Killer Sales Kickoff Meetings
By Janet Gregory

You just announced the date for the sales kickoff meeting. Will you be killing ‘em with drudgery? ... "Oh no, not another meeting." Or will it be a killer? ... “Great, I’m looking forward to it.”

Drudgery: Same cast of characters & topics
Many sales kickoffs follow a similar format. Key people, key departments and key functions each get time in front of the sales team and discuss their own issues and concerns. It’s predictable. It’s easy to tune out.

Killer: A fresh perspective
Take a fresh perspective. Select a key business theme that is important to you customers and have each presenter show how they make a difference to that business theme. Associate the theme with customer benefits, why customers buy, customer retention or the customer’s own business cycles. If the topic does not fit the theme, find another means for delivering the information.

Change the game by bringing in an outside resource to select a business theme and weave it into every presentation. The outside resource can be a facilitator as well as helping you prepare a killer meeting. During the meeting the outside resource can challenge the presenter, test the audience, and add unpredictability, fun and focus.

Drudgery: Death by PowerPoint
Reveal, build, animate. Yawn. Clip art, color, bold. Doze. The information is important, but in too many sales meetings, information delivery is one way and does not engage the sales team.

Killer: New set of eyes & ears
Create rules for delivery. My three favorite rules are:
1) Limit slide-ware to no more than 2 slides for every 5 minutes on the stage (That’s 12 slides for 30 minutes, including the title, agenda & close!)
2) Listen to the audience through question-response, idea forums and brainstorming, and
3) Engage the audience with individual or small group activities.

Get break-through listening, engagement and participation with a facilitator. Sales teams often feel that no one listens to them. A facilitator encourages their involvement and captures their input through organized working sessions. A fresh pair of eyes and ears can bridge communications with management or between departments. A facilitator gathers information impartially, can challenge anyone without recourse and assist with an unbiased review of existing process or policy.

Drudgery: Time away from selling
Good sales people don’t want to waste prime selling time. Laptops open, Treo’s humming, Blackberry’s buzzing and extended breaks are sales people’s way of saying, “You’re wasting my time.”

Killer: Change agents
Create action-oriented sessions. Each topic should feature actionable changes that sales people should make to their message, their activities or their approach. Keep fresh new exciting ideas flowing. Experiment. Try something new and fresh.

Facilitators energize and transform sales teams. It often takes an outside resource to effect change. New avenues for success arise from innovative strategy sessions.
• How will you change the game?
• How will your next kickoff or sales meeting change your team?
• How will the next kickoff or sales meeting be the one that is talked about for months or years to come?

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