

Sales Sustainability™ – “What is Sales Sustainability” (WiSS)

>> **Sales sustainability is a technique to produce exceptional sales performance.** It requires an organization to develop specific capabilities and the sales team to perform the disciplined execution of an integrated sales and marketing program. The results produce dramatically increasing, profitable, and predictable sales with an expanding customer base, well into the future.

How do you achieve sales sustainability? Exceptional sales performance is the result of implementing well defined processes in your daily sales activities. If you don't have discipline of process, you won't get there. Many opportunities arise during our sales activities but how we convert the opportunity into a sale is determined by our sales process. Outstanding sales organizations manage daily activities and train their people in specific processes. Why? They use these processes to sell effectively toward a clearly defined objective. *The extent and quality of daily sales activities produces results according to our sales program and the training received by our sales force.*

Many organizations attempt to manage activities without training their sales people in a sales process. Why? They expect sales people to intuitively understand their process or use whatever process works. What do they achieve? Inconsistent sales performance and excuses. This approach limits the effectiveness of salespeople and their contribution toward both sales revenue and account development. The organization needs to ensure uniformity of process and sales people need to know why each process is critical and how their activities produce results. *Training establishes role clarity and motivates our sales and marketing team toward sustainability.*

Role clarity is important to the sales process because it establishes the value of key activities and their impact on sales performance. Many sales organizations are not motivated because they do not understand the

value of their activities. This is especially true when sales teams are in transition. Service representatives need to know the importance of referrals and contacts in the Lead Generation Process (LGP). Sales people need to know the importance of the Customer Service Process (CSP) to the Customer Account Management (CAM) process. The purpose of an integrated sales & marketing program is to identify these processes and communicate the cross functional responsibilities through training. *When employees are trained in the process and their expected contribution, they will produce a consistent level of performance according to their training. We benefit from the results*

Sales managers are responsible for Sales Program Development (SPD). The sales program defines the sales process, integrates with the business plan, and identifies key cross functional efforts. Sales managers often fail to define their sales process. Yet, without it, we cannot inform sales people and guide their efforts. We may try to coach our sales people individually, but are often ineffective because communication is seldom consistent across the entire sales force. *Sales processes combined with sales training allow us to achieve consistent performance.*

The sales program and training ensure consistency in the activities of the sales force. When properly communicated, the sales force understands how they are expected to sell and what results are expected from each salesperson. By understanding the program and value of activities, we establish a common language amongst our sales team. *Sustainable sales are achieved by implementing a sales program which is understood by the entire sales force.*

Sustainable sales require a constant inflow of opportunities and inquiries from both new and existing customers. Who is responsible for generating these opportunities? Usually it is marketing, yet in many organizations, the source of opportunities isn't well known. Why? The sales program doesn't establish a process and marketing isn't integrated into the sales program. We need to integrate *core functions into a sales integrated marketing technique.*

Marketing provides a vital long term contribution to sales sustainability through a Sales Integrated Marketing (SIM) process.

This process ensures that our marketing efforts produce a return as measured by sales, leads, and margins. The purpose of marketing in sales sustainability is to develop an image for the company through consistent messages to our customer base. When marketing isn't integrated into a sales program, we never achieve the desired image for products, brands, or the company. *Sales integrated marketing achieves a defined image as the direct result of our sales team delivering consistent messages to the market.*

Customer service and account management activities contribute to sustainable sales by capturing information and developing customers.

Customer service maintains consistency of communication with our customers. They communicate at the end of the current sale and the beginning of the next sales cycle. Service and account management uniquely identify broader customer issues and contacts because they are the glue that provides for consistency in the delivery of our sales process. These coordinated roles actively sell our customers and expand our account base. *Sustainable sales require us to actively communicate and service the initial sale so we move customers up the priority pyramid into key account status.*

So after these examples, “what is sales sustainability?” It is sales excellence produced by making sure that we have the right technique. It is the sales produced by having integration of all the key elements of a sales team. We achieve superior performance by defining how, what, where, and why we sell. Once we define it we communicate it and we reinforce it with our sales team. We manage our sales force and their efforts with complete alignment and role clarity. Our sales people understand their role and why key activities add value to the overall sales program. *Because our sales force is informed, trained and aligned they produce results as a team according to the expectations of the sales plan.*

Sales sustainability leads to predictability in sales revenue. How? We achieve our sales plans on a regular basis because expectations and methods are clear. The efforts of the sales organization are focused on results rather



than diverted toward implementing the latest interpretation of the approved sales process or making explanations for not meeting objectives. *This is a powerful outcome directly related to our focus on process, integration, role clarity, and communicating expectations through our training program.*

Where does this all lead? The answer is it leads to exceptional sales performance by managing your sales resources in a clear and consistent methodology. Sustainable sales do not occur by accident, they are achieved through organizational development and role clarity. To attain superior sales performance and solidify sales results, we must define our sales program and train our sales force. Otherwise we are acting without consistency of direction and alignment of resources. Poor sales leadership in our alignment of resources produces failure in the execution of a sales program. *Sales Sustainability produces results through excellent leadership and execution of integrated sales and marketing programs.*