

Ten strategies and 42 actions your sales team can start doing today to prepare for a post Covid-19 market

As markets open across the world again, sales teams will have to go back to work in a completely different market, here are ten strategies and actions that you and your sales team should be doing to prepare for re-engaging with your customers.

1. Sales Heroes Never in the last 50 years will the role of the sales team be more important to the survival and growth of a business than in the current times we live in.

The sales team needs to realise the responsibility that they will carry. It is not just their income and jobs that are on the line but the very survival of the company and their colleague's livelihoods that will depend on their success

Action

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- Start the discussion with your team around their responsibilities on your next Zoom or Google meets call.
- Ask them for their individual plan of action across agreed areas.
- Share these ideas across the team and agree an aligned team strategy.
- Review all sales KPI's, targets, payment bonuses in line with the new reality.
- Download your one-page strategy document www.robertmckernan.com resources

2. Cash is king Many companies will be cash poor post this period, this will have a significant impact on their previous plans, levels of outstanding debt and will likely result in cancelled direct debits

Action

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- Agree with your finance team a process to ring fence current receivables and an agreed set of rescheduled payments over a six-month period. This will allow you to start trading immediately with an existing account
- Expect significant push back from your head of finance but the reality is by not having this option in place, you are forcing your customers to go to your competitors.
- It is critical that the process is pre- approved at an account level so that the sales team does not have to go back and forth with each individual account to finance. This will lead to significant frustration, lost sales and upset customers.

3. Pipeline fantasy When was the last time you realistically looked at your pipeline? Companies will shelve all non-essential spend and decision making will completely slow down.

Companies will have internal political debates about who gets what across limited resources.

Action

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- Be realistic and start by taking 50% off the current number.
- Move everything from deals with PO numbers, signed agreements

into your “to be confirmed” status as you should no longer rely on these until they are re-confirmed by your clients.

- Base your business investment and outlook on the new reality.

4.New business development The days of following a long list of leads is dead. Traditionally the cost of a face to face sales call averaged between €600 to €2500. What will your companies virtual sales call cost be now?

Action

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- Create a profile of your perfect customer.
- Understand how you add value and why existing customers did business with you in the past and what they will need to do business with you in the future.
- Identify companies that have similar profiles and target them immediately.
- Profile your sales team to see who is best suited to chasing new business.
- Those high energy, driven, resilient sales team members with a revised but compelling compensation plan will be your rain makers

5.Spend time researching new sales disruption technologies This crisis has shown how critical it is for businesses to be fully digital so they can operate in a non-face to face environment.

How well can you onboard a new customer digitally, how well can you fulfil your customer’s needs digitally, i.e. new orders and how good is your

fulfilment and customer service in a digital world.

There is a range of new apps and technology that can help you to find, engage with and fulfil your customer needs.

These can speed up your access to potential leads and drive new customer behaviours to deal with you through bespoke campaigns. Even if you do not currently use these tools you need to be aware of them, understand them and ensure you are not missing an opportunity

Action

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- Nominate a member of your sales team for each of these tools and ask them to research them and come back with a recommendation including costs for your business.
- Get your team to try them using free trials, ask for demos from suppliers and agree a simple format for assessing their value to your particular needs and clients
- Agree as a team what would work for you.
- Here are some companies you can ask your team to investigate for enhancing your customer engagement Air table, Fuze, How space, Google Jam board, Miro, Notion, Seidat, Slack, Zoom
- AI tools for customer prospecting, Infer, Discovery org, Inside View, Lattice engines, Outreach, Sales Loft, ZoomInfo, Radius.

6. Business case review Does your business case still stack up and does it have a clear set of easy to understand and revised numbers backing it up in a Covid world? If not, your original 2020 projections are now in trouble. As you read this article, CFO's are cutting spend, with CEO's now micromanaging spends with a view to cancelling or postponing any non-essential spend.

Action

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- Do you need to re issue your proposal moving away from capex to opex?
- Any business case with more than a seven-month payback will be seriously challenged.
- The assumptions you made in the past will not hold up in a future Covid -19 world and you may need to re-submit your proposal.

7.Sales aids Use this time to totally revamp them.

Action

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- Show your sales deck to a 14-year-old and if he or she can understand it and can relay to you a basic understanding then you are okay. If they cannot then you are in trouble.
- Is there consistency across your messaging, are all the logos correct?
- Is there too much text?
- Is it PC, Laptop, tablet and smart phone friendly?
- Do the graphics and imagery reflect a Covid-19 environment e.g. photos of large groups of people with close contact may not be appropriate given the social distancing norms at present.
- Are these slides and sales aids all ready to go and simple for your team to access from one place or folder in your business?
- Get your sales and marketing teams reviewing them today to have them completed in one week.

8.Multi level, Multi engagement strategy It is amazing how many salespeople have stopped reaching out to customers and talking. Many businesses do not even have

anyone answering phones, its simply madness.

Action

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- What customers is your CEO talking to at CEO level?
 - Past research has shown that less than 5% of supplier's CEO's spoke to their customers CEO's.
- What is your sales team doing today? How are they keeping in touch with their top 10 customers?
- When talking to customers, it is not all about pitching for business it is about, trying to understand their view of the market and how you can better meet the needs of your clients in this new world.
- How do you measure the effectiveness of these contacts and ensure nobody is left out?

9.Reduce and simplify your sales offering,

follow the profit Over the years I have seen so many product or service launches that have failed. Each one takes focus and head space away from the sales team.

Action

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- Look at what sells in your portfolio. Get your team focused on these opportunities. What is the 20% that generates 80% of your revenue?
- Get a true visibility on your profit by channel, customer, product, or service.
 - You'll never get an opportunity like now to do this in depth analysis and you will be amazed by what you discover. Do

not waste this opportunity.

- Imagine the complexity you can take out of your business by focusing on what sells and who buys and what delivers to the bottom line

10. Managing your physical energy is more important than your offering

Like a lot of people over the last few months we have slowed down, and our world is filled temporarily with so many mixed and draining emotions.

Action

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- Ask yourself how you perform with low energy versus high energy.
- Get you and your team engaged in a fun way to get your energy levels back up.
- As a part of your weekly call, get each team member to feedback on their exercise plan, walking, running whatever.
- There is a link between your energy level and your sales, you are a corporate athlete and you need to be fit to deliver.

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Energising Business Growth

Robert Mc Kernan has trained over 45,000 salespeople since 2002, with participants from 94 countries attending sales training sessions. Robert has been facilitating online sales training since 2014

If you would like to attend a facilitated training online, please www.robertymckernan.com resources

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