

# The Top 5 Sales Mistakes Small to Mid-Size Businesses Make



Every business makes sales mistakes, but many still achieve sustainable long-term sales success. How do they do it? How do thriving smaller businesses reach sales goals quarter after quarter and outpace the competition year after year? The key to sales success isn't that these small to mid-size businesses are perfect; it's that they recognize their mistakes and adjust their sales operations to be stronger and more competitive. What are the most common sales mistakes struggling smaller businesses make? According to data compiled from Sales Xceleration's Sales Agility Assessments, here are the top 5:

## **Mistake #1: Not Properly Preparing Sales Reps for Success**

A surprising 63% of small to mid-size businesses admit being unsure if they have adequately trained their sales reps to succeed with effective sales training. While most businesses understand that proper training strengthens their organizations, more than 3 in 5 cannot confidently say they're doing what it takes to prepare sales reps for success.

### **Solution:**

Establish training that supports essential sales skills and integrates with sales processes. Because sales training is typically directed by the Sales Manager, it can also

be important to bolster the manager's skills. The Certified Sales Leader (CSL) designation, offered by Sales Xceleration, is the country's most comprehensive sales leadership certification program.

### **Mistake #2: Not Establishing Clear Sales Territories**

Even smaller businesses can experience confusion and conflict if sales territories are not clearly defined. Imagine the embarrassment if a prospect company gets called on by multiple sales reps, or if sales call follow-ups fall through the cracks if responsibilities are not clear. Unfortunately, sales territories are not well-defined at nearly 2 of every 3 organizations based on Sales Agility Assessment responses.

#### **Solution:**

Create the best territory structure for your organization by analyzing your markets, overall sales potential, sales team strengths, and other crucial factors. To learn more about setting up optimized sales territories, download our "How to Build a Highly Efficient Sales Structure" eBook.

### **Mistake #3: Not Aligning Sales Quotas to Company Goals**

Do your company's sales objectives and sales quotas align with bigger-picture corporate goals? And even if they do, is the relationship clear between them? If not, sales reps could be undermotivated and might question the purpose behind their individual benchmarks. Sadly, this is the situation in 65% of smaller companies according to Sales Agility Assessment responses.

#### **Solution:**

Take a close look at overall company objectives and compare these with established sales rep goals. Remember that merely implementing numerical sales quotas are not enough to optimize sales performance and motivation. If you link sales rep success to overall company success, everyone wins!

### **Mistake #4: Not Properly Training Sales Reps Early and Often**

The problem of not properly preparing sales reps to succeed starts early and continues to worsen, according to nearly 3 in 4 responding companies. They report failing to do initial or ongoing training to provide a solid foundation for sales success.

#### **Solution:**

Begin comprehensive training as part of the onboarding process and offer frequent training that supplements and reinforces understanding of key skills.

### **Mistake #5: Not Understanding – and Differentiating From – the Competition**

According to Sales Agility Assessment responses, 75% of companies do not have a good understanding of their competition and have failed to adequately differentiate their products and services from competitors. Obviously, this makes it harder for sales reps to stake out competitive advantages, properly position features and benefits, and overcome sales objections.

#### **Solution:**

Work with your company's marketing team to ensure key characteristics and competitive advantages of your products and services are well defined and clearly delineated. When your sales reps know *what* they are selling, it will help them know *how* to sell.

## The Bottom Line:

No business is perfect. But companies that take the time to understand their competitors, build a solid sales infrastructure before investing in training, establish clear territories for their sales reps, and make sure their quotas align with goals will have a 300x+ times better chance of achieving their sales goals. And that's where Sales Xceleration can help. Our sales leadership consultants, serving as Outsourced VPs of Sales, empower small to mid-size businesses build the right sales processes, programs, and teams to drive sustainable sales growth. To connect with Steve Bendzak, your Outsourced VP of Sales, [contact online](#) or call **406.600.7820**.

