



Common Reasons You Won't Make Your Sales Numbers

The fourth quarter is upon us, and most sales professionals know where they currently are—and where they need to be by year-end. According to some studies, 60 percent of sales professionals will miss quota. Learn some of the common reasons for this and what you as a business owner can do to help change the outcome.

Your Funnel and Forecast Are Not Realistic

Your team has been in sales situations where they felt it necessary to “fluff” the numbers in order to please their managers but as they get toward end of third/beginning of fourth quarter, they know they are not going to hit that number. To avoid relying on this doomed practice, start by asking the right questions at the outset:

- What selling actions actually have to occur in order to position an opportunity or prospect within that funnel stage?
- What are your customers' buying actions that validate these selling actions so that you can accurately place this piece of business, or this prospect, in this position of the funnel?
- What activities and actions are you doing that moves those opportunities with velocity down the funnel?

When these things occur, it increases that forecast accuracy.

You're Using a Spoon for Sales Tactics When You Need a Fork

Your sales team is guilty of being too nice to the customer. If they're not probing them enough—poking them with that proverbial fork—they may end up keeping them on the line, hanging indefinitely.

Ask your team, “Do we have an identified action commitment with every interaction that we have with our customers so that they have some skin in the game”? And then hold them accountable to those action commitments.



You Are Selling to The Wrong Customers

Your team might be chasing after the wrong customer, i.e., selling to an organization that doesn't align with your products and your services or not talking to the right person. If so, ask your team, "What is the ideal customer criteria, i.e.,

- Where do we win most often?
- What does that customer look like?
- Are your customers willing to pay for value-add?
- Are they committed to high quality?
- What's the size of their organization?
- Do they have budget?
- What's their time frame for buying-making decisions?
- Are they within the industry expertise and experience that your organization is key in?

Make sure you have developed an ideal customer profile and have determined how well those opportunities that you're pursuing align to it. If they aren't aligned, you're just wasting time and resources.