



SALES MEETINGS THAT ROCK!

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Dear Reader,

Thanks for stopping by to check out these tips to help you jumpstart your sales meetings.

As with everything I do on Sales Playbook, there are no strings attached, no catch, no hidden agenda.

If you like the tips, feel free to pass them along to your network and if you don't, then this E-Book deserves a trip to the round file.

Thanks again and happy selling!

With respect & appreciation,

Paul Castain

Aspiring Rock Star

The Problem With Meetings

Most meetings lack structure and good content. Luckily, we're going to tackle both but it's critical that you embrace the material with the proper mindset.

Facilitating a great sales meeting isn't the sole responsibility of sales leadership! It's something that we ALL need to commit to, contribute to and even take turns leading.

So, if you're ready, I believe it's time for the first tip . . .

- Set a day & time where you will have these meetings consistently! Having a meeting this week, skipping 7 weeks, then on for 3 weeks in a row is useless and presents scheduling headaches for all who are involved. Everyone, needs to commit to these meetings. The best way to get everyone there is to schedule it during non money hours (like 7:30 am) More about that in a minute.
- Start and end on time. Some sales meetings just get way out of hand in the overtime department. What everyone thought was a 1 hour deal turned into 3 hours of pure hell. The first thing everyone can do is get to the meeting on time. Be mindful of going off on tangents, war stories, side bars etc. Sales Managers: Tell your team in advance that you have the unpleasant responsibility of making sure the meeting starts and ends on schedule. To that end you might have to respectfully stop a discussion but that's where the next tip will serve you well.
- Utilize a "Parking Lot" A Parking lot is simply a place for you to put all discussions and ideas that needed to be cut short. These discussions get put in a holding pattern until another meeting. You can use a flip chart or notebook. Anything that will help you keep the items organized will do. Here's the cool part . . . if you use your Parking Lot properly, you now have an endless supply of meeting topics. Not too shabby, huh?
- Sales meetings can never be a complaint fest. Some healthy, controlled limited discussion can be good but not if it lowers the spirit

of the team. A good sales meeting helps rebuild your body armor, not rip away at it! Oh, and did I mention that its everyone's responsibility to put the nix on the negativity?

- I'm not a big advocate of going around the table and reviewing each person's numbers in front of the team. Why? Because it's a freakin drag! What do I care about John's numbers and in fairness to John, I don't expect him to care about mine . . . in that setting. Why waste a meeting on that? That's a cool email, or sales board in the bullpen, but if we are going to leave the field, there needs to be value. Nothing wrong with highlighting the top performer or the top 3 to get our competitive juices going. You can even do a quick state of the union, YTD department update. Other than that, shoot me an email. Please?
- Administrative items should be kept to a minimum. Once again, that might make a cool email in fact, if you can say what you have to say in an email . . . don't have the meeting dude!
- Sales Reps, don't you dare show up to the meeting with an attitude that says "OK circus boy. Entertain me!" Come prepared to participate, learn, share and contribute. Oh and before I forget, turn off your blackberry. We know you're important, but the world most probably won't end in the hour we spend "Blackberry Free".
- Sales Managers, no lectures . . . seriously. We hate 'em! And don't you dare beat up your team. You should be building them up to do battle, not killing them before they get to back to the battle field. Note: There is nothing wrong in expressing disappointment but instead of lectures and threats, how about leveraging the brain power in the room to turn the situation around? There's more money in that conversation. I promise!
- Sales Managers, turn over the keys to your reps. Your meeting should never be your show. Otherwise, people show up with that glazed over look in anticipation of your rant. Each meeting, promote a rep to CMO (Chief Meeting Officer) Their job is to set the agenda and facilitate the meeting. There are multiple benefits to this. Aside from working their facilitation & public speaking muscles, the group benefits from the different styles and they take a higher level of ownership when they have to know the material. Not a bad way to build leadership muscles too!
- Appoint a scribe for each meeting (take turns to keep it fair) The scribe's job is to take notes (as everyone else better be doing) and

create a recap that is emailed to the team within 24-48 hrs after the meeting.

- Don't ever leave a meeting without clear cut action items. Otherwise we don't progress and we certainly don't grow. Get those Action Verbs going my friend!
- End with Good News! Its rough out there gang so we need to embrace a bit of positivity! Perhaps some humor, motivational quote, a funny clip from Tommy Boy . . . you get the idea!

Now that we've gotten the structure out of the way, we need ideas for good content.

Strap in gang!

Mucho ideas coming atcha in 3,2,1 . . .

Take turns doing a quick report on an article from any of these sites:

- www.salestrainingcamp.com
- www.eyesonsales.com
- www.salesopedia.com
- www.successmagazine.com
- www.sellingpower.com
- <http://salesandmanagementblog.com/>
- <http://www.fearless-selling.com/>
- <http://www.thejfblogit.co.uk/>
- <http://www.sales2.com/index.php/articles/nigels-sales-2-blog>
- <http://partnersinexcellenceblog.com/>
- http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/
- <http://salesoperationsblog.com/>
- <http://blog.bridgegroupinc.com/>
- <http://www.telesalesblog.com/>
- <http://www.chrisbrogan.com/>
- <http://www.thesaleslion.com/>
- <http://ypsgroup.com/blog/>
- <http://www.burg.com/blog/>
- <http://www.thegogiver.com/blog/>

<http://yoursalesplaybook.com> I have no idea how my sales website came out bigger and bolder than the rest. Freakin PDF! 😊

You can have 1-2 reps per meeting give a 3-5 minute presentation on an article. The presenter gets to work on critical presentation skills, they will be forced to “own” the material and the group will benefit from the knowledge share.

For a different direction:

Send an article out to your team ahead of time. Everyone should come prepared with their thoughts.

To kick that bad boy up a notch:

Come up with action items based on the discussion

Brainstorming: Pick a topic and ask the group the ultimate brainstorming question. “In What Ways Can We” and then fill in the blank. Example: “In what ways can we bring in more local accounts?”

What the heck. Here are 10 topics for you to brainstorm.

- 1) In what ways can we get into bigger companies?
- 2) In what ways can we competitor proof our business?
- 3) In what ways can we grow revenue within existing accounts?
- 4) In what ways can we manage our time better?
- 5) In what ways can we use more creativity in hunting business?
- 6) In what ways can we ask better questions to assess needs?
- 7) In what ways can we avoid the “your price is too high” objection?
- 8) In what ways can we build a higher degree of rapport with our clients?
- 9) In what ways can we leverage Social Media to grow revenue?
- 10) In what ways can we thrive in challenging times?

On The Spot

Write down on 3 x 5 cards different things each person needs to know inside and out. You could have product/service questions, perhaps a common objection, give us your 30 second elevator speech etc. The Rep picks a random card out of a hat and they must stand up in front of their peers and respond. The group offers feedback and discusses different ways of handling that same situation. Don't want to use random cards? Take turns fielding left hooks thrown by the sales team.

Want to kick it up a notch?

Once everyone gets the feel for "On The Spot" you can ask for 3 responses for each item you throw at them.

You can reject the first answer and say give me something different.

You can ask for answers that speak to different behavioral styles such as:

Give me an answer that would speak to someone who is analytical

Give me an answer that would speak to someone who is a Dominant Director type.

You can even ask for an answer with humor.

You can ask for an answer that included "evidence" or proof to bring their point home.

One more notch?

Ask whatever question you choose then after the rep answers it, call on specific members of the team to answer differently.

Example: "John. Same scenario but you are dealing with someone who is an analytical type"

Increase the speed and intensity and you can bring this over the top.

The Press Conference

Very similar to “On the spot”. Each participant writes down a question or two that just makes them flat out uncomfortable.

It might be a question regarding something negative about your company, a former rep or sales manager. Perhaps their lack of experience, age etc. It might even be something where you just don't have the product knowledge to answer the question properly

When each person goes to the front of the room, they hand in the card with the question or topic.

You can role play the question and always remember to train tougher than it actually is. No need to be over the top difficult but don't yell “sold” after one “so/so” response”

Get feedback from the group.

Ask the group: “What's another response we could offer?”

Ask the group: “Does someone have a different spin?”

Email Clinic: Have everyone bring their typical emails, letters and creative door openers. Share ideas, critique, brainstorm.

Creative Door Openers: Have everyone bring 3 creative ways to get the attention of a prospect. The scribe collects these and you compile a list from the group. How cool is that?

Vertical Market Discussion: Have someone who has sold a particular vertical do a presentation to include: Overview of that vertical, typical points of entry and title of the decision makers, buzzwords, typical pain/opportunity points, perhaps a case history or two, typical questions you would use in a needs analysis for that vertical, name of an industry trade group, websites etc.

Role Play: (and not that kinky nonsense where you are the traveling salesman she is the evil warrior princess) Have someone think of a recent appointment they were on and have them play that prospect. Someone else plays the role of the rep and has to uncover the needs. Everyone can offer input and constructive feedback.

Competitor Update: Assign certain reps with the task of researching a specific competitor. Have them present a 10-15 minute report

Book Report: Every now and again, assign a book for people to read for a group discussion. You could even assign a specific book to help that rep address a specific skill. Have them do a book report in front of the team.

Qualities Of Success Exercise

Start by asking for each rep to write down (in silence) the qualities of a rock star sales rep. Give them 60 seconds to write down as many qualities as they can think of. To help prompt their thinking, say something like “One quality I can think of right off the bat is time management or questioning skills” (fill in your own examples to prompt their thinking)

Next, tell everyone that you are going to ask them for those qualities in a moment but first you want to invite them to rip each other off as we go along. In other words, if you hear something you don’t have on your list, add it. Ask them for qualities and be sure to take some of the ideas a step further by asking for examples or even a “why” every now and again.

Now the fun part. Everyone needs to look in the mirror. How do they rank themselves (on a scale from 1-10) with the qualities they have on their list?

Once they complete that part, have them flag 1 area where they ranked the lowest.

Final step: Have each rep come up with a quick 2-3 bullet action plan for improvement to be started within the next 24-48 hrs

Add some accountability!

Have them pair up and consider each other “accountability partners” Part of that responsibility is to check in with each other weekly and hold each other accountable. You also need to be good teammates and help the other person by suggesting resources, encouraging etc

Resource sharing meeting: Every now and again have everyone bring one resource to the meeting. A resource can be anything from an article, a website, a tool, a magazine, trade organization, a must read book etc.

War Stories: Heads up! 10 ideas coming at you!

- 1) The one that got away.
- 2) How you hunted one of your accounts.
- 3) Lesson learned.
- 4) Your best method of getting in the door.
- 5) A personal challenge you had to overcome.
- 6) People buy difference. What's yours?
- 7) Someone who impacted your career and why.
- 8) How you pulled yourself out of a selling slump.
- 9) What do you do to balance?
- 10) The client from hell.

Call a successful rep: Perhaps there is a rep at another location within your company. If not, how about a successful rep from your network. Perhaps your team can benefit from their success.

Special Guest Star: Have someone from another department come in and do a presentation. My advice would be to offer them time parameters so the meeting doesn't get away from you.

Business Acumen Workshop: Ask your CFO or Controller to prepare a business acumen workshop for the team. Have them cover things like important terminology, reading financial statements and dare I say . . . how to sell to the financial type.

Share Journal Entries: As many of you know, I'm a big advocate of keeping a journal. I did a post on my old blog that provides you with [50 Ways To Rock Your Journal](#) Every now and again, have your team come to the meeting prepared to share one journal entry.

SWOT Analysis: Periodically, you can have your reps do a SWOT analysis for their top account. Randomly call on one of them to present it at the sales meeting.

2 final resources for you to consider:

Jill Myrick has a company called [Meeting To Win](#). They are specialists at sales meeting content. If you stop by her [blog](#), you'll find lots of cool, free sales meeting content. Note: I'm not affiliated with them, just like to pass along resources that I find valuable!

Go to the LinkedIn groups and hunt for cool discussions that you can use in your sales meetings. There's never a shortage, in fact stop by my [Sales Playbook Group](#) and get some ideas there. You'll find approximately 500 discussions and your secret is safe with me if you want to swipe some of them!

Some Cool Next Steps If You Like This E-Book

Go to my website <http://yoursalesplaybook.com> and click on the “Free Stuff From Uncle Paul” tab. I have lots of free downloads for you. You’re welcome! 😊

Sign up for my [free sales tips](#). I never give out your information and you won’t get any sales pitches from me because this is my way of giving back!

Join our [Linkedin Group Sales Playbook](#). We have over 13,000 members and 500, spam free discussions. We don’t allow any of the shameless self promotion you see in the other groups . . . just pure discussion the way these groups were meant to be.

Finally, please pass this along to your network and pay it forward!

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