



WHAT'S KEEPING SALES LEADERS UP AT NIGHT?

Trends, Challenges & Actionable Tips You Can Use Right Now

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

WHAT'S KEEPING YOU UP AT NIGHT?

What's keeping you up at night? That's the simple question we put to sales leaders as we put together this report. The question, we think, is timely. There have never been more opportunities to succeed as an inside sales manager. However, the path to sales success is littered with hazards that threaten everyone's job security.

*The average tenure of a sales manager
is only 18 months.*

Sales Benchmark Index

It turns out that there are several common pain points that sales leaders are struggling with. In this eBook, we've attacked some of the most prevalent challenges, and offered a concise action plan to help you triumph. We hope you'll gain the fuel you need to push past threats and succeed where your peers are failing.

01

DIFFICULTY HIRING

Annual venture capital investments have reached their highest level in over a decade. As a result, startups and early-stage companies are under increasing pressure from investors and board members to demonstrate real revenue as proof of their business model's validity. This has started an arms race to acquire sales talent. The result? More competition than ever.

The war for sales talent is on, and it's getting ugly. There are a million tricks to compete, but none of them matter if your sales culture doesn't close the deal for you. To win, establish, and openly sell, a sales culture must prioritize mutual respect, meaningful professional development, and pay a premium for performance.

Peter Gracey
CEO, QuotaFactory



Actionable Tips

Looking to improve your outbound prospecting success?

We've discovered some tactics that can vastly improve your reach rates:

- **Outsource sales efforts.** Recently, a wellspring of outsourced sales services companies have emerged. Now it's easier than ever to find partners providing a wide variety of outsourced services including list building, appointment setting, inbound sales and high-level sales training. Some will even let you hire the reps at the end of an outsourcing contract. So if you need to ramp up a sales team quickly, outsourcing can often be a viable option.
- **Avoid reps who just started new jobs.** Instead, look for reps who have been at their position for at least two years. These reps may have outgrown their current position and feel poised to move forward in their career. After two years, they may have also built up enough equity in their current company to be open to a job change.
- **Hire an internal recruiter.** You may think that you have to be a big company to afford an internal recruiter, but this isn't necessarily the case. Look at the costs levied on your existing team for finding, recruiting and interviewing. The [average fee-per-hire](#) when using a third-party recruiter is over \$22K. Even more alarming is that [DePaul University's Sales Effectiveness Survey](#) found the average cost of turnover for a single sales rep to be \$114,957.
- **Subscribe to LinkedIn's recruiting services package.** LinkedIn can be a powerful tool for finding talent, but LinkedIn limits search functionality unless you pay for a premium account. As an example, if you search for "sales development reps" too many times, LinkedIn will temporarily block your search capabilities. Luckily, LinkedIn offers a premium package for recruiters that will not only give you access to unlimited searches, but also give you better filters for finding candidates.
- **Recruit from your competitors.** A rep that has worked for one of your competitors will likely possess a solid view of your business landscape on day one. This can radically decrease ramp time. Also, changing to a company that's selling familiar products can be a lot more appealing for reps.

02

LOW OUTBOUND REACH RATES

Sadly, it has never been more difficult to reach prospects. This is because virtually all of your prospects are using caller ID.

It takes 18 or more dials to connect with a prospect over the phone, and call-back rates are below 1%.

TOPO

Outbound prospecting can be so challenging that some sales leaders such as David Meerman Scott, [have advocated abandoning outbound sales altogether](#) in favor of inbound sales (our advice: keep your outbound sales reps). And while inbound sales is important, by ignoring outbound you are almost certainly leaving a lot of revenue on the table. In fact, [during a recent webinar](#) we hosted, sales trainer Craig Elias presented research from DemandGen showing that 80% of B2B purchases are unplanned and unbudgeted. You can't always wait for great leads to find you.

Actionable Tips

Looking to improve your outbound prospecting success? We've discovered some tactics that can vastly improve your reach rates:

- **Build a specific prospect profile.** Are you targeting the right prospects? Take the time to decide the roles and companies you are going to target and the value you are delivering for each of those roles.
- **Reach out to multiple contacts at each company.** Remember that in B2B sales, there are usually multiple stakeholders in every deal. For each prospective account, we recommend reaching out to at least three prospects, and perhaps more depending on the size and scope of the deal.
- **Automate dialing.** Since it takes an [average of 18 dials](#) to reach a prospect, tools that enable reps to dial prospects faster (e.g. click-to-call, voicemail automation, automatic call logging and one-click call dispositions to name a few) can help reps reach more prospects each day.
- **Dial from local numbers.** One of the most powerful outbound sales tools is called Local Presence, which enables reps to dial prospects from local telephone numbers automatically. This can be a game-changer. According to [research from Software Advice](#), your prospects are almost 400% more likely to pick up calls from local numbers than from toll-free numbers.

03

REPS DON'T RESPOND TO LEADS QUICKLY ENOUGH

Inbound tactics like content marketing, blogging and social media can be a great way to generate leads. In fact, according to Hubspot, inbound practices produce 54% more leads than traditional outbound practices. And while more sales leads may sound like a good thing, many businesses lack the tools to respond to inbound leads quickly enough. Even waiting five minutes to follow up with an inbound lead [can have devastating effects](#) on sales ROI.

Your sales team needs to be prepared to quickly respond to inbound web leads and provide a great customer experience. When leads call in and have to wait on hold or speak to unqualified reps, it can severely diminish call conversion rates. And thanks to increases in mobile search, you should be prepared for more inbound calls than ever before. [BIA/Kelsey expects](#) mobile search will generate more than 73 billion calls from consumers to businesses by 2018.

Actionable Tips

Without the right technology, it can be impossible to ensure that leads are getting the attention they deserve. Look for tools that help your team:

- **Prioritize leads** based on behavioral engagement scores so reps reach out to the highest value leads first.
- **Qualify/Disqualify leads** through qualification fields on web forms so reps don't waste time responding to unqualified leads.
- **Automatically send nurturing emails** based on role and behavior to help get them sales-ready.
- **Route inbound calls** to the best available reps to reduce friction and hold time.
- **Deliver contextual data** about prospects during calls so reps can solve customer pain points as quickly as possible.

04

INCREASED NOISE ON LINKEDIN

LinkedIn has traditionally been a fantastic platform for outbound prospecting, but it's becoming increasingly difficult for sales reps to get responses when using it. Why? The huge increase in noise (spam and sales emails). One reason is likely due to a change in LinkedIn's InMail policy. Users now get 15 monthly InMail credits (instead of 10), and users now get a credit back for each email they send that *does* get a response within 90 days. That all adds up to many more messages.

As more untargeted messages flood our inbox, we're becoming more numb to these messages. As a result, the open rates of all InMail messages are decreasing, thus decreasing response rates, especially for spammy untargeted messages. If you want even the slightest chance of getting a response you have to create messages that are thoughtful, targeted and highly relevant.

Heather R. Morgan
Founder, SalesFolk



Actionable Tips

Here are some ways to improve your response rates:

- **Personalize InMail.** Writing great sales emails can help cut through the noise and get responses. If you aren't already, make sure that your LinkedIn emails are highly personalized.
- **Use referrals.** If you have a mutual connection with a target, getting a referral can go a long way in getting responses.
- **Connect with your target's contacts.** If you don't have mutual contacts already, connect with high-quality contacts of the targets you are trying to sell to. Even with LinkedIn free, you can reach out to prospects as long as they're a third-degree connection or less. However, having a first-degree connection in common builds more trust. Your prospects are far more likely to take a message and/or a connect request seriously if there is a legit first-degree connection.

05

POOR DATA QUALITY

Without real-time access to high-quality sales data, it can be difficult to guide your team's activities and predict reps' performance. One of the reasons that sales data is so often incomplete or inaccurate is because it's so difficult to get reps to update data fields in Salesforce. Even reps that are diligent in regards to data entry cannot be counted on to enter accurate sales data 100% of the time. Another data problem that plagues sales leaders is duplicate leads. This is especially prevalent when multiple reps are working the same accounts. The first step on the path to insight is ensuring that accurate data is captured. Only then is it possible to convert this data into insight and insight into action.

Incomplete data is actually the number one reason that salespeople give up on their CRM, and the CRM system fails. Enable salespeople with tools and technologies that will seamlessly move information about prospects into your CRM.

John Kosturos
VP of Enterprise & Channel Sales
RingLead



Actionable Tips

There are several ways to improve the quality of your sales data.

- **Prevent duplicate leads.** Consider using tools that can dedupe leads in your CRM as well as prevent duplicate leads from being entered in your CRM.
- **Log call data automatically.** Tools that automate data capture can greatly improve the quality and abundance of prospect data. Look for tools that minimize the data that reps need to log in your CRM manually.
- **Make data actionable in real time.** In order to make data actionable, managers need to be able to transform data into insight. Dashboards can help you view KPIs which can help you lead your team more effectively.

Some valuable metrics to track in sales dashboards might include:

- Average Lead Response Time
- Close Rate by Marketing Source
- Dials to Connection Percentage
- Dials per Day by Rep
- Dial-to-Opportunity Ratio
- Email Response Rate
- Inbound Calls by Time of Day
- Inbound Leads by Campaign
- Opportunity Win Percentage
- Voicemail Return Rate

	Dials	Connects	Dial/Connect Ratio	Dial/ Opportunity Ratio	Dial to Deal Ratio
Brianna Wells	3,844	384	10:1	349:1	3,844:1
Tim Chan	4,310	387	11:1	410:1	3,977:1
John Michaels	4,285	339	13:1	286:1	2,143:1
Ashley Scott	2,911	251	12:1	108:1	662:1
Brad Cooper	3,973	342	12:1	199:1	728:1

RingDNA Sales Acceleration

Boost Revenue by 30%

“Simply the best inside sales solution for Salesforce.



Sean Whiteley
Founder, GetFeedback & Former GM, Salesforce

“RingDNA call data is something we could not live without.



Erik Kostelnik
Global Sales Director, Wrike

“RingDNA was our best sales productivity investment this year.



Scott Clugston
Director Sales, FreshBooks

“I have used InsideSales, Ring Central and Five9 in the past, and now we have the team on RingDNA. It has been a fantastic experience. Really the best product that I have used with SFDC.



Dallas Hogensen
Vice President of Sales & Expansion, iCracked Inc

Call us: 855.645.8028

*yes - this is a
call tracking number!*

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