

14 TOP SALES LEADERS REVEAL THEIR MOST ESSENTIAL SALES METRICS



Maximizing Sales Performance

How To Gain the Insight You Need to Build a World-Class Sales Team

Here at RingDNA, we believe that sales managers should be able to glean much more from sales metrics than which reps have and haven't achieved quota. The right metrics can help managers make predictive assumptions about revenue, see where underperforming reps are faltering, and coach their team into a world-class sales organization.

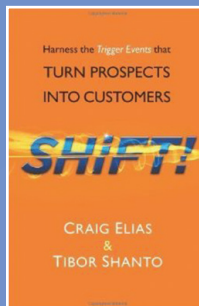
Inside sales hiring is at an all-time high, and the competition has never been steeper. Building a team capable of outselling the competition means going deeper, and tracking more advanced metrics in your CRM. It's no longer viable to just sit back, relax and see who does and doesn't hit their numbers. By tracking the right sales metrics in real time, sales managers can intervene at a moment's notice to not only ensure that underperforming reps hit their marks, but also help every rep maximize the revenue they close.

We can't overstate the value of tracking sales metrics. However, we know there are bound to be certain metrics that fly under the radar of even seasoned sales managers. To that end, we thought it would be helpful to speak to some of the top sales coaches, CEOs and thought leaders about which metrics they think are most valuable.

For this eBook, we asked 14 sales leaders a simple question:

What is the one sales metric that you wish more companies would track?

Responses ranged from big picture items (such as tracking the overall velocity of leads), to more granular metrics such as the number of meetings with qualified executives. Our hope is that this eBook will shed light on some new metrics that you can add to your arsenal in order to help drive exponential growth across your sales organization.



First-In

How often are you First In?

The number one metric I think more sales leaders should measure is how often they are the first vendor into an opportunity – aka first in. Forrester's research says **be first in and your odds of winning the sale jump up to 74%**. Being first in means you proactively reached out to a decision maker that recently experienced a Trigger Event and is in the [Window of Dissatisfaction™](#) – unhappy with the status quo and thinking of changing but not talking to any of your competitors yet. Be first in and you get an opportunity to define the prospect's problem, design their solution and start developing a great relationship, **before your competition even knows an opportunity exists!**

To be first in more often, I suggest your sales team conduct a [Won Sales Analysis™](#) on sales where three or more of the following were true:

- They had a shorter-than-usual sales cycle
- It was easier than normal to reach the decision maker
- They did not have to discount much in order to win the business
- The customer was willing to be a reference, gave a testimonial, or even better, referred your salesperson to someone else who was in need of your services

Just like when you buy a new car and start seeing that same car all over the place, once your sales team analyzes their best wins, they will start seeing more opportunities where a decision maker is in the Window of Dissatisfaction and they will be first in more often.

Craig Elias

Creator, Trigger Event Selling™

Author of *SHiFT!*

ShiftSelling.com

 @CraigElias

“



Lori Richardson

Mid-market Sales Influencer, Writer, Consultant & Trainer

Score More Sales

scoremoresales.com

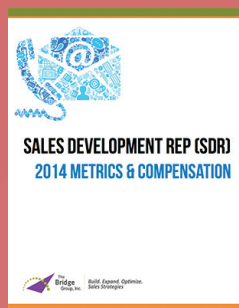
 [@scoremoresales](https://twitter.com/scoremoresales)

Lead Closure Percentage

When it comes to choosing my favorite metric in B2B selling, I am somewhat like a parent who cannot choose a favorite child. In my world, there is not just one. Most sales managers say it is the revenue number – what revenue closed? But I would have to say, if I can only pick one metric, it's closure percentage.

By tracking this metric, I can tell several things:

1. If QUALIFIED leads are happening, then I have an engaged sales team that is working to identify more probable prospective buyers vs. less probable.
2. If these leads don't come to closure, I can then zoom in and find out what about the value proposition isn't resonating with buyers.
3. I can also see what within our sales team is an issue – lack of sales skills? Or were these leads really not qualified in the first place.



Matt Bertuzzi

Marketing and Operations, The Bridge Group

Author, *Sales Development Metrics & Compensation Report*

bridgegroupinc.com

@mattbertuzzi

Percentage of Reps at or Above 90% of Quota

When thinking about metrics, I'm often reminded of this line attributed to Albert Einstein:

"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."

There is a particular metric which can both be counted (the easy part) and also counts (the part that really matters). That metric is **Percentage of Reps at or above 90% of quota**. Capturing this metric gives you four points throughout the year to stop and ask yourself important questions.

Here are the benchmarks from our [Sales Team Grader](#):

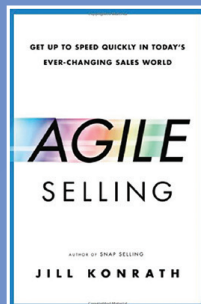
- After one quarter, 49% of reps should hit 90%+
- After two, 58% of reps
- After three, 66%
- By year's end, roughly 72%

Let's say you just closed Q1. You find that one-quarter of reps are 90%+. Now, you have some questions you'll need to answer. Are territories equitable? What are you stars doing that your core reps aren't? You get the idea. Let's say you close out Q3 with three-quarters of reps at 90%+. Are you on track to hit the year end number? I'd say yes.

Now compare this to two 'standard' metrics. Take 'group actual vs. goal' as an example. In my view, the total group number often over counts the impact of your A-players. Two stars can deliver a group's number, but their departure can ruin a year. Or consider 'number of reps at quota.' It is certainly useful, but it fails to tell you how far away from quota are the next tier of reps. If the next rep below quota is only at 60%, we've got a big problem.

I hope I've convinced you that tracking **90%+** leads to more interesting questions, which is the highest compliment a metric can earn.

“



Personal Bests

I'd like to propose a new metric to you – PBs. Personal bests. The first time I heard of them was when my then-8-year-old daughter joined the local swim team. As a neophyte, her backstroke and freestyle left a lot to be desired. But she didn't fret about losing races. Instead, her coach kept her attention on PBs. Each week, her goal was to drop time in her races. Sometimes she only cut .1 second from her previous performance. But it was an improvement and worth celebrating.

It was an eye-opener for me. And, because I'm sales-obsessed, I immediately saw its application for new salespeople. Instead of just focusing on quantity, we need to take a look at improvement metrics. Think about it!

- Connection Ratio: Percent of phone calls/emails that turn into initial conversations.
- 2nd Meeting Ratio: Percent of initial conversations that turn into follow-up meetings.
- Proposal Ratio: Percent of your proposals that turn into signed deals.
- Closing Ratio: Percent of initial meetings that ultimately turn into customers.
- Loss-to-No-Decision Ratio: Percent of prospects who decide to stay with the status quo.
- Forecasting Ratio: Percent of your forecasted prospects that actually close.

Focusing on these types of metrics lets you know if you're getting better. People who focus on 'getting better' goals (also known as PBs) as opposed to performance goals have a much better chance of success.

What's cool about these kinds of goals too is that you can sequence them. By constantly maintaining a PB mindset, your rock-chewing time will get shorter and shorter. And, before you know it, you'll be really good in that one area. Then, it's on to the next.

Jill Konrath

CEO and Chief Sales Officer

Author, *Agile Selling*

JillKonrath.com

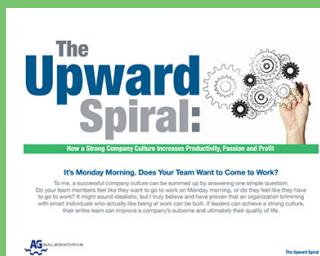
@jillkonrath



Proposal-to-Close Rate

While all sales metrics have value and can provide valuable insight in specific areas of the sales process, the one metric I believe to be the most important is the conversion of proposal to close. If this number is low, say 20%, then the salesperson is sending too many proposals. And if it is too high, for example 80%, they may be sending too few. I believe a number of 50% is about right. In any case, this information will allow sales management to do a deep dive into a sales rep's process to see what is working and what is not with a high degree of specificity.

For example, if reps are sending too many proposals, they may not have the necessary skills to identify a real prospect from one who is just gathering information. Of course, this can lead to a false sense of security and lots of valuable time wasted. If reps are sending too few proposals, they may be being too conservative and missing out on prospects, who if further qualified, may have seen the value and been a fit.



Paul Alves

CEO, AG Salesworks

Author, *The Upward Spiral: How a Strong Company Culture Increases Productivity, Passion and Profit*

AGSalesworks.com

 @PaulAlves63

“

Qualified Lead Velocity Rate (LVR)

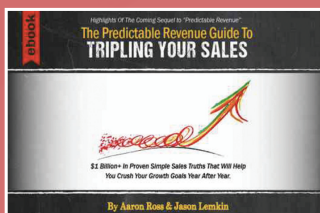
You can't create predictable revenue without predictable lead generation/pipeline creation. If you can predict the rate at which you create (or create and grow) qualified pipeline, and you know your average close rate(s), then you can start predicting your revenue.

The metric to track and score yourself to, as well as hold your VP Marketing and VP Demand Generation team(s) to: Qualified Lead Velocity Rate (LVR). LVR measures your growth in qualified leads & pipeline, measure month-over-month, every month. LVR is real-time, not lagging, and it clearly predicts your future revenues and growth—and even better—your growth trend.

So if you created \$1 million in new qualified pipeline this month, and created \$1.1 million in new qualified pipeline the following month, you are growing LVR at 10% month-over-month. So, your sales should grow 10% as well after a period of an average sales cycle length.

One great thing about LVR is that while sales can vary a lot by month and quarter, there's no reason leads can't grow every single month like clockwork. Every. Single. Month. Follow other core business metrics of course—just understand they aren't as good. Sales and pipeline lag. Monthly sales growth is important, but minor variations can lead to huge forecasting/modeling variances.

As long as you are using Qualified Leads (not raw or unqualified leads) with a consistent formula and process to qualify them, you then See The Future. Hit your LVR goal every month and you're golden. And with practice, you'll see the future of your business 12+ months out, clear as can be.



Aaron Ross

CEO Predictable Revenue Inc.

Author, *The Predictable Revenue Guide to Tripling Your Sales*

PredictableRevenue.com

@motoceo



First Meetings – Your Early Warning System

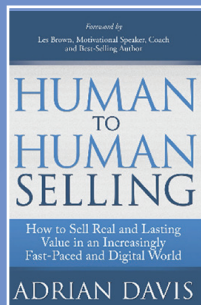
There are many metrics that are important to the health of any sales organization. Perhaps the one that is least tracked, but offers the most potential to drive consistency in sales performance, is the number of first meetings.

Every organization should be clear about the profile of their ideal prospect. Once this profile is well defined, a primary objective of the sales force is to get in front of as many people as possible that match this profile. All sales begin with a conversation. Something special happens when competent, passionate and caring sales people get in front of the right prospects with problems they can solve.

When sales people get caught up with existing opportunities and fail to fill the top of the funnel, it is inevitable that within a number of months, depending on the length of their sales cycle, they will have one abysmal quarter followed by another. Keeping one's attention on continually filling the top of the funnel, prevents downstream blackouts or brownouts in sales performance.

Also, this forces sales people to get in front of "right fit" prospects early in their buying process. An associated benefit of keeping an eye on the top of the funnel is sales people do a better job of scrutinizing the time they spend on deals that are not well qualified.

Sales managers should track the number of first meetings with "right fit" prospects a sales person is engaged in on a monthly basis. This metric should be compared to the previous month and the previous year, and it should also be rolled up on a quarterly basis and compared to the corresponding quarter of the previous year. This metric alone will serve as a powerful, early-warning system to sales performance.



Adrian Davis

President & CEO, Whetstone Inc.

Author, *Human to Human Selling*

whetstoneinc.ca

 [@thesalesoracle](https://twitter.com/thesalesoracle)

“



Meetings with Key Decision Makers by Rep

Most companies measure activities like the number of dials, connects, meetings, proposals, etc. These quantitative measurements are all good and should be tracked, but I think we should find ways to track more qualitative measurements. The reason is that there are some obvious and disturbing trends impacting Sales these days, which highlight why quantitative measurements alone no longer cut it. The first trend is that Marketing is moving further and further upstream into the world of Sales and getting far more targeted with its messaging. The second is that clients now have far more access to information than they ever did before, and are only engaging with Sales when they have to, often after they have already progressed themselves 60-70% of the way through the sales process. Both of these factors are squeezing the value out of what the average Sales rep typically brings to the table.

The only way Sales professionals are going to survive moving forward is to find more ways to add value to the process and engage at higher levels. This is why I think we should not just measure the number of meetings a rep gets (quantity) but also measure the amount of meetings they get with Executives (quality). In addition to measuring closed deals and revenue (quantity), measure the % discount (quality). These are two examples of what I think we should be spending more and more of our time paying attention to and coaching reps towards as the world of Sales and Marketing continue to evolve and force us to improve.

John Barrows

Owner, Sales From the Streets

Author, *12 Guiding Principles to Sales Success*

jbarrows.com/blog

@JohnMBarrows

“

Profit Margin Against Delivered Projects/Products

If I could pick one number I wish more sales managers would monitor more closely, it would be measuring their profit margin against delivered projects or products. Too often, our customers know they are making a profit, but they don't know exactly why or where the money comes from. If they knew what their top margin items were, they could better coach sales reps to cross-sell or up-sell these lines. It would also help drive a better customer experience, as the company would swiftly become known as the “go-to guys” for that product and expertise every time.



Geraldine Gray

CEO and Principal Consultant, Endiem

Salesforce MVP

endiem.com

 [@GeraldineGray](https://twitter.com/GeraldineGray)

“



Opportunity to Close

First, I want to see the new opportunities created each week. No deal is ever closed that isn't first opened. If you open new opportunities with consistency, you do well. If you don't, you struggle. Second, I want see which opportunities were moved forward in the sales process. This is where the action is, and it tells you most of what you need to know to determine how your salespeople are doing and how to help them.



S. Anthony Iannarino

President and Chief Sales Officer, SOLUTIONS Staffing

The Sales Blog

thesalesblog.com

 [@iannarino](https://twitter.com/iannarino)

“



Active Selling Time


I would love to see more sales managers prioritize and measure Active Selling Time. This is the percentage of the day sales reps spend on actual sales activities, vs. administrative work, reporting, internal meetings, etc. Far too often, this is the silent killer of sales productivity when companies add complexity, CRM process, management layers and more that hurt vs. help your reps hit and exceed quota.



Matt Heinz

President, Heinz Marketing Inc.

HeinzMarketing.com

 [@HeinzMarketing](https://twitter.com/HeinzMarketing)

“

Velocity of Conversion Through The Funnel Stages

The single most important sales metric for sales managers is the velocity of conversion through the funnel stages. The reality is, sales reps have a finite amount of time to win opportunities. Therefore, the faster a prospect turns into a customer, the more time the sales rep has to close more business. The two primary metrics that should be analyzed to ensure maximum velocity are: Lead Response Time & Rate of Follow-Up Contact.

Responsiveness in early stages is the difference between winning and losing business. Period.



Jaime Muirhead

VP of Sales, RingLead

RingLead.com

 @JaimeMuirhead

“

Touch Points Per Current Customer by Rep

For businesses with contract models, engaging new leads isn't enough.

Improving the quality and frequency of customer engagement is a metric that we are starting to see sales organizations adopt and measure in order to be truly customer-focused. Calling customers only when it is renewal time or engaging with customers on your own end-of-quarter timeframes — to bring in last minute deals — leaves your customer-facing team unable to establish credibility and engage around the most important initiatives impacting your customers. Utilizing apps that prompt sellers with reasons to call, that are very personal to how that seller sells and when it is a good time to call, can facilitate the process and lead to higher win rates, renewal rates and customer retention.



Penny Herscher

President and CEO, FirstRain

firstrain.com

 [@pennyherscher](https://twitter.com/pennyherscher)

“

Dials to Accepted Opportunities

How efficiently do the activities of your sales team translate into qualified opportunities?

As we all know, measuring sales activity volume is vital, since productivity can be an early indicator of sales success. But [tracking sales efficiency](#) is far more important since the ratios determine the correlation between activities, pipeline and ultimately, revenue.

By measuring the number of Dials to Accepted opportunities, you'll gain insight into how many dials it takes your reps to source a qualified opportunity.

Once you have enough data to establish internal benchmarks, you can then begin improving your least efficient reps by addressing the most likely causes of underperformance. Are they not following up with the right leads? Are they not calling at the most optimal times? Are they asking the wrong questions, or worse, not adequately understanding prospects' pain points?


By measuring your reps' efficiency ratios and trying to elevate them, you'll quickly identify areas for improvement and maximize the number of accepted opportunities and deals.



Howard Brown

Founder and CEO, RingDNA

RingDNA.com

 @HowardBrown

RingDNA Sales Acceleration Software

RingDNA is an inside sales acceleration engine that helps sales teams prioritize, connect with and convert more customers. Automated call metrics provide sales managers with deep insight into individual and team performance, while reps get critical insight into the prospect data they need when they need it.



Inside Sales Reps

- Connect with 57-300% more leads
- Gain 20% more selling time each month
- Close more deals thanks to contextual prospect data

Inside Sales Managers

- Gain 100% visibility into reps' activities
- Make smarter revenue predictions
- Coach more reps into A-players

[Start a Free Trial](#)

[Get a Demo Today](#)

Find us on the [Salesforce AppExchange](#)

Call us: 866.513.5862

*yes - this is a
call tracking number!*

Email us: sales@RingDNA.com

Visit us online: RingDNA.com

@ringdna