

PULL YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS: *PERFORMANCE-BASED LEAD MANAGEMENT*

DURING A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH A FRIEND FROM THE AUTO INDUSTRY, OUR CONVERSATION TURNED TO THE TOPIC OF LEAN PRODUCTION. DURING THIS DISCUSSION, I NOTED THAT ICOSALES HAS BORROWED FROM THIS METHODOLOGY TO INCREASE SALES EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTION LEVELS.

LEAN PRODUCTION, A METHODOLOGY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DEVELOPED BY TOYOTA, CAPTURES THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS:

- (1) MAXIMIZING PRODUCTION FROM RAW MATERIALS (LEADS),
- (2) INCREASING THROUGHPUT (SALES VELOCITY),
- (3) PULL PRODUCTION BASED ON DEMAND (LEAD ALLOCATION), AND
- (4) CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (ANALYTICS)

THESE PRINCIPLES BECOME INTERESTING WHEN THEY ARE APPLIED TO LEAD MANAGEMENT--PARTICULARLY ONE THAT IMPLEMENTS THE CORE PRINCIPLE OF "ON DEMAND" OR "PULL" SYSTEM.

A LEAD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM THAT USES A PULL METHODOLOGY REACTS TO THE DEMAND OF THE USER FOR THE NEXT LEAD BASED TAKING ACTION ON THE PRECEDING LEAD. THIS DEMAND OR PERFORMANCE BASED MECHANISM DIRECTLY AFFECTS SALES CONVERSION RATE. THE COMBINATION OF COMPELLING ACTION AND FOCUSING ON ONE LEAD AT A TIME SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES SALES PERFORMANCE; THE QUESTION IS HOW.

**A LEAN PULL SYSTEM
CONSISTENTLY
OUTPERFORMS**

**A WASTEFUL, LOW
PRODUCTION PUSH
SYSTEM**

HERE IS HOW A *LEAN* PULL SYSTEM CONSISTENTLY OUTPERFORMS A WASTEFUL, LOW PRODUCTION PUSH SYSTEM.

SALES TEMPO

I DEBATE THE GENERAL BELIEF THAT A PUSH SYSTEM MORE QUICKLY GETS A LEAD TO THE RIGHT PERSON. IN FACT, IF THE ORGANIZATION IS MANAGING THEIR LEAD TO SALES CAPACITY THE TIMELINESS IN GETTING TO A LEAD SHOULD BE EQUAL ON BOTH SYSTEMS.

I HAVE ALWAYS MAINTAINED, WHEN I WAS RUNNING HIGH PERFORMANCE SALES TEAMS, THAT THROTTLING (MANUALLY BACK

THEN) LEAD DISTRIBUTION BASED ON PRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE (TAKING ACTION ON LEADS) AND ENSURING THAT LEADS DO NOT DROP INTO "DEAD" QUEUES WERE THE KEYS TO SUCCESS. THEREFORE, IN SELECTING A PUSH VERSUS PULL LEAD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IT IS TYPICALLY A COMMITMENT TO AN INCREASED SALES TEMPO.

A PUSH METHODOLOGY WILL CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE SALES PEOPLE EXPECT LEADS TO BE "GIVEN TO THEM." THIS TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT BUILDS A SALES ATTITUDE WITH LESS RESPECT FOR THE PROSPECT AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLLOW THROUGH ON THAT PROSPECTS INQUIRY.

IN CONTRAST, A PULL METHODOLOGY CREATES AN EXPECTATION THAT EVERY LEAD IS "EARNED" BY MEETING THE LAST CUSTOMER'S NEEDS OR AT LEAST RESPONDING QUICKLY TO THEIR REQUEST. IF YOU ARE BUILDING A HIGH VELOCITY SALES TEAM, A SIGNIFICANT EDGE GOES TO THE PUSH METHODOLOGY.

KEYS TO SUCCESS:

- LEAD DISTRIBUTION BASED ON PERFORMANCE
- ENSURING LEADS DON'T GO INTO DEAD QUEUES
- COMMITMENT TO AN INCREASED SALES TEMPO

TIME TO INITIAL CONTACT

IN ASSESSING TIME TO CONTACT, YOU MIGHT CONCEDE THAT WITH HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS THERE SHOULD BE NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PUSH OR PULL SYSTEM. HOWEVER, I HAVE NEVER SEEN A CONSISTENT TOP TO BOTTOM HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAM. THEN THERE IS STILL (IN THE PUSH SYSTEM) THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE DREADED "DEAD" QUEUE.

INHERENTLY, THE PUSH SYSTEM ALLOCATES EACH LEAD TO A USER ON THE SYSTEM. HOWEVER, IS THAT USER LOGGED-IN, OR IS HE OR SHE ON THAT WELL DESERVED TWO WEEK VACATION, OR DO THEY EVEN STILL WORK AT THE COMPANY? IN A PUSH SYSTEM, YOU HAD BETTER BE VERY ACTIVE IN USER MANAGEMENT OR YOU MAY ALLOCATE VALUABLE LEADS INTO "DEAD" QUEUES AND ONCE ALLOCATED THEY ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO SEE--A VERY EXPENSIVE MISTAKE.

COMBINED EFFECTS OF SIZE, SCHEDULING, AND A TYPICAL HIGH TURN OVER RATE MADE

MY PUSH LEAD ALLOCATION SYSTEM DIRECTLY LOWERED MY MARKETING ROI AND MY SALES TEAMS' OVERALL PERFORMANCE

THE LAST SALES ORGANIZATION I RAN HAD THOUSANDS OF SALES PEOPLE AND A PUSH SYSTEM. MANAGING THAT MANY SALES PEOPLE CAN BE DAUNTING. THERE WERE THE COMBINED EFFECTS OF SIZE, SCHEDULING, AND A TYPICAL HIGH RATE OF TURN OVER THAT MADE PUSH LEAD ALLOCATION A DIRECT HIT TO MY MARKETING ROI. I ROUTINELY EXPERIENCED GUT-WRENCHING PUNCH OF FINDING HUNDREDS OF LEADS IN "DEAD" QUEUES-- THOUSANDS OF LOST DOLLARS AND HUNDREDS OF DISAPPOINTED POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS.

PIPELINE MANAGEMENT

PIPELINE MANAGEMENT, THE NURTURING AND CULTIVATING OF LEADS, IS ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF THE CONVERSION EQUATION AND THE AREA WHERE PUSH AND PULL DRAMATICALLY DIFFER.

IN THE PUSH SYSTEM, LEADS ARE PUT INTO QUEUES AND IT IS ENTIRELY UP TO THE SALES PERSON TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE THEIR PIPELINE. IN A PUSH PARADIGM YOU HOPE, YOU PRAY, THE SALES PERSON EVEN CALLS THE LEAD ONCE MUCH LESS THE 5-7 CONTACTS WE ALL KNOW IT TAKES TO CLOSE AN AVERAGE PROSPECTIVE CUSTOMER.

CONTINUALLY FORCES SALES PEOPLE TO MAKE THE NECESSARY CALLS AND FOLLOW-UP TO MAXIMIZE THE SALES OPPORTUNITY

IN CONTRAST, THE PULL SYSTEM CONTINUALLY FORCES PIPELINE LEADS BACK TO THE SALES PERSON UNTIL A FINAL DISPOSITION IS REACHED--COMPELLING THE NECESSARY CALLS IT TAKES TO CLOSE. ADD TO THIS THE POWER OF AN INTELLIGENT LEAD SELECTION ENGINE THAT IS CONTINUALLY ALLOCATING THE NEXT BEST LEAD AND YOU HAVE A GUARANTEED CONVERSION RATE LIFT.

SALES PROCESS

ONE FINAL CRITICAL ADVANTAGE TO A PULL SYSTEM IS THE INCREASE IN SALES VELOCITY AND CONVERSION RATES THAT COMES FROM A CONSISTENT AND DISCIPLINED SALES PROCESS. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO METHODOLOGIES IS ONCE AGAIN ABOUT ENFORCING TEMPO.

ENFORCE A CONSISTENT AND DISCIPLINED SALES PROCESS

THE PUSH APPROACH PUTS A LEAD IN A SALES QUEUE AND HOPES THE SALES PERSON DOES SOMETHING THAT ACQUIRES THAT CUSTOMER (NOTE THE LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE SALES PROCESS). THE PULL

SYSTEM COMPELS THE SALES PERSON TO ANNOTATE AND DISPOSITION EVERY LEAD IN ORDER TO "EARN" THE NEXT LEAD. THIS CREATES THE CONSISTENCY IN THE SALES PROCESS AND FEEDBACK FOR TEAM LEADERS AND MARKETING.

PUSH V. PULL

SO FUNDAMENTALLY, THE PUSH VERSUS PULL DEBATE IS ONE OF SALES VELOCITY. THE PULL METHOD WILL ALWAYS PRODUCE MORE SALES AND HIGHER CONVERSION, MAINTAINING AN ACCELERATED SALES TEMPO. THE METHOD INHERENTLY ENFORCES THIS BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATIONS COMMITTED TO HIGH PERFORMANCE SALES TEAMS.

OBVIOUSLY, THE PULL LEAD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM HAS SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGES IN MAXIMIZING LEAD RESOURCES AND SALES PRODUCTION. IF YOU WANT A PUSH SYSTEM, USE YOUR EMAIL INBOX. IF YOU WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR MARKETING ROI AND INCREASE YOUR SALES PRODUCTION THEN GET A PULL-BASED LEAD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

**IF YOU WANT A PUSH SYSTEM,
USE OUTLOOK.**

**IF YOU WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR
MARKETING ROI AND INCREASE
YOUR SALES PRODUCTION THEN
GET A PULL-BASED LEAD
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONSULT THE LEAD
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