



## 6 Steps for Creating a

# SUCCESSFUL

## INSIDE SALES TEAM

By Mike Brooks

**W**e all dread it: your phone rings at night, and you're greeted by a person reading a script who asks you how you are doing. "Fine," you think, "as soon as I get rid of you!" Telemarketers like this have given phone scripts a bad name, but don't let them discourage you from the proper use of this highly effective—and crucial—tool for inside sales.

Look at it this way: for those inside sales reps who say they would never be caught dead using a script, isn't it true that if you were to record them for a week, transcribe what they say day in and day out, and then hand it back to them, you'd find that they are using a script already? The truth is, they are

saying the same thing over and over again, and that is their "script."

The real problem with this is that what they are repeating on each call is often a bad combination of poor sales techniques. Most sales reps have never been taught how to handle objections and stalls correctly. Then when they get into these situations, they usually fail.

### Understanding the Importance of Phone Scripts

Think about it: how does your team respond to someone when, after a presentation, the prospect says they need to talk to their partner or spouse or another party? Most sales reps respond to this smokescreen stall by

asking them when a good time to call back would be, or worse, they ask to speak to the other party, completely buying in to the smokescreen and not getting to the real objection. By using proven scripts, however, sales reps can be taught to isolate this smokescreen and thereby advance the sale.

Here's how they should handle the "I want to talk to someone else" objection: "That's perfectly O.K. Just out of curiosity, if they say to do whatever you think is best, and based on what we've gone over just now, what would you tend to do?"

This prepared, scripted response is geared to cut through this smokescreen objection and get the prospect to reveal how they really

feel about the product or service. Any answer other than “I’d move forward” means that talking to another person is just a smokescreen. Unless it’s explored and handled immediately, getting back to someone usually results in a missed sale.

This brings up two important points about all sales. The first is that the great benefit about being in sales is that 80 percent or more of the selling situations, objections, or stalls a sales rep faces are going to be the same day after day, month after month. This is a benefit because they know what’s coming. All it takes is a little preparation to craft and deliver an effective response.

But that’s a step most sales reps and management teams tend to overlook. In fact, if you record most sales reps, you’ll find that they are, for the most

## Here’s how they should handle the “I want to talk to someone else” objection:

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part, ad-libbing on the phone. Most reps are making it up as they go along, and this means their responses are seldom consistent or effective. Having proven, prepared responses and training on these scripts solves this problem, enabling your inside sales team to have the tools they need to overcome the situations they run into most often.

The other important point in sales ties into the above. You’ve probably heard that “practice makes perfect,” right? It’s actually not true. Practice only makes permanent, and the problem with most inside sales teams is that they are practicing, day in and day out, ineffective responses to the same selling situations they get over and over again. This is why such a large percentage of sales reps fail to make their revenue numbers each month.

The answer to improved and consistent sales, and to a confident sales team that does not experience call reluctance, is to equip them with and train them on effective, proven scripts which they can practice, internalize, and deliver naturally. Once an inside sales rep learns how to respond effectively to the selling situations they face most often, they will be freed from thinking about what they are going to say next. This will allow them to begin practicing the most important sales skill of all: listening to the needs and wants of their customers.

Here is how phone scripts can fit into a six-step process to ensure your new sales team is effective and profitable.

### #1 Define the role of your inside sales team

When considering building or adding onto your inside sales team, defining their role will guide every decision you make including who to hire, how to compensate, and how much training and supervision will be needed. Ask yourself: is your inside sales team going to take just inbound calls, or will they make outbound, prospecting calls as well? Will the majority of their calls be to existing customers who are growing accounts or up-selling, or will they also be responsible for bringing in new business? And what part of the sales cycle will they contribute to: appointment setting, qualifying leads, or closing sales? All these considerations will help define not only the role of your inside sales team but will make other decisions more straightforward as well.

### #2 Define your sales process

CSOinsights.com reports that you can improve the performance of your inside sales team by as much as 33 percent if you first define your sales process. Surprisingly, many companies overlook this crucial step. Developing a defined sales process, or “DSP,” simply means that you’ve identified each step a successful sale goes through, and you’ve identified the best practices of each step. Knowing exactly what needs to happen at each step in the sales process allows you to not only teach best practice sales approaches, but it allows you to measure adherence to this best practice approach as well.

### #3 Develop effective phone scripts

Effective phone scripts that are rehearsed, internalized, and delivered in a natural way often mean the difference between a team who regularly hits their sales targets and those that don't. Because sales is a set of skills that can be taught, learned, and repeated, it's important to give your team the tools they'll need right from the start. Since 80 percent of the selling situations they run into are the same day after day, teaching your team the most effective responses to these stalls and objections enables them to stay positive, win sales, and stay empowered.

### #4 Record your calls

This one tip is the essence of all successful inside sales teams. Every major company uses recordings to train, measure improvement, and help coach their teams to better performance. Sales reps find recordings especially helpful because it gives them the awareness they don't have while they're on the phone and in the heat of the sale. By stepping back and listening to opportunities missed, and to areas that can be improved, they'll be able to make adjustments and get better.

### #5 Learn how to onboard your new reps effectively

Many companies spend more time training on their products and services and on their procedures than they do preparing their new reps how to succeed on the phone. Several things you can do include intensive role-playing sessions to help prepare new reps for the selling situations they're about to face. Also, playing recordings of other sales reps successfully handling common objections teaches them not only to expect these objections, but it provides them with specific examples of how to overcome them. This builds confidence and helps them experience success quicker, all of which increases their chances of turning into a productive, long-term hire.

### #6 Give your manager the training they need

Most managers have risen through the ranks of a company, and it's not uncommon for a top-producing sales rep to find themselves promoted to sales manager. The owner's thinking is that if they could sell well, then they should be able to teach others to do what they could do. Unfortunately, successful sales management involves many other skills besides

just a knowledge of how to close a sale. Having good people skills, leadership skills, management skills, etc. are all important components in helping a sales manager be successful at hiring, training, and growing a successful inside sales team. To prepare them for that task, you'll need to provide your sales manager with the specific type of sales management training they'll need. **N**



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