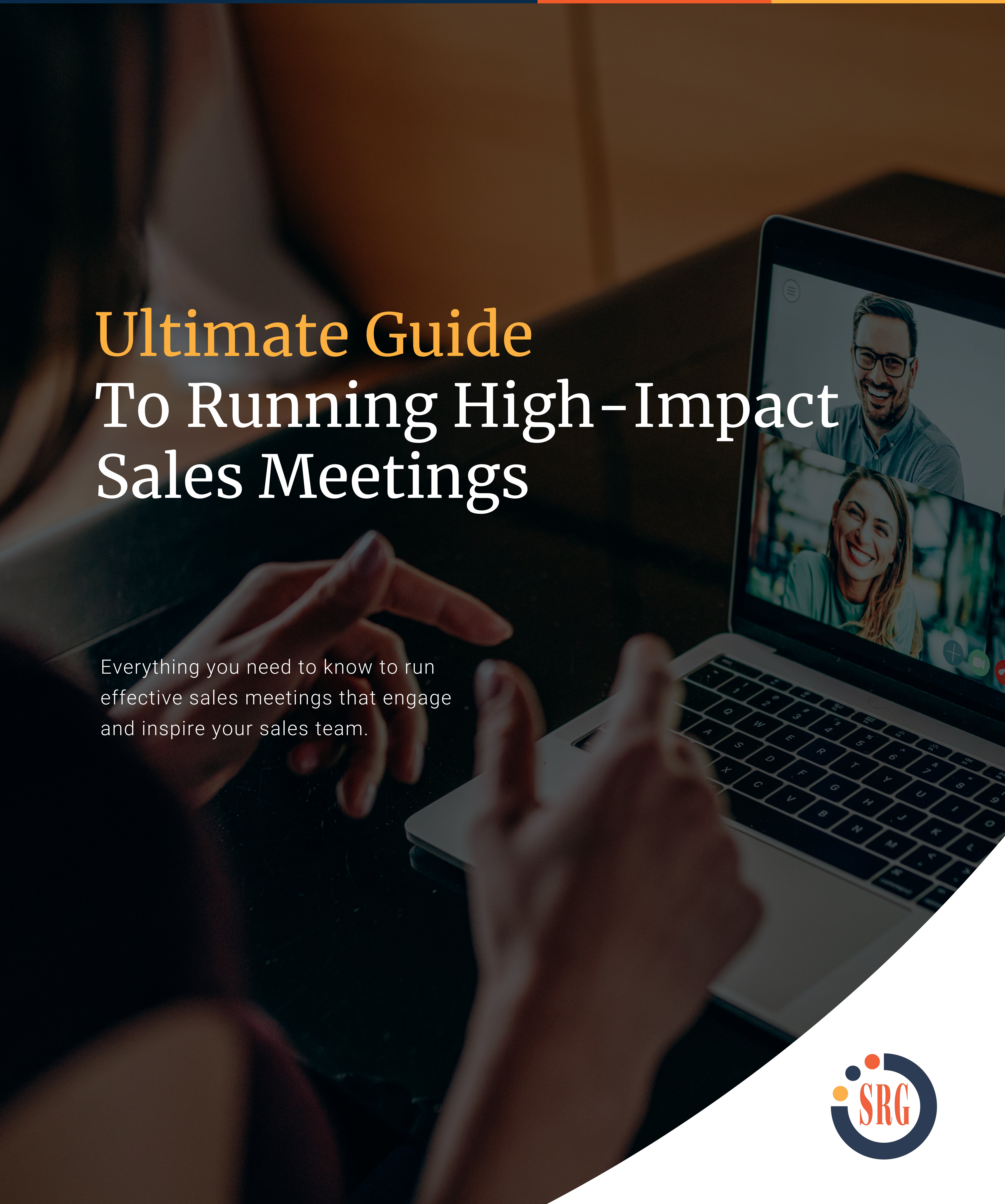
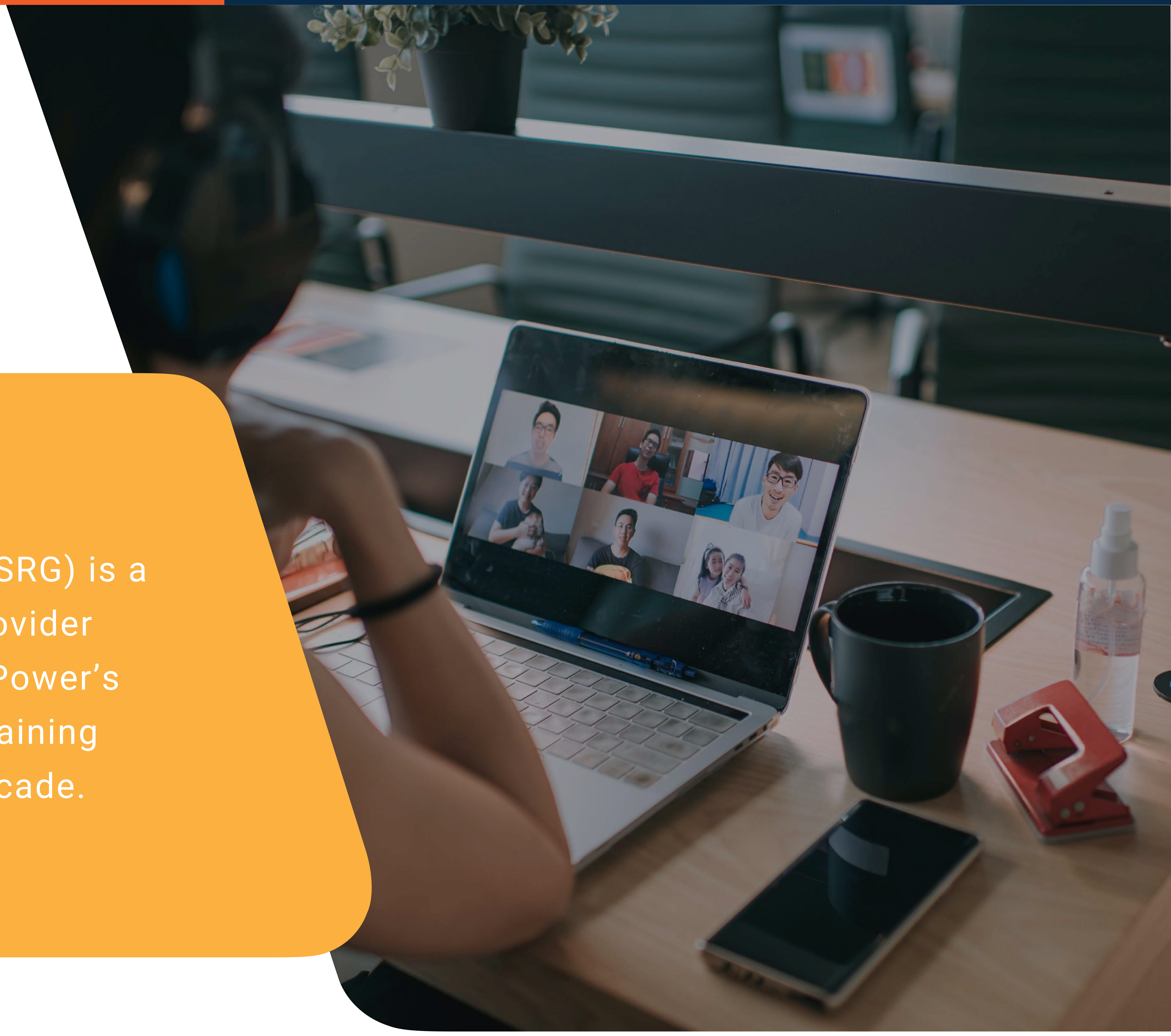


Ultimate Guide To Running High-Impact Sales Meetings

Everything you need to know to run effective sales meetings that engage and inspire your sales team.



Sales Readiness Group (SRG) is a leading sales training provider that has been in Selling Power's Magazine's Top Sales Training Companies for over a decade.

Introduction

Whether it's your first time running a sales meeting or not, this guide will help you conduct effective meetings that engage and inspire your sales team.

Read this guide to learn:

- Two different types of weekly meetings
- What to consider in your different types of sales meeting agendas
- How to maximize the value of your annual sales meetings

Two different types of weekly meetings

One of the most challenging areas for sales managers is conducting effective sales meetings. Therefore, as a starting point, let's think through two different types of meetings that managers should run weekly.

1) Weekly Sales Team Meeting

This is a regularly scheduled meeting that the sales manager should conduct with their sales team. While these meetings can be held anytime during the week, we typically recommend Monday mornings or Friday afternoons, emphasizing reviewing last week's accomplishments and discussing this week's priorities. These meetings can be held in person or via a virtual meeting platform. If this is a remote meeting, you should ask team members to turn on their video cameras to encourage interaction and collaboration. Keep the meetings short—your reps want to be with their customers. One hour or less should do it.

2) Weekly One-On-One Meeting

This is a scheduled weekly meeting with each member of your sales team. Its purpose is to discuss individual performance, identify the root causes of any performance gaps, and agree upon actions to get back on track. It is also an excellent opportunity to build relationships with reps and understand any personal or professional issues getting in the way of performance. These meetings are one-on-one, so if a sales manager has five sales reps, there will be five one-on-one meetings during the week. Unlike the weekly sales meeting, these meetings can be scheduled for any weekday that works well for the manager and the sales rep and can be in person or via a virtual meeting platform. Following the meeting, be sure to summarize any key takeaways or action items in an email to your sales rep.

Since both types of meetings are recurring, it is essential to think about the meeting goals and establish an agenda that aligns with them. The agenda also provides a level of predictability that allows the sales manager and the sales reps to prepare for the meetings.

What to consider in your different types of sales meeting agendas

Weekly Sales Team Meeting Agenda

The weekly team meeting should focus on team goals and accomplishments, and it is an excellent forum to recognize wins, discuss new opportunities, review priorities, and promote skills development. The sales meeting discussions should be positive and forward-looking. Keep the discussions concerning underperforming reps for your individual meetings with them.

Here is a sample agenda for a weekly 1-hour team meeting, along with a brief description for each suggested topic:

1) Sales Results (5 minutes):
The manager should begin with a quick overview of where the team stands versus sales goals. This can include a breakdown by each salesperson, provided the emphasis is on team achievement. This is also a great time to recognize and celebrate any new wins or significant accomplishments.

2) Sales Activity (10 minutes):
Now focus on key performance indicators such as new meetings, proposals, and opportunities. To keep this positive, ask each team member to share accomplishments from the prior week and their top opportunities for this week.

3) Top Opportunities (15 minutes):
This should include a high-level pipeline review where each sales rep can share their top opportunities and associated next steps. To the extent possible, sales reps should seek advice from the team when they are uncertain about the next steps or could use strategic direction. If this discussion for any specific opportunity runs longer than 5 minutes, the sales manager should set up a separate meeting to continue that discussion.

4**) New Priorities and Initiatives (10 minutes):**
You have the entire team together, so this is a great forum to preview any new priorities, initiatives, and “sales plays.” The goal is to make sure that the entire sales team is informed and to solicit their feedback. For example, you might review upcoming marketing events and programs or any new policies or procedures that impact your team. If the team has legitimate issues or concerns, take notes and gather more information to follow up with them.

5**) Skills Development (15 minutes):**
Development can be the entire team’s responsibility. Ask a team member to research and prepare a group discussion on a specific selling skill or approach to the marketplace. The objective is to actively involve your sales team in their own skills development by focusing on real-world applications. Suggested topics:

- Prospecting for new business
- Building relationships
- Developing sales call objectives
- Asking great questions to develop needs
- Selling on value
- Overcoming objections
- Gaining commitment
- Negotiating

6) Recap Priorities for the Week (5 minutes):
End the meeting by recapping the top priorities. Remember to always end on a positive note by thanking your team and providing encouragement.

Weekly One-On-One Meeting Agenda

You should conduct weekly one-on-one meetings with each of your sales reps to keep up with their sales activities and to strengthen your relationship. To keep these meetings focused and productive, ensure the meetings are used for the intended purpose and do not veer off course or preempt by other activities. If there is a timing issue, reschedule. However, do not forego these important meetings.

Here is a sample agenda for a 1-hour weekly one-on-one meeting along with a brief description for each suggested topic:

1) Check-In (5 minutes):
You should start the one-on-one meeting with a quick check-in to see how your sales rep is doing personally and professionally. This helps develop rapport and create a personal connection. While your meeting is business-related, the relationship element is essential to build trust and receptivity to your input. The check-in will also give you insight into any issues that are affecting the rep's attitude or motivation.

2) Review highlights from last week (10 minutes):
Ask your sales rep to overview highlights from last week. This could include meetings conducted, new opportunities, proposals submitted, and, of course, any recent wins. As the manager, you should listen, ask questions, and provide positive reinforcement.

3**) Review priorities for this week (10 minutes):**
Ask your sales rep to review top priorities for the next week, such as upcoming meetings, presentations, and proposals. You should listen, ask questions, and assess whether you can or should assist with any forthcoming priorities.

4**) Review sales pipeline (25 minutes):**
Here's where you can add immense value. With the rep, review their sales pipeline and assess whether the appropriate actions or strategies are being taken to advance opportunities. The sales rep should lead the pipeline review and focus on opportunities within each stage, beginning with the most advanced stage (i.e., closest to closing).

Ask your sales rep to discuss their top opportunities, the associated sales strategy, and the next steps. As you review opportunities, ask the sales rep to articulate the customer's business need, how your solution addresses the need, access to key decision-makers, competitive positioning, and why your solution is the best choice for the customer.

5**) Sales Performance (10 minutes):**
As a starting point, have the sales rep share their sales results and where they stand relative to their plan. Based on what they have achieved so far and the opportunities in their pipeline, you should then ask them to assess where they expect to finish relative to the plan. Typically, this is expressed as their expected monthly, quarterly, or annual plan attainment. Note: Some sales reps are overly optimistic, so make sure that their projections are based on a realistic pipeline assessment of dollar amounts and timing.

Assuming the sales rep is expecting to finish at or above the plan, offer encouragement and determine how you could assist with any opportunities currently in the pipeline. Conversely, if you have reason to doubt their ability to achieve their sales goals, you should help them focus on sales activities that will improve their probability of achieving their sales goals. Note: If there are ongoing performance issues, you should schedule a separate meeting to review performance expectations and, if necessary, develop a performance improvement plan.

Sales team meetings and one-on-ones provide you with a holistic view of your team. To the extent possible, avoid rescheduling, and treat these meetings with the same level of importance as a customer meeting. Remember, your ability to achieve sales goals is based on an empowered team. These meetings provide you with valuable insights into sales opportunities, including the associated sales strategies. And they are a regular forum for connecting on a collective and personalized basis, where you can recognize wins, review priorities, and provide input based on your experience.

How to maximize the value of your annual sales meetings

Annual Sales Team Meeting:

Annual meetings should be held at the beginning of the fiscal year and serve as an opportunity for sales managers to share annual goals and discuss the associated strategies with their sales teams. At a high level, the meeting should focus on (1) what you expect your team to achieve and (2) how your team will achieve these goals. The annual meeting should also include a "team-building" component.

The actual timeframe for the Annual Meeting may vary, but we typically suggest a one-day format unless it is being combined with a larger-scale company event. If the Annual Meeting is being held virtually, it should be conducted as a series of three or four 2-hour live online sessions.

1) Annual Goals: What You Are Expecting Your Team to Achieve (1 hour):

Start by sharing with your team the annual sales goal and any other relevant goals, such as business mix, profitability margins, and support services. The goal is to make sure your team clearly understands what they are expected to achieve collectively. Note: Separate from your annual meeting, you should schedule time with each team member to review their individual yearly sales goals and collaborate on how to best achieve these goals.

Once you have clearly outlined the goals, you should break down the goals by quarter and month in some cases (i.e., shorter sales cycles). The quarterly goals should reflect your expected growth rate during the year and any seasonality associated with your business.

You should then lead your team through an overview of the underlying assumptions, which will likely include a quarter-by-quarter comparison to the prior year's actual results to show the year-over-year growth you are expecting. Other assumptions you should review include the amount of business you expect from new and existing customers, and revenue associated with any new or strategic offerings.

2) **Strategies & Tactics: How Your Team Will Achieve That Goal (3-Hours):**

At this point, it is essential to get your team involved in the annual planning process. As is typical in many sales organizations, they may have already expressed some level of cynicism or concern about the annual sales goals. This is entirely normal, and, as the manager, you must get them involved and vested in achieving the goals.

As a starting point, begin with your goals for the first quarter and discuss what strategies can best lead to the attainment of the goal. Strategies describe how you will achieve the goal. As an example, one strategy to support new customer acquisition would be a referral strategy from existing customers and contacts.

Once you have identified a strategy, ask your team to brainstorm tactics that support the strategy. Again, going back to our referral strategy example, this could include a plan to secure three referrals from each sales rep's top 10 customers. For each strategy, ask your team to identify 4 – 6 supporting tactics.

Keep in mind that many strategies have longer lead times and may involve securing assistance from other areas within your company, such as marketing or product development. As such, you should ask your team to focus first on near-term strategies and tactics that are entirely within their control and then focus on strategies requiring outside support.

Remember to take notes along the way, so you can summarize the goals you reviewed and the associated strategies and tactics. Following the meeting, prepare a presentation that includes the goals, strategies, and tactics for the year. You should plan to review this presentation with your team shortly after the sales meeting to reinforce the annual plan you developed with your team. As you go through the year, be sure to update the presentation in advance of your quarterly meetings with actual results and progress on the strategies your team developed.

3) **Motivation & Team Building (2 – 4 hours):**

By incorporating a team-building event into your annual sales meeting, you can help your team develop and strengthen their connections with each other. While much of this happens organically throughout the year, a structured activity at the beginning of the year can help foster an even greater sense of teamwork. For example, you could ask your team to volunteer for a charitable cause or participate in a group activity. Ideally, you should get input from your team about their group activity preferences well in advance of your annual meeting so that you can plan accordingly.

Quarterly Sales Team Meetings:

At the beginning of each new quarter, lead a 1-hour meeting with your team to review the prior quarter's performance and progress on the strategies your team developed at the annual meeting. Regardless of how your team finished the preceding quarter, you should recognize wins, accomplishments, and upcoming opportunities.

If your team did not achieve the sales goal, you should review areas for improvement in the upcoming quarters and solicit their input. Remember to keep the discussion focused on the underlying activities that drive results and on areas they can control.

To the extent, you have salespeople who fell short of their individual sales goals, address the underlying causes in your weekly one-on-one discussions with those team members. Do not discuss these publicly at the quarterly meeting.

Once you have reviewed the prior quarter, you should turn your attention to this quarter's goals and discuss the appropriate strategies and tactics. Again, as in the annual meeting, make sure to solicit your team's input on how to achieve the goals.

Conclusion

Conducting effective meetings allows you to prioritize, share, and collaborate with your team. As a sales manager, you set the tone by having a prepared agenda and keeping the meetings positive. Set clear expectations for your team regarding their meeting preparation and participation.

You should also make sure to begin and end meetings on schedule and avoid the temptation to reschedule based on other priorities. Sales meetings should be a high priority for you and your team since they are one of the best ways to keep your sales team on track.

About the Sales Readiness Group

Sales Readiness Group (SRG) is a leading sales training provider that has been in Selling Power's Magazine's Top Sales Training Companies for over a decade. Its leadership team consists of highly experienced sales performance consultants who bring over 25 years of sales and sales management experience.

SRG has successfully partnered with Fortune 500 companies to mid-sized businesses from various industries. To learn more on how to improve sales team performance, you can get in touch with us at 1-800-490-0715.

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