

## ***Demand Your Sales Team Bring Their “A” Game on Every Sales Call***



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“Failure to plan equates to planning to fail.”

### ***Case Study:***

A Regional Sales Manager had plans to fly into Kansas City for a few days of joint field sales calls with a seasoned Account Manager. After airport pick up by the Account Manager and a few minutes of personal catch-up, the Regional Sales Manager began a discussion of the calls on tap for that week. Much to his surprise the Account Manager had little planned. He began to roll out a tale of how busy he had been, but he “thought” the two of them would “stop by” and “catch call” a few current customers that day to “see how things were going.”

The Regional Sales Manager sat quietly listening to the Account Manager fumbling for ideas for the next day. Finally, the Regional Sales Manager interrupted and asked the Account Manager how long he had known that this trip was planned. The Account Manager did acknowledge that he was aware of this joint call activity for over five weeks, “BUT” he had been busy traveling and “visiting” customers. The Regional Sales Manager told the Account Manager that he didn’t mind making cold calls, but wanted to know where the pre-call plans were for the stops that they were going to make. The Account Manager said he thought they’d discuss that on the way to each call.

Growing increasingly impatient and irritated, the Regional Sales Manager expressed his disappointment at the lack of planning that had taken place for this trip. He quickly recounted the expenses that he would incur for meaningless, “goodwill” calls. Less than 20 minutes down the freeway from the airport, he abruptly instructed the Account Manager to take the next exit and drive him back to the airport. He then said, “If you are not prepared to succeed, I don’t want to be part of your failure. I’m headed to work with someone who is ready to sell.” And, he did.

TRUE STORY! After relaying this incident to us, the Regional Sales Manager posed a rhetorical question, “If he’s not conducting any planning for my visits, I wonder if he is doing any planning when he’s on his own?” Immediately after this folly, the Regional Sales Manager began to require a formal written pre-call plan for every joint customer call in which he was a participant. To this day, he tells all his Account Managers that if they are not prepared to bring their “A” game on every call, he doesn’t want to waste his time nor more importantly, the customer’s time.

Sound familiar? Ever been there? We all have, but how can you be assured that you will not be a victim of poor pre-call planning again?

As we see it, there are two recurring problems within this case study that we see in many sales forces:

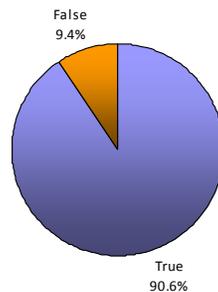
First, top reps are generally the only ones who prepare for calls. It’s one of the major reasons they are your top reps. In fact, in a recent study conducted with global sales executives, we asked:

***“(True/False) My best (top 10%) sales professionals generally use pre-call planning more effectively than the rest of my sales team.***

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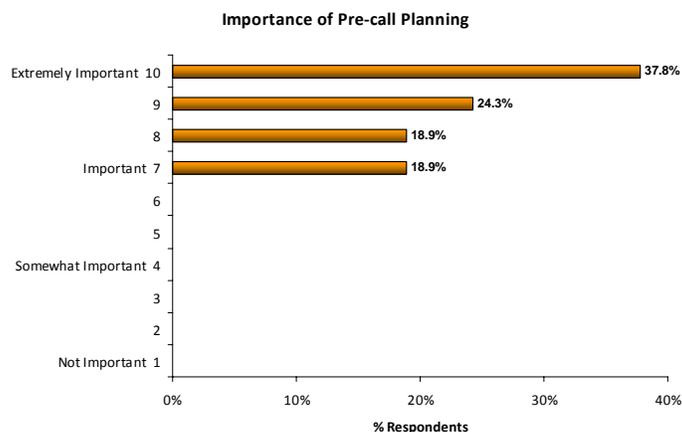
"My best (top 10%) sales professionals generally use pre-call planning more effectively than the rest of my sales team."



The second problem is that a manager has very little opportunity to impact the success of a call that he/she is not personally observing. In the same study cited above, we asked: ***"When not accompanying a sales rep on a call, how consistently do your sales managers evaluate the details and quality of the sales call preparation prior to the call?"***

Respondents indicated that such evaluation is inconsistent at best. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 meaning "not at all" and 5 meaning "always"), respondents gave an average rating of 2.91, not even "3" which means "sometimes." 28.1% rated their managers at "2," 53.1% gave a "3," 18.8% scored their managers at "4," and not one single sales executive rated their sales managers as a "5!" Unless a sales manager is going to directly participate in the actual customer interaction, only one opportunity to affect the outcome of that interaction exists – the time *before* that interaction. The implication for sales executives is that, generally speaking, their own sales managers should be doing a better job of evaluating their sales professionals' preparation prior to live calls or risk poor performance.

Here is the irony. In the same global survey, we asked: ***"Please rate the importance of effective pre-call planning to successful completion of your sales process."***



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Respondents view effective pre-call planning as critical to achieving sales success – 100% of respondents say that pre-call planning falls in the range between “Important” to “Extremely Important.” Experience shows that effective pre-call planning *improves the odds* of sales success. Global sales executives agree, with an average score of importance of 8.81 out of 10.

The message is quite clear. Strong pre-call preparation/planning forces your sales team into bringing their “A” game on every call. It is a proven fact. So why don’t more sales managers mandate written pre-call plans?

Up until now, there were three logical reasons:

First – it took too long per call for a sales representative to identify the stage of the sales cycle; create meaningful competitive differentiation for that stage; draft pertinent open-ended discover questions to ask the customer; prepare answers for anticipated tough customer questions; develop strategies to overcome expected objections; craft closing statements to gain some form of customer commitment; and write a game plan to keep the sale on track, if the customer says, “No.”

Second – there was no timely, uniform, or convenient method to write the pre-call plans. Every sales rep was left on his/her own to institute what they felt were best practices.

Third -- because of the lack of a uniform system of pre-call planning, accountability for execution of this planning was lacking. There was no quick way to submit a pre-call plan to the sales manager and receive feedback before the call.

Precallpro.com solves these problems. It provides a standardized, customized pre-call planning format that replicates the “best practices” of your top reps throughout your sales team. In just minutes, each sales rep can create a written pre-call plan for each key call within each respective stage in your sales cycle. Not only that, but sales managers have the opportunity to critique and collaborate with the sales professional, before the call or meeting even occurs.

You should consider Precallpro.com if any of the below criteria are true for your organization:

- Pre-call planning is important to your sales process success
- It is vital that your sales professionals bring their “A” game to every call or meeting
- Creating uniformity and standard sales practices enterprise-wide is a key initiative for your team
- Leveraging your top sales professionals’ skills throughout your sales force is a priority
- Ramping-up newly hired sales professionals to full productivity more quickly is a priority

***For more information please visit [www.precallpro.com](http://www.precallpro.com)***