

Finishing 2009 on a High Note: What is your 100 day sales plan?

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As we head into the latter part of September, there are approximately 100 days left between now and the end of the calendar year. For many sales representatives, especially those where their quota and performance bonuses are based upon a calendar year, this is a critical time to ensure you meet your goals and hopefully trigger significant sales commissions or bonuses. In economic times such as we have faced in 2009 to date, this is also a critical time for your company to ensure they are doing everything they can to make the overall corporate goals, or at least minimize the difference between planned and actual results.

So as everybody has a lot riding on the conclusion of the year, how best can we ensure we are maximizing our sales in these last 100 days, as well as building our pipeline for a strong start to 2010? It all starts with a plan, a 100 day plan!

The first step is to set your 100 day goals using the SMART methodology. Your goals should be Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. Goal setting is the best way to ensure your subsequent actions are effectively and efficiently directed towards achieving those goals. Appropriate goals should focus on the revenue and profits you require over the next 100 days to achieve and exceed your quota.

The second step is to identify the actions you need to take to achieve the goals you set. The sales profession tends to be activity based, the more effort and intelligence you put in the more return you get out. This means you can reverse engineer the activity required to meet your goal. For example, if you know what percentage of time you convert opportunities into sales as well as your average dollar sale, you can calculate the number of leads/opportunities that you require to meet your goal. It then allows you to identify the actions that will impact upon these drivers. In other words, what can I do to increase the number of leads/opportunities as well as improve my conversion ratio and average dollar sale? These actions, which should also follow the SMART methodology, then form the basis of your 100 day plan.

The third step is to execute, putting into action what up to this point is only upon paper. As Conrad Hilton, the founder of Hilton Hotels observed "Achievement seems to be connected with action. Successful men and women keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit." The same will be true of your 100 day plan. Its success depends upon your ability to execute the actions you have identified. It is also incumbent upon your ability to learn from your mistakes and quickly fine tune or make corrections as you move ahead.

The fourth step is to maintain a laser like focus. 100 days is not a long period of time, and the days will pass quickly. Always assess whether your time is being spent in a way that contributes to your 100 day plan and avoid initiatives that will not contribute to your achieving your goals. Keep it simple, stay focused on the prize and you can conclude 2009 with a smile on your face and earnings in your pocket!

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