

Sales Techniques

A few simple tips for better sales meetings



If they snooze, you lose!

Have you ever found yourself gazing out of the window during a sales meeting, wishing you were somewhere else? A good sales meeting should inform staff about new developments, resolve any issues and leave the sales team inspired and motivated.

So why do so many people feel like attending meetings is a waste of time?



WHY THIS GUIDE?

The success of any meeting is the responsibility of the person running it. Meetings that allow digression and have no clear aim will drag on and end unsatisfactorily.

But with careful thought and planning, you can run an effective, dynamic meeting that achieves its goals and spurs on your team.

MEETING CHECKLIST

Before you start your sales meeting

It may seem an obvious question, but do you need to hold a meeting in the first place, or will an email or phone call suffice? If a meeting is definitely required then consider different formats, venues and room layouts to keep things fresh.

Once you know your staff, you'll have a better idea of how to work with them and a feel for their morale and motivation. While sales doesn't tend to attract shy wallflowers, some will be more vocal than others and it's important to find a format that encourages everyone's input without putting individuals on the spot.

If performance is under par, you might want to look at a team building exercise or ask your staff to bring with them an example of a successful sales tactic they have used or seen elsewhere. These can provide a springboard for further discussion. A creative approach to problem solving can reap benefits – studies have even found that placing a striking abstract image on display can increase the creativity of those in the room.

Start by working out what they want from the negotiation: let them speak without interruption, listen carefully and tailor your responses accordingly.

→ **“While sales doesn't tend to attract shy wallflowers, some will be more vocal than others and it's important to find a format that encourages everyone's input without putting individuals on the spot.”**

Provide refreshments – staff who have been fed and watered are less likely to be distracted – and make sure the meeting venue is well ventilated and kept at a comfortable temperature.

MEETING TECHNIQUES

Setting the agenda of your sales meeting

The key complaints levelled at meetings are that they are too long and rambling – and that they achieve nothing. Set a fixed time and agenda and stick to them. This includes planning a rough idea of how long you'll spend on each subject on the agenda. If one of the items needs more time or throws up new areas for discussion, park this for a separate meeting rather than letting your meeting be thrown off course.



Don't try to change the world in one meeting: better to hold two or more separate meetings so that staff brainpower remains fresh and the subjects lower down on the agenda aren't rushed.

Start at the set time even if there are sales staff missing: waiting for those arriving late will cause the meeting to run over, penalising those who arrived on time and sending the wrong signal to latecomers.

→ "Make sure the objectives of the meeting are clear by giving a brief introduction covering what you want to achieve by the end of the session."

Make sure the objectives of the meeting are clear by giving a brief introduction covering what you want to achieve by the end of the session. It will help to focus on what's important and give the meeting purpose and drive. A lively but focused meeting will feel more dynamic and your sales staff will be more likely to leave with clear objectives and a sense of resolve.

MEETING TECHNIQUES

Driving your sales meeting forward

Remember that your sales staff will take their cues from you. If you arrive late and flustered, appear unprepared or criticise the company or the products, you won't be sending the right signals. Conversely, if you encourage your staff to feel they have a stake in the company and will benefit from its success, it will increase their motivation and engagement.

→ "Be aware that money is not the only motivator - your staff will want to be appreciated for their efforts and achievements, so give praise where it's due."

Avoid digressions: general chat should be reserved for before and after the meeting or during breaks. Start as you mean to go on, in a professional, business-like manner.

Be aware that money is not the only motivator – your staff will want to be appreciated for their efforts and achievements, so give praise where it's due. Where targets aren't being met, offer practical advice and encouragement rather than apportioning blame.

The human brain needs time to assimilate information, so it's a good idea to incorporate short breaks within longer meetings. This will give staff the opportunity to refill their coffee cups, chat with their colleagues and ask questions that have arisen from the discussion so far.

It's also a good opportunity to have a quiet word with anyone who's not engaging with the discussion; they may feel more comfortable raising issues on a one-to-one basis rather than in front of the rest of the group.

After each point on the agenda, make sure all conclusions and actions are clearly minuted for follow up. After all, it's pointless coming up with great ideas if they are never acted on.

In conclusion

As the person in charge of a sales meeting, the onus is on you to make it a success. This involves good planning, creative thinking and an awareness of the most effective ways to get the best results from those involved.

Sales meetings should always have a purpose and drive that encourages follow-on activities. If they fall into routine, wander off the point, fail to come to conclusions or produce great ideas that never get acted upon, then they are not meeting their goal.



By creating the right environment and encouraging feedback from your sales staff, your sales meetings will become a pleasure rather than a chore.

What our consultants say...



"Some of the topics that may come up in sales meetings could be unpleasant. Don't let those issues bring the team down. If you have bad news to deliver, put it in the early part of the agenda and always try to end on a high note. Motivation is key!"

- **Mel Parry**, Senior Consultant

Get in touch:



"Have a clear objective set out and keep it succinct – Sales people want to know how they can improve their figures...and then want to be able to get on with it"

- **Neil Williamson**, Recruitment Consultant

Get in touch:



"My Top Tip would be to not put all the information you discuss in your meeting on your PowerPoint but to take a document for each member of the meeting with everything on it and to take the extra expense to have it professionally printed and bound."

- **Pascual Ariza-Hoffman**, Associate Director

Get in touch:



"A good sales meeting will have full team interaction and this should be welcomed. There is little worse than the same people taking over the room and enforcing their views on the rest of the team."

- **Rebecca Yahia**, Senior Consultant

Get in touch:



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