

Avoid the April time crunch

Easter is just around the corner, so businesses of all sizes and from all sectors should be preparing to meet another business slowdown head-on.



"April is traditionally a challenging month for business because of all the public holidays and is the source of sales stress for many companies trying to achieve their monthly or quarterly targets," says Louise Robinson, sales director at specialist consultancy CG Consulting. "This stress can easily be avoided by getting a pipeline in place ahead of Easter."

She points out that the spacing of the public holidays this year means that there are effectively only two working weeks in April, halving the time available to sales reps to do their jobs. "They need not despair though. There are several strategies to help reduce any impact, and keep sales up during this time."

Sales strategies

Firstly, pinpointing the right customers, early on in the sales cycle. "A qualified leads database can help with this, as the provider will have sorted the wheat from the chaff and eliminated any prospect who isn't genuinely interested in the product or service that you are selling."

She says companies must also realise that not all deals are of the same size and value. "Because of this, sales teams must realise that efforts should be proportional to the deal size. Overselling or too many sales pitches can have the reverse affect that is desired, as it's easy to become a nuisance."

Next, understand exactly what the prospect's requirements are. "Make sure you know what they want, and what they are willing to pay for it. Finding this out upfront helps to close sales in a reasonable timeframe without wasting anyone's time."

While the legwork involved in doing the homework on the prospective client and putting together a list of leads can be time consuming, Robinson points out that a good outsourced lead generation specialist will have a lot of the right information available already. "In addition, service providers that specialise in databases and lead generation will be able to get the information that isn't immediately available faster, helping the sales team get the pipeline going in a shorter space of time."

Link between pipeline management and growth

According to research conducted by Vantage Point Performance and the Sales Management Association, there is a direct correlation between effective pipeline management and strong revenue growth. The research revealed the importance of dedicating enough time and resources to carrying a sales pipeline out well, with companies that spent at least three hours per month managing their sales pipeline, seeing 11% greater revenue growth than those that spent fewer than three hours per month.

"It's not just the amount of time that's spent on pipeline management that's important, it's how the time is spent that makes the difference. If a sales team is spending a lot of time pinpointing leads or calling the wrong prospects, they are wasting valuable time. Accessing qualified leads that are already primed to buy is a much more efficient and effective way to increase revenues. Too many companies waste valuable time in this way and their sales suffer for it. Reversing this equation can be the difference between winning a deal, and letting one fall through the cracks," Robinson concludes.

Louise Robinson is Sales Director at CG Consulting and Database360

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