Today, I’m writing specifically to sales leaders, though the myth of more applies to anyone in sales. For many of you, your sales teams are reaching the half-way mark in your revenue year. Is your team on track to hit their revenue goals with six months to go? If your answer is yes, congratulations!

If your answer is no, or you have concerns about whether your team will get there, then we need to talk. If you are keeping up with sales trends, and I’m sure you are, then you know that roughly half of salespeople are not going to hit their quota objectives this year. This problem isn’t new news. It has been a disturbing trend for some years now.

Now you might be thinking, “that isn’t going to happen to my team,” but statistically speaking, it is quite likely that half your salespeople aren’t going to hit their numbers. If I’m you, I’m worried.

Why, with all the advances in sales training, sales performance and productivity approaches and tools, is the problem still a pervasive one? One big reason is due to what I’m calling the myth of more. It is a serious problem worth talking about.

To prepare for a recent podcast interview, I read Jeff Koser’s book Selling to Zebras. A book I highly recommend you read. From the book’s beginning, I was grabbed by this hard-hitting fact: “The most competitive company in an industry closes about 15 percent of its forecasted sales, and its competitors close another 15 percent. 70 percent of the prospects in an industry—the sales everybody is fighting for—will never buy from anyone.”

Let that sink in for just a moment.

Precious resources are being stretched thin to support activity after activity. Think about the time and energy drain being placed on pre-sales support, sales, marketing, management or finance. And, think about the hard dollar costs associated with all of that effort.

Why are time and energy continually spent on opportunities that are never going to go anywhere? The answer is quite simple. Most sales organizations follow an activity-driven sales approach and the thinking is that all activity is the right activity, which will lead to the right results. And when the going gets tough, as in sales objectives aren’t being met, a large majority of sales leaders subscribe to the philosophy that more activity is even better. Um. No. More isn’t necessarily better.

The battle cry goes like this... we need to get our sales back on track so...

- Prospect more.
- Make more dials.
- Send more emails.
Network more.
Talk to more people.
Get more appointments.
Deliver more demos.
Do more proposals.

If you just do more, then the sales will follow, right? Wrong.

The problem with this approach is that energy expended chasing people who aren’t the right prospect for what your company sells isn’t going to lead to more positive results. It will result in resources being stretched to the breaking point, burnout and turnover among your sales ranks, and quota numbers continuing to go south.

A better approach is focusing on the right prospects, which includes going deeper into current customer accounts, and stop insisting that your salespeople chase anyone with a pulse. Even if you think that’s not what you are communicating to your salespeople, when you insist on more activity, invariably people will focus on any activity to satisfy your request.

Instead of chasing anyone who might be able to buy from you, your salespeople should be focusing all of their attention on only going after your ideal prospect.

The concept of focusing on your ideal prospect profile isn’t new. It is certainly one of the core tenets of an account-based selling and marketing approach. The problem is that even if your team has spent the time to clearly identify the characteristics of your ideal prospect, the only prospects that your salespeople should pursue, it takes real discipline and commitment to see this through. Unfortunately, the moment numbers look questionable, all reason flies out the window and the reflexive action is to fall back on activity for activities sake. The thinking is that more will solve the problem. It rarely does.

As a sales leader, what can you do?

First, acknowledge that more isn’t necessarily the answer. Pressuring your salespeople to do more of what already isn’t working, expecting that somehow the results will be different, is how Einstein-defined insanity.

Second, it all begins with a commitment and the discipline to focus all your sales resources on the right prospects. Spending time with the prospects who fall outside your ideal prospect profile are simply burning time and money that can and should be invested somewhere else.

Third, resist the urge to ask salespeople to push harder and do more when numbers are off. Instead, evaluate carefully where your team members are spending time. Are they pursuing the right companies? Are they talking to the right buyers? Are they demoing to the right people? Are they booking the right sales meetings? Are they responding to the right proposals?

More isn’t the answer because it is the quality of sales activities that matter. If you are going to ask your people to do more, it should be more of the RIGHT activity; otherwise, you’ll keep spinning your wheels.

For more on this topic, read NewVoiceMedia's whitepaper 10 best practices of winning sales professionals.
Please fill out the form and we will be in touch with you shortly.

1.844.324.0340