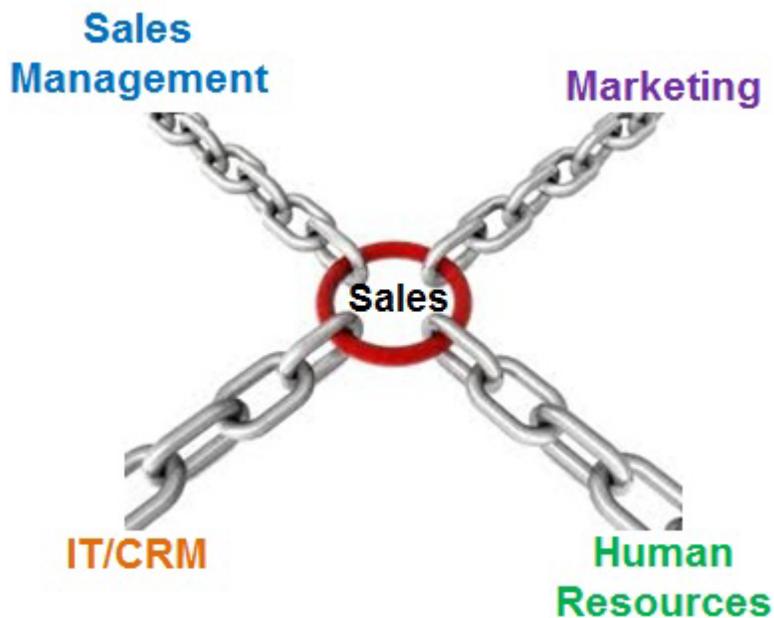




Achieving radical and sustainable improvement in top line performance

Sales Operations: The Vital Link



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The Challenge:

What is sales operations? The answer is complicated because it can be highly varied across companies. Sales organizations, in contrast typically have specific roles and certain job types that are fairly common across companies and industries. Many different sales organizations for example might have a large account or large/major account organization in the middle market and an SMB (small-medium business) in the lower end of the market. But when it comes to sales operations, when you look from company to company the one thing you notice is inconsistency. Some organizations refer to sales ops as sales support or sales effectiveness.

One reason is that sales ops is still a relatively young field, with many companies in different stages of development. Sales operations also tends to be a catch all. Anything that sales



"In the end, all business operations can be reduced to 3 words: People, Products and Profits. Unless you've got a good team, you can't do much with the other 2."
...Lee Iacocca



"Think ahead. Don't let day-to-day operations drive out planning."
...Donald Rumsfeld



"Secret operations are essential in war, upon them the army relies to make its every move."
...Sun Tzu

doesn't want to do or anything that is taking away from sales force productivity often ends up in sales operations.

Sales, to be successful, has to look and focus in one direction: basically to go out and sell. Sales operations must support those goals but the methods of support are multi-faceted in terms of what sales operations has to do to support that very single goal of profitable revenue growth. But in high performing organizations, sales operations is a critical function. Sales operations must enable sales. In the absence of a sales operations organization, for example in very young companies, the sales people are tasked with sales operations functions which contaminates the sales job and takes away productivity.

Sales Operations Roles:

What roles does sales operations LEAD in your organization?

- Performance Analytics: 71%
- Sales Process Definition: 66%
- CRM Development: 51%
- Sales Forecasting: 48%
- Sales Tool Design: 48%
- Sales Comp Design: 46%
- Sales Talent Training: 40%
- Proposal/RFP Management: 37%
- Sales Strategy Definition: 37%
- Quote to Order Operations: 31%
- Customer Segmentation: 28%
- Sales Role Definition: 26%
- Customer Service: 20%
- Pricing: 20%
- Sales Talent Recruiting: 8%

*Source Sales Leadership Forum

Where ever sales operations is located in the company it must cooperate with sales management, marketing, human resources (incentive compensation and developing people) and IT (sales forecasting, CRM and funnel management).

Just Try It:

We recommend that companies consider the following key points when structuring and evaluating their sales operations organizations:

1. **Define clear objectives for the sales operations group.** Determining how sales operations will be judged effective (increases in sales productivity per rep) is critical to establishing clear objectives.
2. **Manage to the metrics.** Develop a dashboard for sales and sales operations to ensure that the teams are reaching their objectives.
3. **Balance a central and localized structure.** Balance the efficiency of a centralized structure with the frequent communication and sensitivity requirements of a localized structure.
4. **Measure the ROI.** In high performing organizations, sales operations provides a clear impact on sales productivity. Understand and articulate the ROI levers for sales operations and make investments in the key initiatives most connected to sales productivity.

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