

Sales Meetings Which Increase Sales

by
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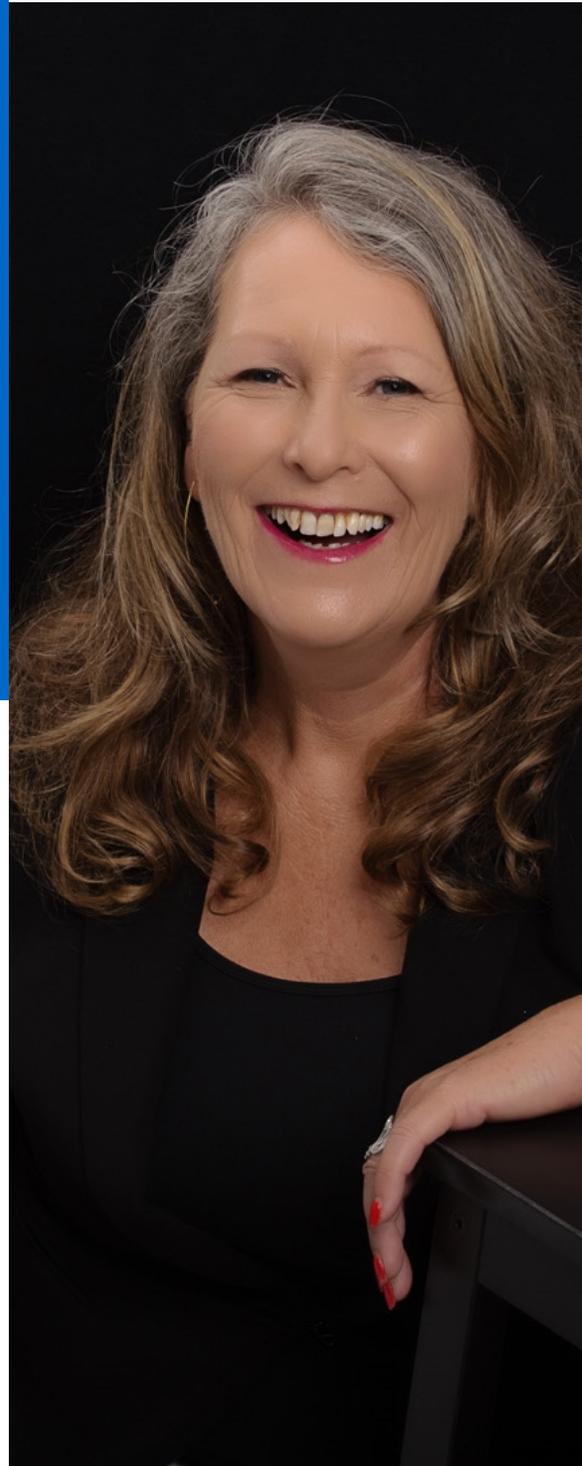
Owner of the
McKinnon Sales Centre Pty Ltd

Creator of the
Sage Sales Strategies

Our sales team was voted by its peers as Australia's best. This was the culmination of two years of over-achievement – it's no coincidence that this is the precise time we've accessed McKinnon's expertise.

Gary Roberts

Managing Director, 94.5FM

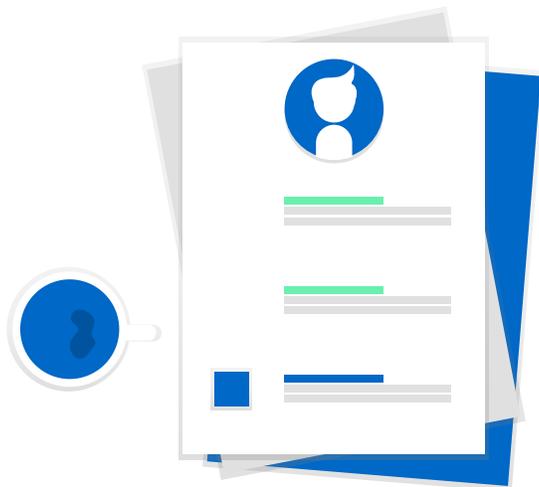


This guide is for Entrepreneurs and Business Owners who manage their own sales team or for Sales Managers who would like to build an A-team. Many Sales Meetings are considered a boring waste of time and the reps will do everything in their power to get their Manager to either cancel them or reduce the frequency of them. They persuade the Manager that they would be better out there finding new clients, which is difficult for a new Manager to argue against.

However, a well-run, well-planned sales meeting increases motivation, focus, energy, excitement and sales skills. Remember, everything you do impacts the motivation, focus and energy of your reps either positively or negatively. And unlike other teams in the business, they do not shrug it off lightly.

How not to do it

You rush in late because obviously, there has been something much more important which has held you up. And you finish late because:



- ⦿ You have not planned the meeting and have allowed conversation to repeatedly go off track.
- ⦿ You allow the reps to get bogged down into small detail
- ⦿ Discuss what was not on the agenda
- ⦿ Or allow them to use the meeting as a forum to air their complaints

If someone has a complaint, they need to bring it to you to explore individually. The problem could be a lack of skill, a personal grudge or any other numbers of reasons. You need to explore the reasons behind the problem before taking it further. Often a one-on-one coaching session will solve the issue. If it is a problem

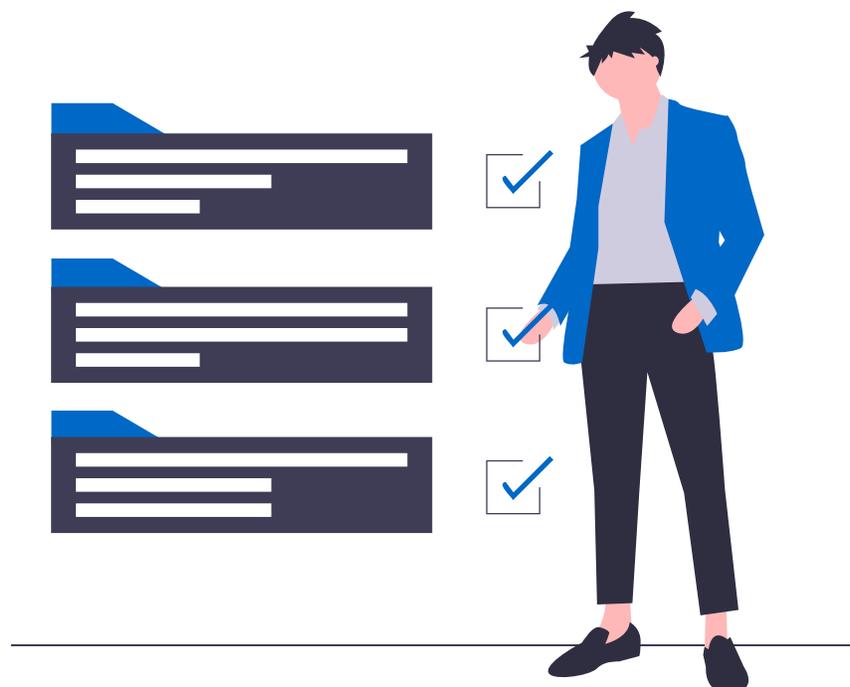
which impacts the whole team, only then do you add it to the agenda of the meeting.

Also, if you are not presenting the figures the right way, people lose their confidence because they are not reaching their budgets and there is no one-on-one coaching offered to address this. I'm all for presenting the figures to the whole team and, done well, reps will feel challenged and eager to get out there and add to their sales.

Many sales meetings are seen as an opportunity to do product knowledge training and cover housekeeping issues. Reps walk out of the meeting feeling flat and

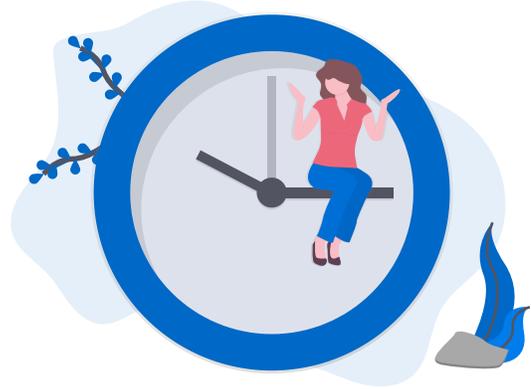
The objective of a Sales Meeting

The sales meeting is to update the reps on any internal changes which impact their sales and any market changes (although these things can be done by email as long as you manage the impact on them), celebrate wins, address challenges, conduct sales training, build excitement, focus and motivation. It's a fine balancing act and needs to be well planned and prepared.



Starting and finishing on time

Remember, as the Sales Manager or Owner of the Business, they will aspire to the traits you demonstrate. Time keeping and being organised are two important traits which will increase sales or inhibit them in chaos. If you haven't booked the sales meeting into your diary, you are not serious about taking your reps to a new level of professionalism.



Open with a Positive!

Start your meeting with good news. Set the tone of the meeting. Recognise a win from someone to lift the energy in the room. This has nothing to do with false optimism and everything to do with managing the motivation of your reps. It could be that someone finally won over a difficult client, a new person who got their first deal over the line or that the team is on track to achieve budget for the month. Whoever the good news is about, let them tell their story. You always encourage participation in the sales meeting.



What challenge did you have and how did you get past it?

If the reps have been sharing their challenges and getting advice from you, you will know what challenges are being faced. By sharing these stories, the rest of the team learn what to do or say when faced with the same problem. If one rep is facing a problem, chances are others will too. Learning how to handle a challenge each week prepares the reps and builds their confidence that they know what to do. It may well be that the rep did not know about a rule set by the company and so it is good for the team to be reminded of the guidelines they have to work within.



Give them a training notebook to bring to the sales meeting. When someone overcomes a challenge, it is usually the wording which has been the most important. Share the wording but more importantly, get them to write down the exact wording. Then make them learn it. Let them know you will test them at the next meeting. Learning the right phrases is what the top 1% are so good at. And by the way, if they forget to bring their training notebook with them to the sales meeting, this is an indication that their organisational skills need work. Remember that in your monthly coaching session with them.

Why a training notebook and not bring their laptop to take notes? Because during the session, the temptation to check their emails will become overpowering. And from email, it is only a short step to Facebook – and you've lost them completely.

Short Sales Training Session

This is the perfect forum to conduct short Sales training with your most experienced reps coming up with strategies they use to achieve budget. A 20 to 30-minute session is long enough. Some suggested subjects are:

- Handling objections
- A list of all the benefits of our products
- Questioning skills — open and closed questions
- Listening skills
- Reading body language
- Selling through telling stories
- Persuasive emails which sell

These templates for many of these training sessions and more are on www.shirleymckinnon.com

What you do for example, if you are going to cover handling objections, is to get everyone to put the most common objections up on a white board. Then get them to work in groups coming up with the answers, making sure there is an experienced rep in each group. Each group will come up with answers which you then put up on the whiteboard.

Get everyone to copy down all the answers in their notebook and their homework for the week is to learn the answers off by heart to be tested at the next Sales Meeting. At the next Sales Meeting, you should be able to shoot an objection at anyone in the room and they will smoothly and comfortably answer it in a powerful and confident manner.

Training Tip for the Reps

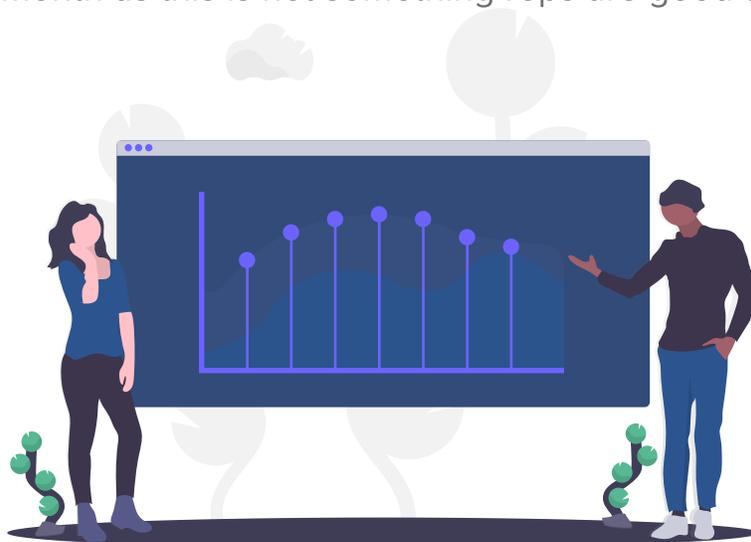
Remind them that all objections need to be learned out loud. If they just read them, there is a funny thing which happens. The brain says one thing and what comes out of the mouth, is something quite different. Only learning to say these out loud is effective.

Training Tip for You

However, use the old training technique of PPP. Pose the question, Pause, as then everyone is thinking of the answer because they don't know who you're going to pick, then Pounce and pick a person to answer. If you pick the person first, everyone else knows they are off the hook and they stop listening.

Reinforce their goal

At every opportunity, you reinforce the goal they are working towards. This is usually the team goal and it's great if you have a reason for this goal. It may be that you are trying to beat their best from the previous year or, you are trying to beat the competition. This gets the blood running and they can jump in and prove how good they are. If possible, have some pictures which relate to the goal and spend a few minutes exploring what it will be like when they achieve the goal. If you think it will help, go around the room and ask each person what they are doing to achieve the goal. What is in their pipeline and how are they going to fill it? That way, you force them to plan their month as this is not something reps are good at usually.



Finish by recognising someone exceeding Personal Best

Traditionally, sales teams compete for the top spot. However, a more effective way to get improved performance is to try to get everyone to improve their Personal Best. That means that even new people to the team can be recognised for improvement, not just the best in the team.

I'm a great fan of John Wooden. In his 27 years as UCLA basketball coach, he won a record-setting 10 national championships. And he never brought in 'star'. He did it

Planning the Sales Meeting

Meetings like this don't just happen, they are planned. This means that you must book the time in your diary every week to prepare for the Sales Meeting. You need to know what is happening in your team, what is tripping them up, what the new people are struggling with, what is stopping even the experienced stars.

You need stories you can share both positive and educational. There are many things to share in a Sales Meeting from stories and motivational sayings to information about the market. Encourage them to believe your information rather than the nonsense fear-filled information that the media spreads that undermines their confidence.

And last but not least, Sales Meetings should be run weekly. Keep them focused on the progress towards the goal, the motivation and energy remain high and the excitement at a peak. And they'll love being in your team and respond by exceeding budget.





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