



WHITE PAPER: 3 KEY INSIGHTS MANAGEMENT CAN LEARN FROM AN INSIDE SALES TEAM

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3 KEY INSIGHTS MANAGEMENT CAN LEARN FROM AN INSIDE SALES TEAM

In my 20+ years of managing Inside Sales teams, I am still amazed at the amount of critical information that inside sales teams can provide to management. After all, the inside sales people are on the front line, communicating with prospects, customers and field sales representatives on a daily basis. The managers, who understand the value of this up-to-date information that inside sales teams can provide, are often rewarded with professional success and significant incentive payouts. I've seen managers use this critical information to successfully change their sales and marketing strategies including their product strategy, target market, and messaging. Following is an example of how an Inside Sales Team helped a medical software company refocus their sales and marketing strategy to be more successful.

A medical software company in business for 10 years had recently begun to experience high turnover rates in their salesforce. The departing sales people pointed out the lack of promised sales leads that never materialized. The company's VP of Sales decided that outsourcing their lead generation and appointment setting efforts would remedy the situation.

The outsourced Inside Sales Team was instructed to focus on introducing modules 1 and 2 of the company's software into hospitals, and not to bother with modules 3 or 4 unless asked. This same strategy had been used for years. After a month of thousands of calls and emails to the VP of Operations target prospects, it became apparent that this target was not remotely interested in modules 1 and 2 and deflected the sales calls, claiming that they were not the appropriate people to talk to about this software. The Inside Sales Team became frustrated by their lack of success and the VP of Sales began to doubt the Inside Sales Team's capabilities and his decision to hire them.

INSIGHT #1: PRODUCT STRATEGY

The manager of the outsourced Inside Sales Team was determined to discover a way to make the team successful and began asking relevant questions to decision makers at the hospitals. She discovered that most hospitals had already implemented software that provided the functionality of modules 1 and 2 during the past few years, as the functionality had been mandated by recent government regulations. However, these hospitals had not yet found a solution for a different problem that modules 3 and 4 solved.

INSIGHT # 2: TARGET MARKET FOCUS

The Inside Sales Team manager also discovered that the appropriate decision makers for modules 3 and 4 were not in operations, but in finance. These decision makers were not only interested in learning more about this software, but had been actively looking for a solution that these modules provided.

The Inside Sales Team changed their product focus and went to work introducing modules 3 and 4 to finance executives in hospitals. The VP Sales and VP Marketing were thrilled with the number of qualified meetings that were now being scheduled for their sales team. The Inside Sales Team was proud of their meetings scheduled and were anxious to listen in on the phone meetings and product demonstrations.

INSIGHT # 3: MESSAGING

Very quickly though, it became apparent that there was another disconnect. During every meeting, the company's sales people who were accustomed to pitching modules 1 and 2, and continued to do so on "auto-pilot", often not hearing the needs of the finance executives and their interest in modules 3 and 4. As highly trained sales professionals, the Inside Sales Team was able to objectively observe and provide feedback and insights to help retrain the sales people and change the focus of their message to introduce modules 3 and 4 to the appropriate decision makers.

This valuable feedback from the outsourced Inside Sales Team enabled the sales representatives to conduct phone meetings and product demonstrations which quickly led to follow-on meetings and exponentially increased sales revenue.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Bonnie Rodden's more than 20 years of sales and management experience, includes the design and execution of successful, company-specific sales distribution programs from inception, using Solution Selling, CustomerCentric and StoryLeader methodologies for numerous organizations in the e-discovery, information governance, technology, medical and legal industries. C-Level Connections was born through Bonnie's many years in various organizations implementing and building highly successful inside sales, business development, channel, and direct sales teams. Bonnie realized her proven programs could be implemented in other organizations to cost effectively help build and fortify their sales efforts and thus formed C-Level Connections.