5 tips

to Exceed Your Sales Quota

1. Engage more prospects
2. Better qualify prospects in the sales cycle
3. Spend more time selling
4. Accelerate your sales cycle
5. Increase communications (and sales) with existing customers

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Introduction

Other than lowering your sales quota (which we won't consider!) – exceeding your quota requires some combination of the following:

* Get more new customers, more quickly than before

* Increase the size of your average sale

* Sell more to existing customers

This Guide gives you **five tips - concrete Action Steps** that we guarantee will maximize your ability to exceed your quota.

The key – stay focused on your Action Items and continue to take actions that ***advance*** toward your goal. The results will materialize as a natural by-product of your thoughtful planning and follow-through actions.

Action Item #1

Engage more prospects

To get new customers more quickly than before, it certainly helps to have a large funnel of prospects. But note that this Action Item doesn't simply refer to the *number* of your prospects.

You must develop a personal strategy and action plan to actually ***engage*** more of the prospects available to you. To exceed your quota, you must be more than an order taker. You must engage and sell that middle third of the prospect pool that doesn't feel the need to buy now, or buy from you.

The dictionary definition of "engage" means "to occupy the attention or efforts of a person." But how can you occupy the attention of a prospect you've never met – or someone who doesn't come from a friendly referral source – or someone who isn't so desperate to buy that they are only looking to you as an order taker?

Sample Script - Impromptu Prospecting with the help of ClearMeeting™ SA

Sales Pro: Are you online right now?

Prospect: Sure

Sales Pro: I'd like to show you a diagram of the idea we're discussing – go to www.clearmeeting.com

Prospect: OK – I'm there. Do I need any download or anything special?

Sales Pro: Nothing special – just type in this Meeting Number.

Prospect: OK – I'm there

Sales Pro: Great. Here's the diagram …

Prospect: Hmmm – this is interesting. Let me see if Brad from our operations area can join us too.

With enough time, effort and budget, you could probably engage the attention of almost any prospect. You could send them lavish gifts. You could travel across town or across the country to entertain them. But spending too many resources on one prospect or a small number of prospects runs counter to achieving your overall goal.

Top sales performers share a trait in common – they discipline themselves to allocate their time and resources across a number of prospects and existing customers, and in a way that maximizes the return on their investment.

Increasingly, top sales performers are turning to prospecting via telephone and web conference as the best way to truly engage more prospects while expending the least amount of time, effort and budget.

These top sales performers have tapped into a simple formula: **See + Hear + Interact = Engage.** The telephone provides the hearing – ClearMeeting™ SA provides the seeing and the interaction.

The *Sample Script* (box, left) shows how to get this engagement in an impromptu telephone conversation, such as a cold call. In addition, the See + Hear + Interact formula can be deployed in a pre-planned telephone appointment call, and also in larger group webinar settings.

To schedule an initial presentation or demo, make the parameters clear to the prospect. Most prospects won't devote a whole hour to an unknown activity – and you shouldn't want to devote that time to an unqualified prospect either.

What works really well is to offer a 15 or 20-minute initial online presentation. If you have a complex product or service, you can still prepare a brief highlight presentation with strategic ideas. Explain to the prospect that the next step is a 15-minute online presentation, but that you will allot more time in your schedule to answer questions.

This method really opens doors – a prospect is more willing to agree to the presentation because of the minimal time commitment. The initial meeting will either progress into more - or you will both quickly realize that there's not a good fit and move on to other matters.

One reality of scheduled web conferences – people are more likely to cancel or forget a web conference appointment than they are to cancel or forget an in-person meeting.

Just as it's easier to get a person to agree to a web conference than to an in-person meeting in the first place, it's also easier for the person to cancel. Confirm appointments, and expect some requests to reschedule.

ClearMeeting™ SA offers an online class on Planning Large Webinars – a topic unto itself.

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Action Item #2

Better qualify prospects earlier in the sales cycle

Better qualification of prospects earlier in the sales cycle results in two benefits that will help you exceed your quota.

The first benefit: you will learn which prospects to drop from your list. Quickly dropping prospects – or properly classifying them for future follow up – is one of most productive habits of top sales performers. Redirect all of the time saved from *not* pursuing unqualified prospects towards pursuing qualified prospects or cold calling/ initial prospecting.

Don't get caught in the trap of investing more time in a prospect just because you already have invested time. This is the principle of "sunk costs." To exceed your quota, don't analyze your future actions based on your sunk costs.

Spend time focusing on your qualification questions – develop questions that relate to a company's activities and current situation, not simply questions that relate to demographics and size categories. Then integrate these questions into your web presentations, making it easier to ask more and better questions.

Web Conferencing as a Qualification Tool

* Use Slides to prompt qualification questions.

* Don't ask too many questions at once - spread the questions throughout the presentation.

* ClearMeeting™ SA makes your PowerPoint(r) slide notes visible to you, the Presenter – but not seen by the Participant. Use these notes for reminders of questions that relate to a particular slide.

* Use the survey or instant poll features of Clear-Meeting™ SA to solicit input. Try doing this towards the *beginning* of the presentation. Don't wait until it's over to find out their real interests.

* Encourage hesitant prospects to open up – explaining the survey or poll will help you tailor the presentation towards their specific interests.

* ClearMeeting™ SA saves the Survey answers in a Meeting Report – refer back to the meeting report when doing future follow up.

The second benefit of better qualification is getting to know the prospect's needs and perspectives. That translates into more new customers and larger average sales.

The less time you waste with unqualified prospects, and the more time you spend learning more about qualified prospects, the closer you will be to exceeding your quota.

Action Item #3

Spend more time actually selling.

Instead of spending your time selling, how often do you find yourself:

* spending unnecessary time creating and distributing presentations

* struggling with WiFi - or typing cryptic messages with your thumbs on your PDA

* stuck in web traffic

You can sell more if spend more time selling – and you can spend more time selling if you spend less time running around.

Enter technology. The first way that you can use technology to give you more time for selling is to use a web conferencing tool such as ClearMeeting™ SA to make your sales calls. In the old days, *you used the telephone to make the appointment.* You used the phone to get your foot in the door, and you used a *personal visit to do the selling.*

In current times, you can do a *significant* portion of the sales work with the telephone and web conferencing. In addition to initial prospecting discussed in Action Item #1, consider using web conferencing for pitches and presentations deep into the sales cycle – including the close.

The second way that you can use technology to give you more time for selling is to transfer *non-sales meetings* to the web. Many good reasons exist to meet in person, from building rapport to celebrating success. But take a hard look at internal sales team meetings, compliance meetings, routine training meetings, vendor meetings, etc. and switch to the Web wherever practical.

Try moving at least a portion of these non-sales meetings to the web. Then discipline yourself to use the time savings for personal calls on *key prospects and customers* and for additional online selling efforts.

A third way to use technology to create more time for selling is to use a web conferencing tool that centrally stores your presentations and allows sharing and reuse of presentations – along with the ability to run the presentation from any location on any computer.

That means a marketing manager or sales manager can make one central upload of a presentation, and all of the team will have access to the presentation – even when they are traveling.

In addition to the benefit of consistency of message, this method of organizing presentations saves time and creates efficiencies. Sales staff and management can focus on selling – not on the hassle of trying to locate the latest presentation.

Many web conferencing tools require the presentation to be stored on the presenter's computer. Clear-Meeting™ SA was designed with sales professionals in mind – it solves the problem by allowing central storage of your presentations on the ClearMeeting™ server. All you need is a basic computer and a low bandwidth Internet connection, and you're in business to host the latest presentation.

Action Item #4

Accelerate your sales cycle.

Of course there are natural limiting factors in certain industries that slow down the sales cycle. But challenge yourself – what can you do personally, and within your organization, to accelerate the sales cycle? How can you shorten the time between initial lead and closing.

On an organizational basis, the best approach involves a cross-departmental team that maps out the entire sales process, from intake of an initial lead through closing the sale. Often the activity of mapping the process – putting it on paper in a diagram or flow chart format – makes the log jams apparent.

Typical delay factors include: the approval, bid or pricing process, or other factors outside the immediate control of the sales rep. Once identified, the team can find ways to change the habits and workflow at your company in a way that accelerates, rather than impedes, the sales process.

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Leaving the organization aside – what can you do as an individual sales rep or sales manager to accelerate your sales cycle? By asking this question, you may identify aspects of the process within your control that you can accelerate. Map your current process, then brainstorm on practical steps you can take to compress the sales process.

As you devise your plans to shorten your sales cycle, consider the way others have used web conferencing to speed the sales process. For example, many prospects may be hesitant to meet in person with an unknown sales person to discuss a product or service for which they have only a vague idea of its application to their business.

However, that same prospect is likely to accept your invitation for a 20-minute or half hour telephone/web meeting. In this way, both you and your prospect can quickly make an informed decision whether further discussions make sense.

Once you are past the initial prospecting stage, use web conferences as a primary or supplemental tool to continue the sales process in the quickest fashion.

For example, companies making complex sales that require buy-in from a number of players can accelerate the meeting schedule by using web conferencing, rather than requiring people to meet in person. Consider a hybrid approach, where some of the players meet in person, while others join via the web.

Action Item #5

Communicate more with existing customers.

It's well accepted that it's easier to sell to an existing customer than to an unknown prospect. So a critical component of exceeding your sales quota will involve additional sales to existing customers.

The stronger your relationship with an existing customer, the more likely they will seek you out for increased opportunities – and the more receptive they will be when you come to them with additional offerings.

See the box below for proven strategies that incorporate web conferencing to better communicate with customers to increase sales.

Web Conferencing as a Customer Communication Tool

* Use group webinars to communicate product updates and training with your smaller or less profitable customers. This frees time to focus personal attention on your most promising accounts.

* Between personal calls on existing customers, schedule a customized web presentation to review their account status. Gaining more knowledge about your customer will make renewals easier and bring upselling opportunities.

* As a way to get in front of existing customers when you do not have a new product, devise a webinar of general interest to a segment of customers.

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