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# IDEABRIDGE



The IdeaBridge White Paper Series:  
Creating a Sales System that Works

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## CREATING A SALES SYSTEM THAT WORKS

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### Summary

Selling opportunities are lost daily by companies who lack a consistent system for prospecting, selling and closing new business. Any company that takes the time to develop a systematic approach to selling by documenting their process and tracking their results will see dramatic improvements. While most entrepreneurs will never take the time to document their sales process, those that follow the steps outlined below will be well on their way to dramatically enhanced sales results.

1. Changing your people will do nothing to improve a fundamentally flawed selling system. The first step in managing new business is not training, hiring, pay plans, better prospect lists, or even better management. It's the design and validation of the entire Company wide new business process.
2. Chronic new business problems are not always related to the people, and oftentimes are the direct result of poor systems, plans or budgets. The search for strategic sales solutions begins with analyzing, evaluating, and validating every individual step in your new business process/system, including the product or service offering.
3. Once the design of your new business development system is logical and capable of delivering results, you must analyze the number of leads, the number of referrals, the appointments with prospects, the number of proposals, the number of signed proposals, the number of closed sales, the average sale size. Then take a look at the gross profit of each sale and contrast that with the cost to create the sale, not only the marketing and advertising costs, but the cost of your salespeople, their managerial overhead and the incentive compensation program. Finally, you must endeavor to systematically improve on each element, beginning with an increase in the number of bonafide sales leads.
4. You should take immediate action to consistently improve each prior month's results by incrementally improving every element of your selling system. Break down every step of your sales process; analyze it and measure it separately. Your sales manager or marketing manager may be tasked to complete this step.
5. Managers and salespeople need a tracking system that allows them to anticipate and forecast new business levels. That strategy should start with the managers setting sales growth targets that are realistic and based upon your sales people's capacity to book new business and your internal staff's ability to process the new accounts.
6. Take a long hard look at your sales force. Salespeople must be trained to ask: "Who makes the decision? Who is on the approval committee? Who signs the proposal, and when will they make that decision? When they are making the decision, what criteria will they'll be using in their evaluation of the various proposals?" Too often, salespeople are too timid to ask the tough questions, resulting in wasted time and lost opportunities. Timidity and lack of proper questions is costing businesses untold millions in lost opportunities annually.
7. No battle plan survives contact with the enemy. This is an iterative process. There will always be constant fine-tuning and adjustments based on the results of the system. The improvements should never stop because this process involves constant feedback in your scheduled reviews of the prior month's results.