FROM THE FOUNDER'S HUB

Effective Sales Training Techniques:

Dummy Up to Ramp Up

Most founders admit that they struggle with hiring sales reps and then ramping those representatives to acceptable performance (>80% quarterly quota attainment). There are several reasons why a new rep doesn't perform, including poor selection, lack of formal orientation or onboarding, ineffective training and coaching, lack of baseline performance, lack of a formal sales process, and unrealistic expectations on time-to-ramp or quotas.

It's difficult for founders to know the most effective sales training techniques, especially for an early-stage hire. But from our firsthand experience, one hack that works consistently to give your reps a fighting chance in their first quarter is to have them "dummy up."

Step 1: Ramp-up research

Effective sales training starts with practice in listening and getting to know your customers. I like to get my new reps on the phone immediately and concurrently with their formal orientation, onboarding, and product training.

Typically I'll start by connecting them with two or three of our customer evangelists on quick 5-10 minute calls where they ask the customer questions such as:

- How did they learn about the product?
- What were some of the challenges they were trying to solve?
- What stood out the most about the product when they made their decision to buy?
- What do they really like today that they didn't know existed in the product at the time of purchase?
- What do they find most valuable day to day?

All of this information is super useful for the rep and gives them confidence in your product. However, these product evangelists are likely the minority within your customer target and won't represent the common points of dissent among your prospect pool.

So how can you really prep your reps to counter objections and reach quarterly quotas?

Step 2: Dummying up

For this part of sales rep training, I'll pull a list of prospects that we've called in the past but lost for some reason or another. These include:

- Aged closed/lost opportunities;
- Qualified (or even semi-qualified) leads that, for whatever reason, did not become opportunities;
- Or even a list of churned customers.

The rep calls on these accounts and informs them that they are new to your company and they've taken over the account. No matter how good the notes are in the CRM, they "play dumb." This might sound something like, "I'm looking at our notes and it looks like perhaps we had some conversations in the past but for some reason it looks like you decided not to move forward. Curious, why was that?" Then—and this is the important part—pause.

They are not to say another word until the prospect responds, no matter how awkward it gets. Wait 30 seconds if that's how long it takes. Make the prospect either respond or simply hang up before you open your mouth again. This "dummy up" technique is the only way to learn the pain points and objections that can and will come up in future sales conversations.

Step 3: Profit

Assuming the prospect doesn't just hang up the phone—whatever the response—the rep is going to learn something valuable. Maybe the prospect says it was too expensive. The rep can follow up with something like, "Oh I see. Curious, what did you like about the product despite the price?" Another response might be something around concerns with implementation, and the rep can follow up to get more color. Or perhaps the prospect mentions some product gaps. The variety of responses is endless, and all of this firsthand knowledge is invaluable to the rep as they ramp up.

And here comes the really awesome part. The rep is going to come into conversations with a handful of prospects where something has changed and it makes sense for them to revisit your offering. And some of those are going to turn into closed/won opportunities. An early win for both the company and for the new rep.

Want more help ramping up your company for high growth? Our team of advisors have been there and done that. Talk to a partner at Scaleview today.

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