

## ***SALES ... an art, a discipline or just hope?***

*A white paper specially developed for the SME-Entrepreneur on how this century old debate can easily be closed once and for all!*



By **Julien Anno** – CEO - Salesmen4U.com - Belgium

I would like to thank the following friends for their outstanding help and their valued contribution to this white paper:

- ✓ **Carsten Knoop** Certified Partner – Salesmen4U Germany
- ✓ **A.J. Van de Kam** Certified Partner – Salesmen4U The Netherlands

***"Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on when others have let go!"***

*Copyright 2016, C. Julien Anno and Salesmen4U.com cvba. All rights reserved. No part of this white paper may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the author. Reviewers may quote brief passages in reviews. Readers may share this with friends only if the entire, unedited document is shared.*

***Before you start ...*** please clear your mind, be honest with yourself and stay with us for 15 pages. Then take a couple of days to let it "sink" in and think it over once more. If after that, it still makes sense to you and your company, you should do something about it ... soon!

# Table of contents

## 1. Introduction

- Market dynamics or market disasters?
- A blue or red ocean strategy
- This 3<sup>rd</sup> paper is pretty different from the first two

## 2. Some facts about B2B sales cycles

- Our experience tells us that ...

## 3. Easy actions to quickly implement

- Sales discipline
- Sales manager function
- Sales organization
- The best hiring process
- An adequate rewarding model
- A 5-year rolling business plan

## 4. Conclusions

## 5. Attachments

## Introduction

In any business area around the world there are market **leaders**, market followers and unfortunately there are also lots of **bankruptcies** and **disasters** waiting to happen!

Furthermore, in any sales team around the world that you can think of, there are a few hot shots, some good elements, lots of average people and a pretty high number of outright bad sales people **which I wouldn't even dare to call sales pro's**. Hence it is this second fact which in many if not all cases drives my first remark!

But **why** is that so???

- ... Are the sales managers to be blamed?
- ... Or maybe the sales professionals themselves?
- ... Could the reason perhaps be the people from marketing?
- ... Is product development not making "in demand"-solutions?
- ... Or is there in fact something else going on that management could change pretty easily and rapidly but doesn't?

Very few company leaders have either the time and/or the money to tackle all of the above scenario's and therefore **do nothing and keep on hoping** that it will heal itself. No wonder that 99.9% of all worldwide businesses are not "leaders" in their domain but are in fact just "participating" in their respective *red oceans* **hoping** in vain to, one day, become a market leader too.

The book "**Blue Ocean Strategies**" explains and clearly proves that in **Red Oceans**, competitors can only gain a certain market share by **taking that share away** from their competitors, thus making them "**bleed**" in their red ocean.

On the opposite side, in a **Blue Ocean** companies are making their competition irrelevant! I shall not go into more detail on this topic because, obviously, **making your own blue ocean isn't that simple** after all and deserves from an entrepreneur a (very) strong willingness and motivation to build such a particular environment.

You can (and should) however **read the book** and take your own conclusions about your "ocean of choice"! (Details on "*Blue ocean strategies*" at the end of this paper)

What **I shall however emphasize on in this third white paper**, is actually something very different and to some extent so obvious that I still am flabbergasted each day to see that so very few B2B-companies are using it in their daily sales operations!!!

I shall talk about **a number of very easy and inexpensive actions and tools** that you can (and should) implement easily quite rapidly in your commercial operations **which in turn will lead to a far better sales performance** by closing more deals and turning your prospects into customers!

### **A substantial increase of your sales performance guaranteed!**

Finally, please understand and accept that with this paper we don't want to demote or minimize the importance of any other department or activity for the success of a B2B-company such as Engineering, Marketing, R&D, Consulting, Accounting, Human Resources, Legal, Customer Support, etc.

But you can't do it all at the same time and **Sales** is, as far as we're concerned, **the better place to start**.

## A few facts about B2B sales cycles

Below are some of the most common facts that are going on all over the world as we speak and in all possible business-to-business areas where sales teams and pro's are occupied in trying to **turn prospects into customers**.

While reading these facts you will, I'm very sure, **know what I'm talking about** and I bet a smile might even pop up on your face from time to time. You may not at all be in agreement with some of my claims but I can assure you that my and my partners' experience can **confirm the sometimes unbelievable numbers**.

In the later parts of this white paper I shall than **give you a number of easy actions and show you some tools** that you can implement easily and quickly in your own operations.

The following facts have all been gathered and proved through many surveys and research from very reliable institutions such as universities, The Gallup Organization and many others.

### So here we go ...

- 1) Did you know that nearly 20% of the sales cycles (so 1 in 5!!!) need to be closed prematurely **due to a solvability issue** of the prospect whereby it appears, sometimes months into the cycle or worse, **that she/he has not enough financial capacities** to pay for your discussed solution. You can imagine the waste of time and money that this creates for your company.
- 2) Over 70% of all people who say to your sales pro that they are the decision maker in a particular sales cycle, **are actually NOT having the mandate to also SIGN** your order sheet! At best these people may be an "influencer" for their management. This simply means that they **are not the economical decision maker** (the person who signs the order) and could very well be wasting your and your sales pro's time. We have even seen in a number of cases that a so called decision maker did not even have the mandate from his management to conduct a buying cycle and was probably just **doing it to fill his days**. No further comment needed, right?
- 3) Only **30% of all active sales professionals** worldwide have the profile, the expertise and the track record needed **to really be retained** by the company they work for! They are part of the **5% hot shots** and the **25% good performers**. All the others are average or outright bad sales guys. You know what they say ... **"It's better not to have any salesmen than to have bad salesmen"**. The **"average"** performers need all the help possible to become "good" ones but should they leave or you need to let them go, so be it. **Replacing them won't be difficult**. This very fact is one of the most important reasons why facts 1) and 2) are happening every day by the thousands! They just don't (dare to) ask the right questions! *(you can refer to our 1<sup>st</sup> white paper for more details on this topic)*
- 4) Most entrepreneurs are not aware that it is statistically proven that approximately **7 out of every 10** current active Sales Managers, do **NOT have a true or acceptable leadership profile!** One of the reasons is that in many cases a company's best performing sales pro **gets promoted to sales manager!** The biggest mistake that a company can make and frequent cause for turmoil, demotivation and rebellion in that sales team. This can bring years of a substantially lower performance and ... missed revenue/profit! *(you can refer to our 2<sup>nd</sup> white paper for more details on this topic)*
- 5) In many or most sales organizations, the Sales Manager is also responsible for a **certain number of key- or large accounts**. This will obviously always limit the amount of time that she/he can dedicate to the follow-up and helping of the team members. **Sales Managers should be "managing sales"** and not some key accounts! Their only focus MUST be the team and its individuals. They need all the help they can get to better qualify prospects and their stake holders and to "turn these prospects **into customers** as soon as they possibly can". Key accounts should be handled by Key Account Managers!!!

- 6) Are you aware of the fact that the very big majority of sales organizations (and therefore probably yours as well) **do not have a common and clear understanding nor definition** of the different steps (or statuses) of the sales (buying) cycles? This very simple fact is however **one of the biggest issues** for any company to get a **regular forecast of the potential closing** of sales cycles in the current and next business period(s)! It indeed makes it for the Sales Manager and by deduction the whole company management, **impossible to have a good predictability** for the month-, quarter- and year end closings with the (very) nasty consequences we all now.
- 7) In my 45+ years of direct activities in sales, sales management and corporate management, I have met lots of companies where their sales teams were considered **by the owners** and by extension therefore also by the personnel, **as "a necessary evil"**! This **very scary fact** always blew me off my feet because I can't possibly understand that companies and their owners/managers forget that **sales is a STRATEGIC activity that does make or break the company!** Therefore they do **deserve** the best possible "environment" in which they can thrive and do their job which is ... **to sell whatever it is that the company makes or develops!!!** No more no less. Only very few single fantastic products or services, if any, can turn by itself a company into a well performing operation and eventually into a leader in its domain, **without a well performing sales team** at its basis!!!
- 8) One of my claims is that **"sales pro's should devote 90% of their time to qualifying their sales cycles"**! Even in 2016, I still see a large number of companies where **sales pro's are doing all but qualifying**. They are preparing quotations, organizing demonstrations, making presentations, chasing internal resources to help them, get product trainings, seek support from the management, etc. All things that **they should NOT have to do** in a modern, performant, strategic and successful B2B sales organization. Only then will the company be able to expect and **deliver a strong and sustainable sales performance** and subsequent profitability.
- 9) A final word on the responsibility for **failing to positively close a sales cycle** into an order. Very often, if not always, **the sales pro will be blamed** by the company management for missing the sale! But is that really fair?

Has "the company" done **all it possibly could for helping the sales pro to close?**

- Has somebody from the management contacted the so called "decision maker" to check if he really had the power of signature and if not who had?
- Did the finance department check the solvability of the prospect early in the cycle?
- Did sales support help the sales pro in preparing the price quotation?
- Did the sales pro get a product specialist to help him give the presentations?
- Did the sales manager support the sales pro all through the cycle?
- Did you as the owner/entrepreneur/MD joined the final negotiations?
- Etc, etc, etc.

What I really mean here is that even in the very best sales teams with the very best leaders, **EVERY sales cycle above the 50% probability mark** (or status "Qualified prospect") **MUST appear on the radar screen of the senior management**, if not the owner himself.

It's very sad to see time and time again, that it just isn't! For all the good **but still not acceptable** reasons in the world, I'm sure.

**YOUR "Sales" MUST be your Nr. 1 priority at all times!**

Some of the points above were already handled in greater detail in our first white papers **"How can I bring my company's sales performance from good to great?"** and **"How to choose my next sales manager?"**.

You can of course find these documents on our website for free download:  
<http://salesmen4u.com/white-papers/>

## Easy actions to quickly implement

In the previous section we have handled a few of the **common problem areas** that we regularly see in B2B sales organizations of Small and Medium sized Enterprises around the world.

In this section I shall give a number of **easy fixes** which will be able to handle and greatly improve one or more of the mentioned problems. All of these fixes and tools are meant **to strengthen the overall sales performance** of your company resulting in a **higher positive closing rate** of sales cycles and **more efficiency** in your sales organization.

Obviously and if needed, Salesmen4U.com will be able to help you in preparing and implementing these actions and tools. **It's our specialization after all.**

### 1) Implement a simple but clear sales discipline!

I am not referring here to a "timing or planning"-action but rather **to an operational discipline** which will first of all install a company-wide system on how you will ...

- **Define the different steps of your typical sales (buying) cycle or opportunity** and the probability percentages that go with each step or status. Force the usage of these steps to the sales team and make sure the whole company understands what they mean.
  - I.e. when a sales pro says that a particular sales opportunity is at status **"Qualified prospect" and related 50%** sales probability, everybody in the company should need to know what that means.
  - Please understand however, that this should be a **rather simple set of steps** so that it remains clear and unambiguous for your personnel!
- Formulate the **number of minimal requirements** in order for a sales team member to promote any of his sales opportunities to a next status.
  - I.e. when setting an opportunity to status **"Qualified prospect"** and 50%, there should be at least ...
    - A known name for the "decision maker";
    - Someone from the management who has checked this by phone and confirms that this person is indeed the "economical decision maker";
    - Two live visits done for this opportunity by the sales team;
    - A formal price proposal for a solution;
- No single opportunity should be allowed to **be promoted with more than 1 step** at the time and each promotion **deserves** a short or longer discussion by your sales manager and the related sales pro!!! It's not the promotion itself but rather the (good) reasons that are important.
- Your **Sales Manager** should need to have **DAILY control and monitoring** of **ALL** his active opportunities and maintain very frequent communication with her/his sales pro's on their records.
- If your sales manager is pretty junior, **YOU should have a weekly detailed discussion** with her/him to go through all sales opportunities with a sales probability **of 50% and higher** and see what you and the other departments of your company can do to help your sales close the deal as planned. If on the other hand she/he has rather a senior and experienced profile, **a monthly and more detailed meeting** in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week could be sufficient. Don't however wait for the last couple of days or your month end closing might (and probably will) be in serious danger!

Finally, have a short but **clear and comprehensive document on this sales discipline** which you will share with all personnel of your company. They will, as a result, better understand their sales operation and therefore grant it some more respect and recognition.

A vital and essential element for the protection and **empowerment** of your future company business plans AND –results!

*In the **attachments** at the end of this white paper, you can find a template for those the sales cycle steps, the related sales probability percentages and the activities that go with each step.*

## 2) Hire the right profile for your Sales Manager (Director) function!

I can't be clear or serious enough in telling you that **you must do everything you possible can** to search for the right person with the right profile to fill this function in **your** company!!!

This might not (yet) be clear or evident to you, but I sincerely hope by now, that you are at least **starting to seriously think about it** and accept that "Sales" is probably not that necessary evil for your company and that they **indeed deserve the status of a "strategic contributor"** to your success and profitability.

I therefore believe that you are seeing the importance of the person which will lead that department for you.

So, to repeat in short what we wrote in our white paper "**How to choose your next Sales manager**", here are a number of important points for your selection and hiring process.

- First of all, try to **take all "emotions" out of these activities** and seeking help from a specialized outside agency with proven track record will help you and take the burden away. After all it's probably your most important hiring anyway!
- Don't just **appoint your best sales pro** to the position of Sales Manager and think about the problems that you might create in your company in doing so!
- In your selection process, a live interview with the candidate(s) **is just not enough!** There are much more elements about a candidate that are very important and should be assessed. You must **get "objective" insight** on a candidate's true **leadership profile** and -skills, her/his **track record**, feedback from a few **references**, real job experience and **expertise** and finally her/his **"sales" skills**.
- Make her/him **part of your management team** and involve her/him in your decision making processes. You'll be astonished to hear what she/he can contribute to your overall managing activities.
- Good leaders and most certainly **good sales directors don't come cheap** and they deserve a serious salary and benefits package that will "retain" them for your company. After a while, it will pay itself back big time!
- You should have at least **one weekly eyeball meeting** you your sales manager to discuss forecast, the situation, the issues and the necessary solutions. This will ensure that you don't get surprises a few days before month closings.
- And last but not least, do a **regular assessment of the "environment"** in which your sales team has to operate and discuss this with your sales leader. Such an environment needs to be supportive and motivational!

## 3) Implement the best possible sales organization!

Very few companies do need a copycat of someone else's sales organization! In other words your own specific **"total company environment"** will most probably be unique and will depend on some choices and decisions you have made in the past.

This means that also your own sales operation **will need an organizational model** which is based on your own total environment. Once again I can't give you a blue print for your sales organization but these following elements should be taken into severe consideration.

- You will obviously need some **"field sales professionals"**. The number will of course depend on your environment. Hoping to only find "hot shots" is futile, but you should always strive to a good balance of excellent and somewhat lesser people. Never settle for just "average" salesmen and let your sales resources do what they do best!
- It would really be wise to separate your **"hunters"** from your **"farmers"**! The reason being that they are just very **different profiles**.
  - **Hunters** will be specialized and geared up towards the development of your business **with NEW customers**. Once a sales has been done, they will quickly loose interest and start to go look for new "game" to shoot. Going back to existing customers for some upgrades or some new products/services is not a big motivation for them and they mostly consider that a waste of time. Asking hunters to also manage existing accounts, is never a good idea, no matter what they say themselves!
  - **Farmers**, on the other hand, will be highly motivated to **take care of existing customers**. They will nourish them and take the time needed to have frequent contact with their customers to take them **to higher "deep sale"-opportunities**. At the same time they hate client acquisition activities and are generally not so good in qualifying new business deals, with all related potential problems.
- We **always** suggest our customers to install a **hybrid sales team** with hunters for the business development and one or a few farmers taking care of the installed base. This will **drastically improve** the way you handle **prospects and customers alike** and enable you to take full profit of what your sales profiles do best. As a free extra you will create much more motivation and drive in your sales team. Obviously you will have to think on how and when you'll have to move the new customers to the "Account management"-people without losing the motivation and drive in your sales operation.
- Your **sales pro's MUST be in the field** (on the road) and, apart from a weekly sales meeting or the Friday evening drink, there are basically **no good reasons at all for them to be at the office!**
  - This however means that **others should therefore do** the sales "administration" and sales "support". I am referring here to activities such as ...
    - Keeping the sales pro's visit planning up to date and contact customers and prospects wherever needed;
    - Preparing the price quotations;
    - Answer incoming phone calls and emails from customers;
    - Help the sales manager in setting up meetings, demo's, presentations, visits;
    - Give communications support to marketing actions;
    - Etc ...
  - Obviously the sales pro's will need to give their instructions and inputs for most of the above activities but only in rare circumstances will their physical presence at the office be necessary.

We shall call this part of your sales organization **the "Sales Support office"**.

- If your sales profiles, both your hunters and farmers, **have been hired with the right profiles** (see next paragraph), they won't not be product or services specialists! Because that's not what a sales profile likes whatever she/he says!

It's just a fact of life, believe me, and you MUST NOT try to change that or you'll see it in your sales performance and ultimately your profitability!  
Having said that, as a result don't expect your sales pro's **i.e. to give a product demonstration!!!** A **technical** profile, such as an engineer or a subject matter specialist, should join your sales pro to give the demo and/or solution presentation while your sales pro can "monitor" the other side of the table for "body language"-signals that show either "acceptance" or "rejection". She/he can then interfere where needed to (re)align the other side with your company's objectives of that meeting.

In many companies this implies that you should, whenever possible, **add a pre-sales consultant to your sales organization**. This function will of course imply that that person has a few **specific human qualities** enabling her/him to be extravert, well spoken, to like that job and, obviously, frequent customer contact. You can also imagine that **regular technical training** on the components of your "solution" will be required.

- Finally, but that should be pretty clear by now, you will need a **Sales Manager or better a Sales Director**. A dedicated sales secretary might be an additional component as well, but that will entirely depend on the size of your sales operation. In smaller organizations of say less than 10 field sales pro's, such a function can easily be taken care of by the Sales Support Office.

In the **attachments** at the end of this white paper, you can find a template chart for a typical B2B sales organization in an SME.

#### 4) Give your own great sales team the best hiring process available!

We have seen in earlier parts of the white paper, that a performant sales organization **must be manned by "professionals" in their particular domain** within that sales team.

You can imagine that this will imply that you also must have an **adequate, objective and professional hiring process without emotions!**

Your best option is therefore to look for **an outside company** which is really specialized in **assisting SME's** with implementing and empowering that process.

The cost may seem to be high but I can guarantee that the benefits are huge due to their specialization, their experience and expertise.

Just **think about the cost** (see below) of only **one single sales profile** that you have to **let go after one year** due to wrong attitude, weak performance, waste of time and too high required and unproductive management attention!

At least (but probably much more)...

→ On salaries:	45.000€
→ On your own wasted time:	20.000€
→ The company car:	11.400€
→ On lost business:	hard to tell but a LOT!
→ On replacement costs:	12.000€

The average **hiring cost from a professional** SME-service: 12 – 15.000€ depending on the country.

It also does not include **the 6 to 9 months of sales that you will lose** while you are searching, training and integrating the replacement!

## 5) Define an adequate rewarding model for all sales team members!

Part of the deal in building a (very) performant and great sales team is your **“rewarding model”** because above average performance should always go in pair with above average rewarding!

Paying your sales team **“market standard” rewarding models**, will actually (only) get you **market standard sales team members!** And it has been proved since many years and by many research companies and universities around the world, that in this respect **market standard does mean “AVERAGE” performers!!!**

If you have read **my point 3) on page 2** of this white paper about the performance statistics of sales professionals, you know what I mean with the above claim.

Average performers leave you only **with two options!**

- Either you can **make them better** (not obvious!)
- or you **let them go** as soon as you possibly can because in the latter case, they will only cost you (a lot of) time and money!

**Loosing** good or excellent sales **people to your competitors**, will cost you much more than you can start to imagine! Depending on the sector your company is working in, it may **go as high as a few millions in revenue** by the time you have found, integrated, activated and trained a replacement.

Hence, your rewarding model **MUST** be equally used as **one of the rather “easy” retaining tools** that your company can bring into the competitive play.

And think about the fact that next to pure salary elements, rewarding should also include **other benefits such as i.e. ...**

- a standard company car policy;
- a communications allowance regulation;
- healthcare provisions;
- profit share plans;
- a bonus regulation;
- recognition (from the whole company);
- FUN moments;
- etc.

And don't forget, sales team members must always be paid **partly on fixed and partly on variable achievement based components**. The split between fixed and variable will of course be highly dependent on the type of function executed in the given sales team and company but our advice is **not to go below a 50/50 split!**

A last piece of advice on rewarding models is that it should always be **based on some objective elements** on which you would define **the individual components**. Nothing can be more harmful to your company than when people get paid **on how hard they yell** or on how firm they negotiate rather than on common **objective and agreed elements** like i.e. experience, seniority, track record, past functions and performance, etc.

We can of course help you in defining your rewarding model based on the specifics of your own operations.

## 6) Make a 5-year operational “rolling” business plan!

For the last seven pages of this paper, you have been reading about performance, rewarding models, revenue, profit, business, sales and other elements!

It may be very hard if not totally **impossible** to estimate and **evaluate** any of the above without having a set of **bench marks to compare your company's achievements with.**

Sounds evident and de facto, right?

Well my dear readers, our experience tells me every single day for the last 40+ years, that **less than 15% of the worlds SME's** do indeed **have an operational business plan**. Sadly, only very few of these 15% are ever taken out of the drawer or downloaded from a PC or the Cloud for comparison, analysis, decision making and/or update.

Businesses environments **do change more often** than one might expect and they do sometimes in certain sectors, more than once a year! They change due to competitive developments, globally changing financial situations, demographic issues or just company specific changes. Also, the company performances of the past month or quarter may be (pretty) different from the budgeted figures.

That's why I am strongly advising that any business plan **should therefore be "rolling"** and **subject to monthly or at least quarterly updates** based on these modified parameters. After all the rewarding models discussed in part 5) above, will of course have to be offset with this business plan.

Obviously, if needed, Salesmen4U.com will be able to help you in preparing your own 5-year business plan.

### **So as a recap, once more in short:**

- 1. Develop and implement a clear and comprehensive sales discipline**
- 2. Hire the right profile for you sales management function**
- 3. Implement the best possible sales organization for your own specific environment**
- 4. Give your sales resources the best hiring process available in the market**
- 5. Define an adequate and motivating rewarding model for all your sales team members**
- 6. Make an operational and rolling 5-year business plan and challenge it quarterly for update if needed**

## Conclusions

1. It may seem by now that increasing your sales performance **will be a very lengthy, complex and expensive project!**

In some cases where you really would want to tackle, change and greatly **improve all of the elements** of your companywide environment, such a massive change project would indeed be lengthy, more complex and maybe pretty expensive too! In some cases however, that may just be **the only solution to survive.**

If you think that you may be heading that way, we could do a 5-day fixed price analysis of your current environment and give you a detailed report of what the effort, time and cost would be to make that change project come true.

The truth and **the good news however** is that **for most SME's a return to acceptable sales performance and subsequent growth**, is probably not requiring a full blown companywide change project!

Implementing **a few well defined and easy adaptations** in your sales operations, such as the ones described in this paper, **will already make a substantial difference** and bring you **out of the danger zone.**

2. Now let's **go back to the title of this white paper** and give you our view whether **Sales is an art, a discipline or just hope!**

The few hundreds of years of experience of our combined partner network in this matter, have strengthen us very strongly since many years, in the belief that **SALES** is in fact...

**“a disciplined art where hope has no reason to exist”!**

In other words ... **sales can never be sustainably successful and profitable**, if the **experienced sales skills** (the **art**) are not **deployed** by the company with a proper and supporting **professional sales organization** (the **discipline**).

And ... just forget about **hope** because generally it only causes bloody accidents!

We are of course always available to discuss your particular environment, if you are interested.

I thank you for reading.

**Julien Anno**

CEO – Salesmen4U.com c.v.b.a.

More information can be found on [www.salesmen4u.com](http://www.salesmen4u.com)

Call me at +32 495 367699 (mob) or +32 2 3420160

Email me at [Julien.anno@salesmen4U.com](mailto:Julien.anno@salesmen4U.com)

# Attachments

## 1. A template for the sales cycle discipline

Legend: **SM**=Sales Manager **SP**=Sales pro **FD**=Finance Director **OPP**=sales opportunity

Probability for sales	Sales cycle status	Minimal necessary activities
5%	SUSPECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All <b>known companies</b> in your own sweet spot market segment</li> <li>• They have not yet been contacted in any way by any of your people</li> <li>• Therefore they <b>do NOT have</b> an "active" sales cycle</li> <li>• They do <b>not</b> appear in your "pipeline"</li> <li>• They <b>cannot</b> appear in any <b>forecast</b></li> <li>• So far they do NOT mean anything for your budget!</li> </ul>
10%	LEAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SM to set up discussion with SP on <b>why</b> he has promoted this suspect to LEAD</li> <li>• After approval by SM, request to FD to conduct a <b>Credit Check</b> on this company --&gt;<b>BLOCKING EVENT!</b></li> <li>• If any of the 2 checks fails, OPP <b>back</b> to status Suspect</li> </ul>
25%	PROSPECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SM to <b>check</b> if at least 1 visit has been made to OPP by SP. If not done, SP needs to set up appointment ASAP --&gt; <b>move OPP back</b> to LEAD</li> <li>• If visit done SM to set up <b>discussion</b> with SP on <b>why</b> he has promoted this OPP from LEAD to PROSPECT</li> <li>• If not acceptable move OPP back to LEAD</li> </ul>
50%	QUALIFIED PROSPECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SM to check if <b>economic decision maker</b> is known by SP</li> <li>• If yes SM or other mgt team member <b>needs to check</b> if this person is indeed the one <b>who sill SIGN</b> the order sheet!!!</li> <li>• If not the case, inform SP and <b>move OPP back</b> to status PROSPECT --&gt;<b>BLOCKING EVENT!</b></li> <li>• If OK, SM to check if a "price proposal" has been made by SP</li> <li>• If done, SM to set up meeting with SP to start <b>working on a sales plan</b> for closing this OPP</li> <li>• If any of these 2 checks fails, <b>move OPP back</b> to PROSPECT and discuss with SP on an action plan to recover cycle</li> </ul>
70%	NEGOTIATION STARTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SM to discuss with SP if promotion of OPP to this status <b>is valid</b></li> <li>• Preferable, SM should have been joining SP at the last meeting with OPP</li> <li>• If <b>not</b> we suggest to <b>leave OPP at status 50%</b> until that extra qualification of cycle has been done by SM</li> <li>• At this stage SP and SM should at least have prepared and submitted a "<b>Final proposal</b>"-document which needs also to be <b>discussed with FD</b> for compliance with company's T&amp;C's</li> <li>• Depending on your company, this can also be a --&gt;<b>BLOCKING EVENT!</b></li> </ul>

80%	CLOSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SM to check if there is a document "Final proposal" in the systems</li> <li>• <b>FD to check</b> doc Final proposal for the terms &amp; conditions proposed to prospect because they may have changed in earlier stage!!!</li> <li>• <b>SM</b> must be fully active with <b>SP</b> in this stage and we suggest where possible for <b>SM to be present</b>.</li> <li>• If not OK, <b>move OPP back</b> to status "Negociation"</li> <li>• Depending on your company, this can also be a --&gt; <b>BLOCKING EVENT!</b></li> </ul>
90%	ORDER IN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prospect <b>has signed the order sheet</b> using company standard process</li> <li>• <b>FD and SM to make a final check</b> on the T&amp;C's of the registered order versus the final proposal from earlier stage</li> <li>• If all is OK, FD needs to <b>approve</b> next stage</li> <li>• If not, OPP must be moved back to status 80%</li> </ul>
95%	BILLING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance department is starting <b>the billing process</b></li> <li>• Once done, OPP can be <b>promoted</b> to next stage depending of course on company own processes and procedures</li> <li>• This stage allows the <b>SM to keep track of the work-in-progress</b> at the finance department</li> </ul>
100%	BILLED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When delivery is done and billing executed and sent to customer, <b>revenue recognition</b> can be made</li> <li>• OPP can then eventually be moved to the other departments that need to be involved</li> <li>• This will also depend on the company specific delivery procedures</li> </ul>

Obviously this "template" needs to be adapted to your own specific business model and sales environment. We do however recommend that you set up such a discipline in a system that allows for easy usage.

Salesmen4U.com can of course help with some handy and easy tools to achieve that if required. Just give us a call for more information.

## 2. A template for a sales organization in a B2B-company (SME's)

Below is an example of a more or less standard organization **for an effective B2B sales team** in an SME of a certain dimension. Obviously you will have to adapt this template to your current situation. Please note that in smaller operations, one or more functions **can be handled by the same person(s)**. The "external sales support" can also be executed by people from i.e. R&D, Consulting, Engineering, etc.

We do however advise that the "External Sales Support"-function would, wherever and whenever possible, **always report to the Sales Manager**. This will allow Sales to define the time planning for the people in this important function, hence keeping this in line with the needs of the sales- or buying cycle.

