



SALES ACTIVATION GROUP

Hoping your proposals get approved? By Sharon Day

Even the best-intentioned sellers and their managers fall victim to the 'numbers game' mentality. That can be lethal for projection and forecasting accuracy.

Here are 5 signs that your team may need to tweak their beliefs and behaviors.

1) **You claim 33-50% closing ratios to be a success**

Is it? Wouldn't you be more successful and efficient if your sellers pre-qualified your prospects? For example: what if instead of submitting 100 proposals to win 50 sales, your team became adept at ferreting out those who weren't going to purchase? They might submit 75 proposals to win 50, thus increasing your closing ratio to 66% while placing less strain on resources and increasing productivity. This is possible.

2) **Your goal is to have as many suspects at the top of the funnel at all times**

I'd love the opportunity to chat with you about this. While quite common, this philosophy is flawed in that the majority of companies have their sales teams find and spend time with these folks. The vast majority will never end up doing business with you. Often these meetings are actually free consulting sessions. This always makes me think of an Aretha Franklin song, 'Who's Zoomin' Who?'

3) **The total dollars of 'pending' business are more than 2x your average sales in a given period**

Just this week I ruled out a prospect. He was adamant that he was justified in praising a seller for sending out \$300,000 - \$500,000 in proposals per month, even though they only averaged \$5,500 in sales per month for the past four months. There was no reasoning with him about the numerous real stories these numbers told. Focusing on the amount of sales projected without correlating that to what's being sold is a recipe for failure.

4) **You consider a list of addresses to be 'leads'**

While getting in front of enough of the right people is a worthy sales goal, the key words there are 'right people'. Addresses are, well, addresses. When b2b sales people are asked to canvas office parks or strip centers, or make 40 dials per day it makes me cringe. There's a reason why these types of companies have the highest turnover rates.

5) **Your sellers are granted appointments and receive RFPs that seldom result in your winning business**

While it may be cool to get an invitation to the party, it stinks to never get a seat at the table! Sellers who claim to have great relationships with buyers need to prove that's the case by bringing you signed contracts at the margins you expect. Otherwise the fools are fooling the foolish.

Let's commit to getting better at qualifying prospects, measuring and tracking the right behaviors and not sending our sellers out to talk to any warm body. Hoping that quotes will turn into business is not a sound strategy.

