

Using Sales Engineers

One of the biggest impediments to scaling is ramping sales professionals quickly. Depending on the complexity of the solution being sold, it can take months to get the professional intimately familiar with the product/service being sold. While a good training program and experience on the front line is the primary way to effectively ramp, using sales engineers extensively is a great way to short the ramp time period.

A sales engineer is an individual who is an industry or product expert who can assist the salespeople in demoing the product and explaining its benefits in language that the customer understands. While traditionally, it was impossible to widely use sales engineers due to the travel expense, now that almost all sales calls are web-meetings, it should be possible to ensure that a sales engineer is on every sales call. This means that the sales person does not have to gain the product knowledge to the same extent and can be more quickly productive.

The wide use of sales engineers also has other benefits. For example, it transforms every demo into a detailed conversation between industry experts, which helps the seller build an enormous amount of credibility and trust. Also, the fact that the sales engineer is able to answer technical questions and respond to concerns in real time helped keep the sales process progressing without the delays that typically add time to the sales cycle.

Experience has shown that one sales engineer can typically support three sales professionals.

To make the most efficient and effective use of these professionals, it is critical to ensure that they are taught what to say and when to say it.

Also, strongly consider rotating the sales engineers on a round robin basis rather than assigning a sales engineer to work with a set group of AEs. This will allow you to calculate a statistically significant close rate for them and develop best practices by emulating the more successful engineers.