

Sales Execution “Campaign” Planning: 9 Guidelines

Securing opportunities for live dialogue with advisors is becoming much more difficult. Yet many sales professionals in our industry will say that the “sales cycle” is getting longer, requiring multiple contacts in order to gain a decision to move forward. It is essential then to maximize the impact of every meeting or call opportunity. Sales Execution “Campaign” Planning asks you to organize your efforts over multiple contacts in order to better guide the advisor to a favorable outcome.

Consider the following guidelines...

1. Create Your Master List of “Touches”

The majority of the meetings, calls, communications (emails, illustrations, etc.) and activities you execute throughout the year with advisors (collectively your “touches”) are typically made up of 12-14 different types of touches done many times over. Defining the list of your most frequent or highest impact touches is the starting point for substantial gains in efficiency and intent in execution.

2. Success Requires Multiple “Touches”

Research indicates that sales process effectiveness gains traction at 9 to 12 “touches” which means you must build a plan for multiple “touches” in order to meet your objective of a favorable decision.

3. Define a Three “Touch” Sequence

Think of each of your significant live contacts (live meeting, scheduled phone meeting or activity) not as a single event, but as a potential three “touch” sequence — something before, the contact itself and something after. For example, an email or phone call in advance of a meeting, then the meeting itself and then an email, phone call or even an activity after the meeting.

4. Build Your Sales Execution Plan

What are the three best “live” contacts to execute with an advisor in order to guide them to a favorable decision? There is no one right answer, but extensive research gathered on the “buying process” can help you build a better plan.

By considering carefully the three live contacts you wish to execute with an advisor and recognizing that each of these contacts is ideally a three “touch” opportunity, you see that it is possible to quickly define a multi-touch execution plan with an advisor or better still, a targeted group of advisors..

5. Align Your Execution Plan to the Buying Process

By aligning your live contacts to the three crucial stages of the buying process —awareness/acknowledgement of need, analyze/evaluate solutions, decide and commit to forward action – we are intentionally driving the advisor toward a decision and will often, in effect, accelerate the sales cycle.

6. If there is no need, there is no decision!

Of the three buying stages, the one that is most often not adequately addressed is acknowledgement of need. If there is no need, there is no decision! See our resource tools on Positioning Statements and Communicating to Engage to amplify the benefit and help you in building a compelling need.

7. Don't Ignore the Before and After

What you choose to send or do before and after your live contacts may be more important in the long run than the live contact itself. What call or email would best lay the groundwork or build momentum if sent before each of your selected live contacts? Consider the potential outcomes from your meeting. What follow through from each contact would help sustain the momentum and build a bridge to another conversation?

8. Identify Targeted Advisor "Pipelines".

It is best to execute a "campaign" with a limited number (20-30) of targeted advisors at a similar stage of your relationship. For instance, focusing on prospects with negligible business with you or small producers whom you have targeted as capable of doing considerably more business are just two of several potential target "pipelines".

9. Make Time for Campaign Review Cycles.

The discipline to review and refine your "campaign" planning at set intervals is the bedrock for sustained success. A campaign planning review cycle might take 1-2 hours each month to review results, 2-4 hours every quarter to make mid-course adjustments and 8-10 hours every six months to reset the "targeted pipeline" of advisors and examine your "campaign". What worked well? What didn't and why? This cycle represents just 2% of your time in order to be more intentional, more impactful and ultimately more successful with a targeted group of advisors.

Worksheet: Sales Execution “Campaign” Planning

Class of Advisors to be Targeted

Ex. Prospects, Dabblers (Small Producers), Lost Supporters (Big Assets, No Sales), Top Producers (with room to run), etc.

Compelling Need or Problem to be Addressed

People do business with people who can...FILL A NEED or SOLVE A PROBLEM!

Who will be Involved in the Campaign?

Besides yourself, who else from your firm is involved? What role will they play? Consider your partner, portfolio management, account management, product or service specialist, etc.

How Will You Specifically Measure Success?

Conversion Rate of a Target Pipeline is one of the most revealing of all sales metrics! For example, what percent of the “target” achieved annualized sales above \$X? 20% conversion is good, 30% conversion is excellent, 30+% is outstanding!

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Live Contact # 1: Consider focusing on building the Awareness and Acknowledgement of a Need

Purpose of the Meeting / Call

Pre-Contact Options (set the stage)

Post-Contact Follow-Up (bridge to the next contact)

Live Contact # 2: Consider focusing on the Benefit of Your Solution and Analyzing the Alternatives

Purpose of the Meeting / Call

Pre-Contact Options (build momentum)

Post-Contact Follow-Up (bridge to the next contact)

Live Contact # 3: Consider focusing on Reinforcing the Benefit of a Decision and Gaining Commitment

Purpose of the Meeting / Call

Pre-Contact Options (build momentum)

Post-Contact Follow-Up (recognize/reinforce benefit of decision).