

A SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY REQUIRES MORE
THAN A COMPASS AND A MAP BUT ALSO
THE POWER OF EXECUTION



10 Ways to Stand Out in Sales

1. Raise the Bar.

Benchmarking means to evaluate your current baseline in sales: structures, staff, performance, results and compare yourself with others. Don't just look inside healthcare – look outside of the industry. Determine benchmarks or standards that you'd like to achieve, and set goals that raise the bar with mechanisms that will allow you to accomplish those desired results.

2. Structure for Success.

Establish the sales effort in the right place organizationally. Clearly define a structure that keeps a client from being called upon by multiple sales people. Think about using clinical staff as product depth to enrich the sales process. Ensure that sales reports to someone "who gets it" in terms of valuing sales and sponsoring your efforts at the senior leadership table.

3. Hire the Right People.

While people can be trained in their product, organization and work, there are ways to identify talents that will be successful. Develop screening mechanisms, interview criteria and "must haves" for these positions in order to hire the right attitude, skills, competencies and performance for sales. Communicate the hiring process so that everyone understands and uses this model.

4. Train the Talent.

Build a core-training outline that encompasses orientation, internal operations and product knowledge and design a mechanism for staff to participate with measurable outcomes. When staff is recruited, customize the training curriculum to adjust for their personal skills and competencies so you focus on key areas of need. Ensure sales planning, skills and sales cycle management training occurs as well.

5. Extend Probation.

Successful sales organizations have shifted to six-month probation and orientation periods for their staff. This longer period encourages more management engagement in the staff member's success, allows for adequate training and orientation in terms of skills, product and organization and ensures a cultural fit.

6. Set Standards.

Sales staff responds to goals and objectives – targets to shoot for. Develop performance standards that measure activities and results. Define each standard in terms that allow you and them to track their data or results easily – for instance, define what constitutes a closed sale. For example, what would 95-100% of target performance mean in terms of closures; revenue, volumes, number of contracts? Use standards to focus staff on the most important sales work and to evaluate their performance so you can retain talent, manage the development needs and reward appropriately.

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7. Compensate Correctly.

Compensation for sales staffs has always been a difficult subject in healthcare. Emerging data is beginning to establish base pay ranges by markets, position/title and size of organization represented. Base pay needs to be internally equitable to appropriate peer levels for information managed, problem solving and politics. Review external markets for equity, as this is where you may recruit from – check out service industries, banking, hotel, home health, hospice, rehabilitation, etc. for standards of pay.

8. Reward and Recognize.

Sales staffs that deliver results typically receive performance pay, commission or a bonus. Review what your organization believes in culturally in terms of incentive pay and develop a model that can be adopted. In most cases, incentive pay will weight and rank activities and results most valued as contributing to overall success – and those are the areas credited for sales payout. Beyond incentives or bonus, build other recognition mechanisms to ensure team and individual acknowledgement.

9. Optimize.

Benchmark with other organizations (inside and outside healthcare) to determine ways to optimize structure, staffing, territorial or product focus and sales skills. Review what is considered optimum – and challenge yourself to expand your mindset...you may find new ways of selling that are more efficient, cost effective and impactful.

10. Leverage Return on Investment.

Gather data to report on your sales results and measure the return on investment for your sales effort and staff. Have running numbers to justify a request for staff, training or support. Build an internal marketing effort to communicate your results, stories and success. Each year evaluate ways to improve upon performance and return on investment.

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CHG will be launching a new sales benchmarking survey in 2005 – participate by emailing info@corporatehealthgroup.com. Carolyn can be reached at 888-334-2500 or cmerriman@corporatehealthgroup.com.



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