it must be honest; secondly, concrete, with the understanding of what forecast indicator of sales activity it will improve, due to what measures, manipulations with clients, buyers. What is important is that the forecast figures can be achieved equally, both by proper planning of the manager's work and by the proper resources provided by the manager (are there enough people, money, price policy of the company, product policy). Prior to planning work and determining forecast figures, it is necessary to answer the following questions to the head of the sales department: Is the volume of the market growing, decreasing or remaining stable? Is the number of competitors increasing? How does the company and the sales department feel? Are you on the rise or is there a decrease in activity? How hard is or was it easy for you to complete previous work plans? Depending on the answers to these questions, the appropriate plan can be amended accordingly, increasing the likelihood of an event: 100% fulfillment of the predicted sales figures. Forecasting technology. The first step in sales forecast. At the first stage, you need to answer the questions: how much do we want to earn and how much can we earn? At the same time, it is necessary to determine how much you can earn: on first purchases, "new" customers, new regions (or segments); on first purchases, "new" customers, "old" regions (or segments); on repeated purchases of "old" customers; on the first purchases of "new" goods (in all sections above). In this case, fulfilling the forecast by 100% presupposes a combination of actions by employees in four areas - working with new customers, new segments (regions) and regular customers. Each direction requires different actions and solutions. The forecast needs to be made in two indicators - pieces and money. One number in money is not enough, since it is unclear how many customers will ensure this sales, or when planning for a long time, like inflationary expectations, or a change in the competitive field will affect the decline in revenue with the same sales forecasts "in pieces". Therefore, it is important to point out that we expect to receive such a sales volume, say, from twenty contracts. At the second stage of sales forecasting, the second stage includes the

formation of a budget for sales expenses (expenses for presentations, business trips, a premium part of employees' salaries, a subscription fee for telephones, paper, cartridges, meals with clients in a restaurant, etc.). This budget also needs to be predicted, as this is an investment in your income generation. The third stage - planning the work. At the third stage, the sales forecast plan, pieces and money for goods, regions and customers is transferred to the plan of contacts between the sales staff and customers - new and existing. Work planPlan contactIt will again come from your experience. First you need to figure out how many contacts are required to attract one new customer. There is such a concept "sales funnel". It should be borne in mind that the customer base is always heterogeneous. Customers can be divided into several groups: those who do not know about your company at all, but may be of interest to you, those who know about you, but only; those who know you, treat you well and readily consider your proposals ; those who made your purchase only once; those who buy your products regularly. Almost always the customers who made the first purchase are less than those who have a positive attitude towards your company. A positive attitude to the company is always less than just aware of its existence. This imposes a certain feature on the work of managers. Most of the time it takes to work with those who need to be tied to the company. The only exception is the distribution business, when the company operates with a limited number of counterparties. Customer baseThere is another important point to consider. The customer base is a living organism. Some customers come to the market, some disappear, someone starts to buy more goods, and someone goes to another supplier. Therefore, the sales department should work with the entire base of potential customers, and not only with "hot" customers. In addition, you must constantly search for new companies to include them in your database. Otherwise, the circle of clients will narrow over time. We warm up the "cold" clients. As we have already decided above, to fulfill the plan, the company needs to attract 12 new clients and sign a contract for \$ 5000 with each. First, your managers should give answers to two questions: What percentage of "warm" customers makes a purchase? How many contacts with a "warm" customer need to be made to buy goods? Suppose, on average, one of three customers makes a purchase, and to get a certain answer ("Yes, buy" or "no, wait") you need to talk with him four times. Next, you need to find out what percentage of customers are moving from the state of "awareness" to the state of "positive attitude", and for how many contacts you can achieve this transition. Suppose managers believe that 70% of such clients are, and the required number of contacts with them is three. We do the same with cold clients. What percentage of potential customers from our initial base goes to communicate and after how many contacts they become "aware"? Suppose in the considered case such KliThe number of required contacts is half. After that, you can see the status of the customer base at different stages of work. Contacts with old customers. The sales manager can easily hold up to three meetings and make up to fifteen effective phone calls per day. Acting according to the described scheme, you get an adequate and understandable tool for planning the daily activity of managers.

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