How to build a kick-ass inside sales team from scratch

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Introduction

Outbound sales is a critical component of any successful business, and having a strong sales team in place helps your business acquire new clients, increase revenue, and establish a solid market presence.

Building your own successful inside sales team from scratch takes a lot of heavy lifting, but when it's done correctly, the rewards are well worth the effort! We've put together this handy guide to help you navigate the journey.

Recruitment

The foundation of any effective sales team lies in its people. I know, I know! This is so obvious that it barely needs saying. But once you commit to building your team you'll find that hiring the right people is easier said than done.

Keep the following key attributes front of mind and you'll be on the right track:

- Resilience: Sales professionals face rejection at every turn and your team members must be able to recover quickly. Sulky cry babies need not apply.
- Adaptability/Coachability: The sales landscape is constantly changing, requiring your team to be open to learning and adapting to novel approaches. Give us an eager, fresh faced newbie over a battle-hardened, stuck in their ways veteran any day of the week.
- Communication skills: You'll provide your team with scripts for every facet of the sales process, but you can't coach charisma, and the old adage "people buy from people" is true for a reason.
- **Drive:** The old Boiler Room/Wolf of Wall Street style of selling is long gone and good riddance. That being said, sales is a demanding and competitive field, and you want to fill your team with people who are motivated to succeed and continuously improve.

Culture

Fostering a supportive and collaborative environment will significantly impact the success of your outbound sales team. Encourage positivity, collaboration and support by:

- Holding daily team briefings to share best practices, discuss challenges, and communicate incentives/competitions.
- Celebrate the small wins. Sales can be a grind, and it's guaranteed that there will be tough times when deal volumes are lower than expected. This is why it's crucial that you celebrate the small wins, whether it's pitching that hard-to-reach decision maker, setting a discovery call with a Tier 1 prospect, or getting a solid referral from a phone call.
- Promoting a culture of continuous learning and improvement through ongoing training, coaching, and development opportunities.
- Encouraging open communication and transparency, allowing team members to feel comfortable sharing their ideas, concerns, and achievements.
- Recognising and rewarding top performers to maintain high morale and motivate others to achieve their best.
- Leading by example. Senior management can gain serious respect by joining the sales team in the trenches and spending a day pitching the product/service. Make this a regular practice and also gain insight into the marketplace to better understand trends, common objections, and customer needs.

Sales Playbook

A sales playbook is a document that provides strategies, tactics, and best practices to guide your sales team through all stages of closing a deal. Its goal is to make your sales process successful, repeatable, and scalable. Make sure you check out our guide <u>"Key Components of a Winning Sales Playbook"</u> for a more in-depth view.

Onboard new hires more efficiently and effectively

Training new sales reps and getting them up to speed can be achieved far quicker and easier if you have a single source of truth on: who your clients are (Ideal Customer Profile - ICP), how they buy your products/services, what pain points and problems they experience and how you help to solve them, and much more.

Free up time for your sales team

According to HubSpot's 2023 <u>State of Sales Report</u>, only 21% of a sales team's day is spent actually selling. Searching for or creating content is time taken away from nurturing and closing deals, so providing ready-made assets around messaging, questions, and resources to use with prospective clients is a huge win for your team.

Share best practice

Your playbook is a work in progress that needs constantly updating, and you can document the most successful strategies implemented by your team. For example, when a rep has success utilising a specific outreach method.

Onboarding

How do we get our sales team up to speed faster? This is a question for corporations, agencies, and startups alike.

Building and equipping your sales team for success takes discipline, focus, and a tremendous amount of heavy lifting.

We continuously ask and answer the following questions:

- How can we onboard our sales teams efficiently and get people hitting targets faster?
- How do we align our sales teams on messaging and product, and how do we know that they're competent?
- How are we coaching our team leaders and managers to increase their teams' distribution of target attainment and reducing reliance on A-players?

By breaking down the sales process to bite-size content, crowdsourcing best practices, and encouraging peer-review at every step, we can begin to answer all of these questions.

Onboarding

Message alignment

Selling is everybody's responsibility and truly starts from the top. Founders and senior management possess invaluable nous, and what better way to capture this than to have every employee record a 30-second elevator pitch.

This gives a template for everyone to follow, and gets the whole company on the same page about how to pitch and position your service/product.

Knowledge sharing + learning culture

- **Elevator pitch** new recruits record their pitch using a scorecard focused on value, customer proof points, engagement and length. The outcome is that every rep will develop a tight, on message elevator pitch.
- **Discovery pitch** Team members practice qualification and questioning techniques, as well as learning the value of kicking off calls with open ended questions that ignite dialogue. Improving your discovery calls is a guaranteed way to improve pipeline quality.
- Objection handling List the most common objections and have your team share the best ways to overcome them. They get good practice and you end up with a library for future reference and training. And objection handling practice instills confidence.

Onboarding

Service/product video playbooks

With everybody now aligned on messaging, the next step is to build service/product playbooks. Tell your story, explain why you're passionate about what you do, and talk about your history. Share a story that makes your company a living organism and helps new recruits to connect with the company history.

This is unique to every company and can include:

- Brief elevator pitch
- Buyer challenges
- Favourite customer story
- Unique differentiators
- Top discovery questions
- FAQs
- Buyer profiles
- Industry trends
- Competitor info

Investing in these learning tools provides the foundation to enable you to scale effortlessly when the time arises as you will have a library of assets.

Training, coaching, and one-to-one sessions

Are there any functions within a successful business that are "set-and-forget"? If there are, the sales function isn't one of them which is why training, coaching and one-to-one sessions are vitally important.

They are essential for your sales team and lead to:

- Continuous improvement
- Better adaptation to changing circumstances
- Higher productivity
- Improved client relationships
- Increased sales

They also contribute to:

- Team cohesion
- Talent retention
- Technology adaptation
- Individualised support

Training, coaching, and one-to-one sessions

A well-rounded training program will encompass the following areas:

- **Product knowledge:** In-depth knowledge of your product/service offering is essential, and gives your sales team the confidence to effectively pitch to prospects.
- Sales methodology: Teach your team a proven sales methodology that aligns with your company's values and target market, including prospecting, discovery, qualification, presentation, and closing techniques.
- **Tape training:** Provide capacity for your team to record their sales conversations as this is the single most impactful method for improving as a sales person. Set aside time, at least once per month per team member, to listen to a selection of recordings of various lengths and have both parties (yourself and the team member) write down what was done well, what was forgotten/missed and what can be improved.
- Sales tools: Ensure that your team is comfortable with the tools they'll be using, such as CRM software, email platforms, and communication tools.
- Interpersonal skills: Power skills such as active listening, empathy, negotiation, and problem-solving are essential. Be sure to equip your sales team through regular training sessions!

Final note

The highest performing sales teams prioritise building rapport with prospects, listening to their challenges, and developing meaningful relationships so be sure that this underpins everything you do.

With time, patience and sufficient in-house resources you can absolutely manage this yourself. Alternatively, if you don't have the time or tools to undertake this challenge, outsourcing this function may be your best bet; send us a message and let's have a chat!

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Questions? Send us a message at info@thematchstick.co.

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Happy selling!



