

## The X Factor in Sales Kickoffs

by Janet Gregory

A sales kickoff is very strategic in setting the pace for the year ahead. Have your sales kickoff employ the X Factor.

At the center of the **X** Factor is the strategy and planning that go into preparation of each element of the agenda. The **X** Factor is the crossover of four critical dimensions for a sales kickoff: Customer Value, Internal Process, Learning & Innovation and Goals & Rewards.



This approach to planning for a sales kickoff is inspired by Robert Kaplan and David Norton's Balanced Scorecard framework. Their framework is designed to provide balanced organizational performance by correlating internal business process with external outcome. The same concepts apply to an outstanding sales kickoff.

**Core processes differentiate your company to create sustainable competitive advantage.**

Geoffrey Moore  
 "Dealing with Darwin"

### Internal Process

Every sales kickoff includes some process education and training. Yawn. Skill reinforcement should be done at the local level. This is your strategic sales kickoff; energize the organization about process that creates differentiation that wins customers.

It's about execution with purpose. Bring real customer success stories to illustrate the impact.

### Customer Value

Invite a customer to speak at your kickoff or facilitate a customer panel. Have the customer talk about how your products and services helped make *their* business more successful and differentiated from others in their industry. Leave the "how to" and "competitive win" stories for dinner conversation. Ask the customer to focus on the impact, outcome and results for *their* business.

### Learning & Innovation

What is it that you want your sales people to do differently this year? List the top 3 behavioral changes that will provide the company with sustaining leadership. It is critical that this be incorporated in the agenda from an introduction at the opening keynote speech to workshop sessions to the closing presentation. Your sales kickoff is the catalyst for change. Experience is the best teacher. Provide sessions that allow your sales people to experience, explore and exercise the new behavior.

### Goals & Rewards

Electrify the awards dinner with the **X Factor**. You can't have a sales kickoff without setting the goals and handing out rewards. This year's kickoff is no different, but there is a catch. As you hand out rewards for last year's performance use this as an opportunity to communicate the goals for the year ahead.

- Spotlight performance that drove real customer value, with specific examples of the impact and results they achieved for *their* customers.
- Highlight sales people with exceptional execution of internal process that differentiated the company and led them to over achievement.
- In center stage, place the people and winning stories that exemplify the top behavioral changes that will drive learning and innovation for the year ahead.

**Don't just look in the rear view mirror rewarding last year's news.  
Look out the windshield at the road ahead.  
Hand out rewards for past success based on core forward-looking behavior.**

*Janet Gregory leads the sales readiness practice for KickStart Alliance. For assistance with sales strategy, sales planning, training, compensation or any aspect of sales operations, contact [Janet](#). For help in aligning sales & marketing for results, contact any member of the [KickStart Alliance team](#).*