

Executive Viewpoint

Selling Power Magazine: How do you drive growth in today's economy?

The challenging economic environment has placed immense pressure on the sales function. Businesses are facing downward pressure on overall attainment, and nearly half of all sales reps no longer meet target. At the same time, sales leaders are often faced with increased corporate cost controls. The combination of these pressures has made optimizing sales effectiveness truly mission critical. Sales effectiveness means not only maximizing sales cost efficiencies, but also driving real improvements in overall execution. This requires sales leaders to focus on optimizing the entire sales lifecycle, from talent selection and onboarding, to aligning execution with top business objectives, to overall training and performance management.

SP Magazine: How can companies hire the right talent?

Today more than ever, every hire is critical. I've found that the first step to building a successful team is to build behavioral profiles of top talent. By correlating high performance with key indicators, including training and qualifications, sales methodology, and deal profile, sales leaders can build an objective measure of performance they can use to predict future performance. By using this kind of performance index, businesses can also gain insight into the right training profile for overall performance improvements.

SP Magazine: How does performance management play a role?

Sales leaders need to recognize that approximately half of their sales force is underperforming. Sales leaders can drive significant gains in overall attainment by building a consistent training and coaching program to improve both core selling skills and skills aligned with the business. When performance programs are based on key sales-performance indexes that tie back to compensation, sales buy-in and adoption is high, and the programs are highly effective.



LESLIE STRETCH, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Leslie Stretch has 20 years of experience in building long-term customer and business-partner relationships in the IT industry.

Prior to joining Callidus Software, Leslie held the position of Senior Vice President of Global Channel Sales and was the Managing Director of Sun Micro-systems UK Ltd. Before joining Sun Microsystems, Leslie held senior sales positions at Oracle Corporation UK and was instrumental in accelerating the growth of its Scottish and Canadian operations. Throughout his career, Leslie has successfully directed and motivated large sales organizations and facilitated strategic deals.

Leslie holds a B.A. Honors degree in Economics and Economic History from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, and a postgraduate diploma in Computer Systems Engineering from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

SP Magazine: How can companies hit their targets by controlling behavior?

One of the most common mistakes I've seen among sales organizations is a fundamental disconnect between actual sales execution and the business strategy. Businesses need to realize that the only corporate message the sales force hears is the compensation plan. The recent financial crisis is probably one of the most well publicized exam-

ples. In many cases, incentive structures were replete with short-term goals that lacked sustainability and basic principles of risk management. Another common example occurs when businesses deploy commission plans without a balanced plan for meeting more strategic objectives. Strategic objectives ensure that the sales force is focused on driving business that is critical to the company's growth position, where the short-term revenue opportunity alone will not drive sales engagement.

SP Magazine: These are all great ideas, but how can a business move forward?

Great question. Driving sales effectiveness is really about achieving operational excellence. This requires multiple tactics. First, businesses need to leverage technology to drive sales capacity, coverage, target, and incentive decisions based on sound facts. The chief advantages that sales performance management solutions drive in our customer implementations are visibility and insight into actual sales behavior and financial performance as measured against corporate objectives. Second, businesses need to leverage proven best-practices and industry expertise to drive transformation in sales-performance processes. This can involve leveraging prepackaged best practices as part of a technology investment, and outsourcing key design elements to ensure the business meets and exceeds industry standards for competitive advantage.

Please contact Callidus Software at info@callidussoftware.com or call 866-812-5244 for a free evaluation of your current sales processes and practices and a review of how Sales Performance Management software and services can drive your sales growth.



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