

17 Best Practices of Top Performing Sales People

Many people wonder what separates a top performing sales person from the rest of the pack. In most cases, it's because they apply a number of best practices in their daily routine. Here are 17 best practices of top performing sales people.

1. They set **HIGH TARGETS** and goals. Top performers don't wait for their manager to issue an annual or quarterly quota. They set their own goals which is usually more ambitious than the corporate targets.
2. They carefully **PLAN** their quarter, month and week, as well as their daily schedule. Too many sales people fly by the seat of their pants and only look at the day or week ahead instead of planning their month and quarter. Look at the big picture.
3. They set **OBJECTIVES** for every sales call. It is essential to know exactly what you want to accomplish before you make your call (face-to-face or telephone).
4. They **ASK** high-value questions that probe to the heart of the issue. Sounds simple but most sales people fail at this and ask weak, feeble questions. Top performers are comfortable asking tough questions that make their prospect think.
5. They **LISTEN** carefully to what their prospects & customers say. You can ask all the questions in the world but if you don't hear what people tell you won't be able to present the proper solution. Instead of waiting for your turn to speak listen to your customer.
6. They **CLARIFY** the issue when they are unclear what their prospect means. People often say things that are unclear and most sales people assume they know what their prospect means. Top performers take the time to fully understand by asking "What do you mean by that?" or "Can you clarify that for me?"
7. They **WAIT TO PRESENT** their product, service, solution or idea until they know exactly what their prospect's situation is. The majority of sales people jump too quickly into their 'sales pitch' but top performers are patient and wait for the right moment.
8. They begin every sales presentation with a brief **RECAP** of their understanding of the prospect's situation. Again, a simple concept but one that is greatly ignored by many sales people. A quick summary of your customers' situation give you the opportunity to ensure that your presentation addresses their key issues.
9. They know how to **ADAPT** their sales presentation if their prospect's situation has changed. Making changes on-the-fly is challenging but it is one way to stand out from your competition. Learn how to modify your presentation when customer's situation has changed from the time you initially met to the time you are delivering your presentation.
10. They know how to properly and effectively **POSITION** their product, service or solution. The vast majority of sales people fail miserably at this. They talk, talk, talk but usually end up talking about aspects of their product or solution that have little or no relevance to their customer's situation.
11. Their sales presentations **FOCUS** on the prospect. Most sales presentations focus on the seller's company, their product, or other trivial information that is of no interest to the customer.
12. They are **PREPARED** for potential objections. Top performers anticipate objections and plan their response before their sales call.
13. They always establish the **NEXT STEPS**. Decision makers are busier than ever which means they are more difficult to connect with. Avoid losing contact with a prospect by agreeing on the next steps after every sales call. Do this in face-to-face meetings and telephone calls.
14. They **FOLLOW-UP** after the initial call or meeting. Many a sale has been lost because the sales rep failed to follow up after the initial call. You cannot rely on your prospect or customer to call you; you need to take this initiative. Set this up during your call or meeting.
15. They **PROSPECT** continually to keep their pipeline full. It's not uncommon for sales reps to experience peaks and valleys in their sales. This is usually a result of failing to prospect for new business on a regular basis. Avoid the highs and lows and schedule time to prospect for new business every week.
16. They deal with the **DECISION-MAKER** whenever possible. Dealing with people who have little or no buying authority is a waste of time. However, many sales people fall into this trap because it is easier to connect with people other than the decision maker. And that may be true. However, in the long run, they end wasting their time because they don't close the deal.
17. They look for ways to **KEEP IN TOUCH** with their customers. A sale is not a one-time deal. However, you need to find ways to keep your name in your customer's mind to prevent a competitor from squeezing in. Top performers incorporate this into their schedule and make it a priority.

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