

# Additional Benefits of Specialization

The theory of specialization can provide a web-meeting sales assembly line seller with other benefits.

## The Theory of Specialization

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Traditionalists often argue that having specialized resources actually decreases the number of appointments obtained and lowers the renewal rate because the specialist will be less skilled than the salesperson, who is the most senior person on the assembly line. This is not the case. As these other resources are spending 100% of their time focusing on their specific tasks, they quickly become über “experts.”

**For example, it has been shown that a sales development representative will typically enjoy a 7% higher “close rate” than a salesperson.**

When any one professional engages in more than one task, it becomes exceedingly difficult to evaluate the individual’s performance accurately. This is because it gets substantially harder to establish reliable internal benchmarks and then to compare professionals against one another. For example, take the professional who handles lead generation and new sales. In this situation, it would be difficult for management to determine whether the professional is making an optimal number of cold calls.

If the number is low, does this indicate laziness or does it mean that compared to coworkers, this person has more sales opportunities and does not need to add anything to his or her pipeline? Compare this to the situation where a caller does not do anything but cold-call all day. In this case, it is easy to establish an optimal number for both professionals and to ensure that everyone is performing properly.

Successful sales professionals are constantly being poached by other organizations. One of the best ways to prevent this is to make the work environment as pleasant as possible so that they do not want to leave. One way to do this is to remove the tasks that they hate from their responsibilities. For example, cold-calling is one of the most unpleasant aspects of a salesperson's job description. Removing this task will likely dramatically increase job satisfaction, which will boost retention and even make it easier to attract high-quality sales professionals. At CrossBorder Solutions, when sales candidates were told that they no longer had to make cold calls and instead would be presented with hundreds of qualified leads per year, it was not difficult to get them to join the company.

### **The aforementioned structure also provides a pathway for professional development.**

Typically, the most obvious route to becoming a sales professional is to move from sales development to sales. At CrossBorder Solutions, this route did not work well. Sales development professionals are typically too junior to be successful in the Hunter role, especially for a sophisticated product. Numerous times I have seen a great lead-generation professional promoted to sales and then fail miserably and wind up leaving the company. This is a tremendous waste of a very valuable resource. A better approach is to have the sales development representative graduate to become a customer management professional. Customer management professionals who have experience actually closing renewal business can graduate to business development, where they learn to close new business in a more forgiving environment.

Finally, with this experience, successful business development professionals are perfectly suited to move into the Hunter position. By aligning the skills of the professionals with the different tasks in the sales process, a sales assembly line seller can become dramatically more productive. In fact, with this breakdown of roles, the seller's assembly line will be in the position to handle up to seven times the number of leads than in a traditional sales operation. Moreover, the operation itself will become much more profitable, as the seller is able to have less-expensive resources performing the tasks associated with making the sale and ensuring customer success.