



High Performance Sales Teams Are NOT a Myth

Selling is harder than ever before. In this paper, we provide sales effectiveness insights we discovered from our customers. Buyers demand extreme reliability, relevance, convenience, and responsiveness. Despite these significant shifts, most companies operate a static “rear view driven” sales model that restricts them from continuously aligning with their market opportunities.

High performing and best-in-class sales organizations must be both effective and efficient. Effectiveness ensures success at each stage of customer’s buying process and the ultimate delivery of a “triple win” – the win for the sales professional, the win for the company, and the win for the customer.

However, driving high performance sales is a complex problem that demands rich analytics on data spread across multiple applications and databases while accommodating geographically dispersed teams struggling to provide inputs while assuring transparency into targets and territories. Current CRM systems and their analytical extensions driven by data warehouses don’t solve the modeling, scenario analysis, and

continuous optimization required to achieve high performance. This is demonstrated by the fact that most sales leadership and operational teams use either fragmented excel spreadsheets or rear-view manual reports to drive decisions.

Sales organizations need solutions that will let them react to the changing field and market dynamics with the ease of a smart phone app. And it starts with getting the right reps assigned to the right territories and accounts with the right targets/quotas. In addition, sales leadership must be on top of their capacity to ensure that they addressed coverage gaps and manage commissions/discount levels to reach their goals.

01 The devil is in the detail

Traditionally, sales targets are set at a high level and executives have limited understanding of how they translate into goals at a granular level. For example, what does a \$100M target mean for a specific account target for this year compared to what was purchased last year? Or alternatively, how does a forecast change in a big account impact the overall target variance? At a small scale this can be handled in Excel, but add product layers, overlays, and accounts, and this soon becomes a complex model. Best-in-class sales organizations must be able to align their top-down goals to their bottom-up plan on a single platform so that there is traceability on cascading goals and bottoms-up roll-up across all the dimensions of the organization.

02 Analytics at any level of complexity

Sales organizations often have difficulty connecting many different parts of their business and achieving complete visibility to make smart, confident decisions. Research shows sales leaders have hard time generating a “bag analysis,” which is a SKU-level historical analytics on what a sales rep has sold. With flexible multi-dimensional modeling software like Anaplan, Chief Sales Officers can build this analysis and ensure they align their reps to exploit their expertise with accounts that will generate the most sales, incentivize reps, and maximize overall productivity.

03 Be agile and iterative

As organizations grow and become more complex they often have to start their planning earlier and earlier. The development of these plans is resource intensive and more than likely wrong because they don't include actual Q4 data. In addition, executives cannot optimize their plan during the year because it was built on a shaky foundation. The solution is to leverage a planning solution that is based on an open data model where data can be pulled in real-time as it becomes available and then simulate “what if” scenarios to iterate and optimize the plan.

04 Collaborate and collaborate more

A common problem with sales organizations is that the people with the best knowledge about what is going on are normally in the territories closing out the quarter, and not in planning sessions at headquarters. It is hard to engage these individuals quickly during the planning process or while making decisions about personnel and staffing during the sales period. Sales organizations need to have a collaborative and analytical platform empowering field leaders to engage in a timely fashion. Ideally, these inputs should be aggregated to drive models, simulations, and executive dashboards.

By aligning these drivers and organization dynamics, high performing sales teams can increase their sales while keeping costs down and the enterprise can finally have visibility into its commission expenses. This also has a potential positive impact in operating profits and margins.

Summary: Combine real-time analytics and front line expertise to run your sales organization

Driving effectiveness requires sales organizations to operate at dramatically different levels of agility, operational speeds, and a high degree of cross-functional collaboration. With a single, real-time system where everyone has the view they need to be successful, executives can have insights into the capacity they need, on-the-ground coverage requirements, and how both align to their forecast. District Managers can manage their teams through attrition and disruption. Finally, sales reps have dashboards with real-time insights into their patches and how they are tracking against attainment. By bringing a big data analytics engine to their company, high performing sales organizations will be able to plan faster and execute effortlessly while generating record sales.

About Anaplan

Anaplan is disrupting the world of business modeling and planning. We built our platform from the ground up to empower companies to plan, collaborate and act—in real time. Stay ahead of critical business events, rapidly model potential impacts and course correct on the fly. With Anaplan's cloud-based platform, you can continuously align your people, plans and spend to your market opportunities. Anaplan is a privately held company, headquartered in San Francisco, CA with global offices on four continents.

