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5 ESSENTIAL CHANGES FOR PRESALES DURING A DOWNTURN

Every deal matters during challenging economic times. Here are the 5 essential changes that every presales team needs to make right now in order to survive as a team and a company.

#1 ➔ MAKE A PLAN

If every deal matters, then every interaction with your buyer matters. Additionally, time is of the essence with these interactions because time kills all deals.

Sales engineers cannot afford to take an ad hoc approach to how and when to engage with buyers. Now is the time to tighten up and add structure to your presales process.

Codify your best practices and key presales activities into formal evaluation plan templates (aka, playbooks). Evaluation plans remove the guesswork on what to do and when to do it.

Document your standard test/use cases and success criteria into formal POC/POV plan templates. POC/POV plans reduce scope creep and keep deals on track.

Add just enough structure to your plans to enable your team to be efficient and effective, but not so much that the structure itself gets in the way.

For each new deal, assemble the plan using the relevant templates in your library and customize the plan as needed. Follow your plans, track progress, and highlight/escalate any blockers.

#2 ➔ BUILD RAPPORT, QUICKLY

Your buyers are timid and risk-averse as times are tough for them as well. They are less confident seeking budget approval for new tools and services, even if they have the need for them.

Combat this by building rapport with new buyers as quickly as possible. Your product is surely amazing, but people are buying from people especially right now.

Rapport comes from demonstrating technical and domain expertise, providing guidance on best practices, and solving problems.

Rapport also comes from being a fellow human. If your buyer mentions on a call that they have a new puppy named Bosco, then jot that down and remember to ask about Bosco the next time you

talk. If they mention an upcoming vacation, add that to your deal highlight notes and ask how it was when they get back. If it is important to your buyer, then it needs to be important to you.

#3 ➔ FOLLOW-UP DILIGENTLY

If you are on a call and you say you will do something for your buyer... do it, do it quickly, and certainly do it before they have to ask whether you did it.

Document every action item so nothing slips through the cracks.

Every sales engineer has promised a buyer that they would do something after the call, for example send some slides, prepare notes on how you do XYZ, or talk to your product team and report back about a needed feature.

Then you get onto your next call and the call after that and suddenly it's next week and your deal has stalled out because your buyer was waiting to take the next step until you followed up.

As mentioned earlier, time kills all deals!

#4 ➔ TRACK YOUR ACTIVITIES

Activity tracking is already the norm for high performing presales teams, but it is even more important during difficult economic times for two reasons:

GET INSIGHTS TO IMPROVE

When every deal and every buyer interaction matters, make those interactions count.

When your team tracks their activities and their time on those activities, you can analyze your presales activity data to get insights into what is working and what is not.

Use those insights to structure your presales process and design your evaluation and POC/POV plans to get the results you want.

Guide your team to spend more time on activities that lead to wins and reduce sales cycles and away from activities that are a waste of their time.

SHOW YOUR TEAM'S VALUE

When executive leadership starts looking for ways to cut costs and reduce headcounts during difficult economic times, show your team's value to protect your budget, tools, and headcount.

Your presales activity data gives you performance metrics related to:

- Deal Attach Rate: the proportion of deals in which your team participated,
- Revenue Attach Rate: the proportion of revenue that your team touched,
- Activity counts and person-time: the number of demos, RFPs, POCs/POVs that your team delivered and the number of person-hours that were required.
- Multiplier Effect: the number of times an asset that was created by your presales team was sent to or viewed by prospects during the sales cycle. Assets include recorded/self-guided demos (for companies that use demo automation tools, white papers, or slide decks.

Show your team's contribution to the areas that are most important to your executive leadership by segmenting your activity data and metrics by region, product line, or new vs. existing business.

PRO TIP: During difficult economic times, your executive leadership is laser-focused on profitability. For greater impact, use your presales activity data to show some form of 'presales profitability' for your team, for example the total closed revenue attached to your presales team divided by fully loaded cost of your team.

#5 ➔ CONNECT THE DOTS

As you tighten up your presales process, also tighten up your collaboration with other teams.

SALES: Engage more often with your account executives and sales reps to ensure alignment on deals, progress on your evaluation plans, any blockers, issues, or risks, and next steps.

MARKETING: Share 'technical fit' data (i.e. what makes a prospect a good technical fit vs. bad technical fit) with your marketing team to help them refine their demand generation efforts.

PRODUCT: Document the product gaps and feature requests that your buyer tells you about, along with how important it is for them and the associated deal size. Immediately share this information with your product managers. Your product team is desperate for real data to help them prioritize features within their roadmap, especially ones that are causing you to lose deals.

POST-SALES / CUSTOMER SUCCESS: Now more than ever you need happy, vocal customers that will spread the word about your product, your teams, and your company.

Help your post-sales / customer success team deliver an amazing customer experience by giving them the information they need during your presales-to-post-sales transition meeting.

Share everything that your team learned during the technical sales cycle, including the technical attributes, deal highlights, meeting notes, and your evaluation and POC/POV plans and results.

ABOUT HOMERUN PRESALES

Homerun Presales is the presales workspace that gets you through your day with one place to track, manage, organize, and inform your presales efforts.

High performing presales teams such as Demostack, AppViewX, Graylog, Cortex, INKY, JupiterOne and others use Homerun to:

- Increase in deal win rates (20%)
- Decrease sales cycle durations (15%)
- Avoid wasted time (8 hours per sales engineer per week)
- Reduce time-to-productivity for new hires (4 weeks)

Homerun integrates with Salesforce, HubSpot, Consensus, Jira, Slack, and other sales tech stack applications to keep your data and teams in sync.