

4 Tips for Transforming the Outdated Sales Meeting

by Jennifer Kady Aug 09, 2016

Increasingly, companies and industry observers are finding that the weekly sales meeting is more unproductive than not. Jennifer Kady, Sales and Marketing Executive at Allego explores the ways in which the sales industry can refresh the way knowledge is shared across companies

In 2016, we don't obtain or retain information the way we once did. Just as news organizations have stepped away from radio/television to provide updates on Twitter and other social media channels, many organizations have begun opting for more mobile-based strategies. And as opposed to traditional classroom-style learning, newer technologies lend themselves for more effective learning and retention of information. The sales industry is one of many that is overdue for a reassessment of the way it trains personnel and shares information.



Here's what we know are broken: sales meetings. According to a study by Verizon, 91% of participants admitted to daydreaming during meetings, and a full 39% have fallen asleep from time to time. The time and money companies put in to hosting inefficient meetings is an unnecessary sunk cost, but in the U.S. alone, \$37 billion is lost to unproductive meetings each year.

So why is the sales industry still relying on outdated in-person gatherings? Without getting much benefit in return, reps are asked to clear their schedules resulting in a loss of time that could be spent actively selling. No one doubts that the knowledge being shared isn't useful, but it can only be useful if it is being retained.

Unfortunately, most companies aren't in a position to eliminate sales meetings entirely, but "meetings done right" – shorter, more efficient, less frequent – can better accomplish objectives. Consider these tips to on how to maximize efficiency, even if a traditional sales meeting is still your company's common practice:

1. If a meeting isn't necessary, don't hold one

Email is a beautiful thing. Not only is it less time consuming, it gives the person something to reference later on. Not everything is worthy of a face-to-face meeting. Make sure you've got important topics to cover that need to be discussed in person. You'll be amazed at the amount of time you save by eliminating those "just because" meetings.

2. Give video a try

Video is quickly becoming known as the easiest way for people to absorb new content, so try delivering relevant information through video. Especially with newer sales team members, video is as ubiquitous to them as email and they're accustomed to viewing, learning and retaining information this way. Not only can video be utilized for gathering and filtering business information, but it can also be used to create your own videos to share best practices picked up on the job. It provides all the benefits of information in a sales meeting while also helping to ensure participants retain the information.

3. Keep meetings short and to the point

Face-to-face interactions are still important, but they should be mindful of everyone's busy schedules. Keep meetings small and short. Constraining meetings to less than one hour helps the attendees focus better and lessens chitchat. Additionally, following a well-defined, pre-distributed agenda helps ensure everyone is prepared and stays on task. At the very least, identify the top 1-3 takeaways your sales team needs to know and stick to only those topics.

4. Assign next steps

Use the last 5 minutes to recap what was discussed and what everyone's responsibilities post-meeting are. This will help ensure everyone is on board and understands their action items and provides attendees with next steps.

It's well past time for organizations to at least consider putting the weekly sales meeting to bed and leveraging technology, particularly video, whenever possible – supplementing with "meetings done right" as needed. Although we can't eliminate sales meetings entirely, with some planning, meetings can be shortened and more efficient, and the time that is spent in a conference room will at last be considered a value-add.



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