

Tips to Master Inside Sales Time Management

Wednesday, January 24, 2018 - Written by: [Jeff Kalter](#)

TIME MANAGEMENT



A few of the activities that eat up more than their fair share of time and that reps also consider to be least effective in helping to generate sales are administrative tasks, dealing with corporate policies and researching accounts and contacts. These activities are consuming time that reps would like to spend on account planning, sales follow up, forecasting and pipeline management, all of which they believe are effective in sales generation.

This research suggests it's time for managers to find ways to reduce administrative responsibilities, streamline corporate policies and facilitate efficient prospect research. Here are some inside sales time management tips to consider.

1. **Minimize Admin Tasks**

- **Use Email Templates**

Email has become an increasingly important tool for inside salespeople.

While it's important to personalize these communications, that doesn't mean reps should start from scratch every time. So create a series of email templates for use in different situations, such as responding to new leads or following up on phone calls. Reps can select from these messages and customize them as necessary to create a personal touch.

- **Leverage Marketing Automation**

Marketing automation puts information at reps' fingertips, providing access to a central marketing database and insights on how people are interacting with your organization. It also takes the busy work out of conducting phone, email and other marketing campaigns. Finally, because marketing automation empowers you to track and test campaigns, you can continually optimize them for increased efficiency.

- **Do CRM Right**

A customer relationship management (CRM) solution can be powerful, but there's no guarantee. Salespeople only spend 18 percent of their time in CRM and report that it is the most frustrating system they use. That's likely because solutions are often jam-packed with features, but are not easy to use. To encourage reps to engage with CRM systems, usability is essential. Data entry should be intuitive and the reports you require to manage your system should be easily accessible. To get the most out of your CRM solution, you should have it integrated with your marketing automation system. By joining these systems, you can avoid miscommunication and ensure consistent messaging. Reps need to have a holistic view of a contact or customer in one place. Otherwise, you'll find them assembling spreadsheets to manage information.

- **Don't Make Reps Dial the Phone**

It should go without saying that you need an auto-dialer. However, since it's so important, I had to mention it. This technology rapidly dials phone numbers and connects reps when a person or voicemail answers. Reps waste no time dialing. Plus, because there's no stalling between calls, it keeps the momentum going. This tool alone can double or triple productivity, but it needs to be used properly and only when appropriate.

2. Make Prospect Research Easier

While reps can gain insights by seeking information via Google and LinkedIn, there are more efficient ways to tackle foundational prospect research. Take advantage of market intelligence software, which has already done much of the legwork. It holds a treasure trove of information on markets, companies and their associates. If you need business data by categories such as industry or location, a business directory such as Hoover's is useful. You'll find company names, key personnel, number of employees and phone numbers.

3. Review Your Internal Policies

Internal policies are essential to ensure that reps comply with the way you want to do business. They can, however, slow down your sales processes. So review them periodically and make sure that they are necessary or to discover whether you can manage policies more efficiently.

Increased productivity will not happen overnight. Instead, it takes a commitment to continuous improvement in inside sales time management. So talk to *your* reps to discover how they are using their time and what frustrates them on the job. Then prioritize what to tackle first, looking at the most significant time wasters, greatest frustrations and the low hanging fruit. Makes sure you explore administrative tasks that consume too much time, how long it takes to research prospects and if any internal policies are becoming bottlenecks in your sales process.

Also consider outsourcing all or part of your inside sales activities to a company that specializes in telemarketing and inside sales services, such as 3D2B. This can not only provide a higher return on investment, but also increased sales and an optimized sales process.

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