

DO YOU ACTUALLY KNOW  
HOW YOUR SALES REPS  
ARE USING THEIR TIME?

As a sales manager, ask yourself this: *are you getting the sales growth you need?*

If the answer is no, you may be frustrated by the way your sales reps seem to agree with you on priorities and methodology, but then somehow fail to meet their quotas.

While results are, of course, the most important indicator of your sales team's success, without a behaviour analysis, it's nearly impossible for you to fix issues and get the growth you need. The question boils down to: *do you actually know how your sales reps are using their time?*

Until now, a clear understanding of how sales reps spent their time was notoriously hard to glean. It has been **reported by CSO Insights** that sales reps only spend two days per week on actual selling, with about 10 hours per week on lead generation and the rest of the time on meetings, admin, training and travel etc. But even this data is unreliable since, previously, the only way to gauge how reps were spending their time was through self reporting.

New workplace analytics software like **Microsoft Workplace Analytics** (available as an add-on to Microsoft 365 from summer 2017) can now be used to build a more true-to-life snapshot of how your sales team are spending their time.



# WORKPLACE ANALYTICS TOOLS - HOW THEY WORK

Workplace analytics tools analyse the metadata from your team's digital calendars and emails to show how they are using their time and who they are interacting with in real life (versus what they say they are doing). The data can then be correlated to demonstrate the effect this has on sales results. Microsoft explains how the tool was **trialed by a fortune 500 company** to transform sales productivity and increase sales. Using the data produced, the company was able to map out the behaviours of top performers and then scale those patterns across the sales team as a whole.

## How The Best Sales Reps Optimize Their Time

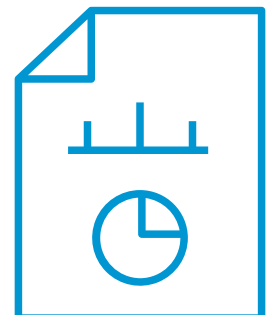
It's an age old question, are sales stars born or nurtured? While the answer may not be clear cut, as indicated by the example above, taking the behaviours of top performers and encouraging them in your whole team can pay off dividends. Buy just what does the data show that sales teams *should* be doing to be most effective?

Obviously, this will vary from industry to industry and company to company. But some of the results already produced from workplace analytics tools have surprising implications that are worth sharing. Research by **Mark Kovac and Jonathan Frick**, using data from workplace analytics combined with data from other sources and traditional qualitative research, pinpoints the differences in behaviour that they believe separates the top sales reps from the rest of the team. They found that the top reps:

- Spent (on average) four more hours a week in communication with customers.

- Were 25% more likely to cross-sell. The researchers pointed to this being thanks to top sellers better prepared for client meeting and reviews. Rather than just asking customers about order numbers, the reps had done their research, were coming armed with other products that might be of interest, and using a consultative approach to learn about the customer's current business position. In doing so, they were able to successfully cross sell other products that played into a current customer pain point.
- Were three times more likely to collaborate with other internal colleagues. Here, the researchers found it wasn't just other sales reps they were interacting with. Rather they were collaborating with a variety of departments to ensure a great customer experience such as legal, finance, marketing and pricing. The researchers consistently found that the larger the size of the sales pro's internal network, the better their performance.
- Were 2x as likely to frequently work with others in the sales team, even though the way their team was structured meant that this was unlikely to be about working together on a deal. Combined with the other qualitative data, the researchers found that these peer interactions were more about mentorship, coaching and learning.
- Were 50% more likely to have weekly pipeline reviews with their direct managers. Here, the researchers found that the best sellers worked in teams where these meetings were not just about reviewing plans or work completed. Instead, they focused on managers coaching reps on how to best tackle upcoming opportunities.

Thus, the research bore out that the most successful reps were spending more time with their customers, more time actively cross selling, more time collaborating with internal colleagues and more time learning and developing their strategy.



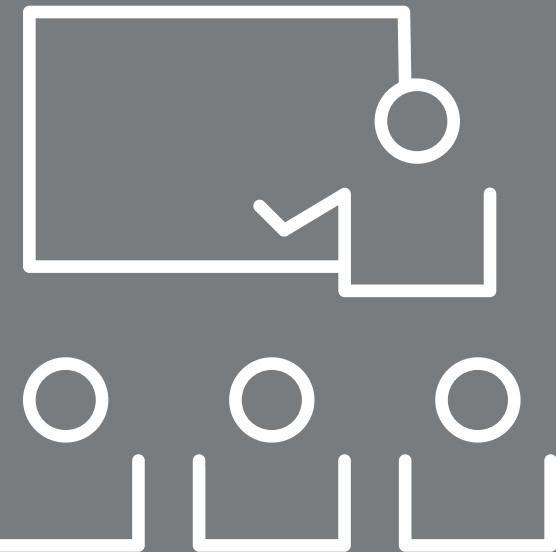
# HOW TO COACH YOUR REPS TO USE THEIR TIME MORE EFFECTIVELY

The research bore out some interesting observations, but based on this, how can you coach your reps to use their time more effectively?

Firstly, work out what the top performers in *your* team are doing and aim to scale this among your reps. As we all know, every sales team is different and working out the unique set of behaviours that work for your market may take time, but this time investment is worth every cent in terms of the rewards. Highlighting the best practices of your selling stars will not only give you a chance to better understand the particular differences between what's going on at the top and what's going on at the bottom in your team, it's also a great way to praise them and give them the recognition they deserve.

Next, take a behaviour based approach when it comes to setting priorities and incentives. Of course, you want to keep your eyes on the prize and that's making sales and hitting quota. But remember, if you only focus on and reward these type of results, many of your team will fall short and growth will stagnate. Instead, incorporate daily or weekly targets into your incentive program that are focused on getting your reps to spend their time in the way you need them to for success. For example, set targets for the number of new opportunities they need to identify, how many meetings they need to have each week or time spent on training or coaching. Consider using Gamification to communicate these goals and results for your team in real time so you are rewarding the behaviours you know will result in sales growth.

Another step is to make learning and growth a priority. All too often, sales pros are fearful of putting time into their skill development for fear it's just a distraction from actual selling. But as the above demonstrates, time spent on training and growth is not wasted, it's an investment. Sales pros who actively seek out mentorship and coaching *make more sales*. If you want to see sales growth, you need to encourage your reps to learn.



Finally, perhaps one of the most important factors is how you spend *your* time with your reps. Don't waste meetings simply checking in on their numbers - there's enough data analysis tools out there to do this for you. Similarly, don't spend the whole time talking at them or barking orders about how they should be spending their time. Be strategic in your meeting and, as you would expect from them, take a consultative approach and *listen*. Take the time to coach them through any issues, discuss best practices and ensure their strategy is aligned with your priorities for them. This is a great way to avoid reps wasting time on leads that aren't going anywhere or bring them back from the brink if they seem to be falling into bad habits.

At the end of the day, what this all comes down to is changing habits - habits that may have become deeply ingrained in your team- and changing them won't be easy. But by investing your time in analysing how your sales reps are using theirs, you'll be able to find the data you need to make positive changes in your team. When it comes to ensuring that your reps stay on the right path, make sure you reward the behaviours you want to see and be firm and consistent with the new team priorities and goals.

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## ABOUT THE CANADIAN PROFESSIONAL SALES ASSOCIATION

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