



Sales Leader Survey Research Brief

Sales Alignment: Determining the Right Sales Approach for the Grand Reopening

84%

of Sales Leaders surveyed say they're challenged by activities permitted by state guidelines

79%

of Sales Leaders surveyed say they will insist on matching or exceeding clients' safety guidelines

80%

of Managers surveyed expect some of their sales team members to express differing opinions when it comes to reopening

In good times, sales professionals can find themselves wearing a variety of hats – trusted confidant, ambassador, psychoanalyst, and problem-solver are just a few that come to mind.

As businesses across the country take the first tentative steps toward reopening their restaurants, factories, offices, and stores, it is becoming clear that new roles will need to be crafted for sales pros. Health expert. Creative financier. Cold calling wizard.

Indeed, wearing these new hats will likely become commonplace for sales teams as they look to lock down sales in a changed landscape, according to sales executives polled for the Brooks Sales Leader Survey for the week ending May 8.

This week's survey – the eighth administered since mid-March as a means of gauging the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sales teams – found that sales executives are still trying to determine how to best approach clients once more traditional channels are reopened for commerce.

Among the findings:

- 84 percent of sales leaders say they're finding it challenging to determine what sales activities are permitted under their state's guidelines;
- 79 percent say they will insist upon at least matching, if not exceeding, their clients' guidelines for on-site visits by vendors, although;
- 80 percent of managers expect some of their sales pros to express differing opinions on their company's chosen path to reopening.

Other questions taking up bandwidth inside sales organizations:

How flexible do our payment policies need to be? Roughly 30 percent of sales executives are asking their account executives to check in with customers for the expressed reason of gauging ability to pay, as 80 percent are expecting to experience ongoing collections challenges during the third and fourth quarters of 2020.

How do we realign our resources? With many sales organizations likely impacted by furloughs or more lasting staff reductions, 54 percent of sales executives said they are struggling with the challenge of realigning territories and resources to ensure proper field sales coverage.

What should our field sales professionals be doing during the extended downtime? Among the suggestions of sales leaders were an increase in time on the phone, either activating new leads from inbound sources, or calling dormant leads in the pipeline.

Finally, there was one bit of optimism noted in the May 8 survey: The percentage of sales organizations that considered themselves to be behind plan declined for the first time since the survey started – down to 88 percent, from a high of 97 percent in the week ended May 1.

How is your company facing issues surrounding the “new normal” of sales once lockdowns are lifted? We'd love to hear from you, email us at research@thebrooksgroup.com.

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