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**Creating Your 2018 Individual Sales Plan**



**By Bill Todd**

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## **Why Plan?**

Sales professionals, unlike traditional employees, have the freedom to direct what they do every moment of every day. They rely on experience, insight, and creativity when deciding where to go, who to see and when to follow-up. Sales professionals who consistently outperform their co-workers and competitors share one best practice; they create a personal written sales plan and refer to it frequently. A personal sales plan is essentially an individual roadmap to success. It is an invaluable tool that, if created and utilized properly, assists in increasing sales, driving higher net profits, and earning far more take-home pay.

Creating and continually readjusting a well-thought-out plan, dramatically increases your odds of exceeding your 2018 sales and net profit goals. Without a plan, your results can fall flat and you end up reacting to market changes and second guessing the competition. The bottom-line is that without a well thought out personal sales plan, you're always a step behind those competitors who are already prepared.

If you don't not have a written sales plan, you're in good company. Both the Zig Ziglar and Brian Tracy organizations have done significant research on those sales professionals that have written plans and those that do not. Both groups concluded that approximately 20% of all sales people will produce a written plan. On average, these individuals produce 16X times the revenue vs. their co-workers and competitors.

The creation of a sales plan is not a menial administrative requirement, but a powerful tactic that enables a sales person to consistently make good decisions about the most important question he/she faces: How can I generate the highest ROI possible utilizing the limited amount of time that I can invest?

Your plan should include these five primary sections.

## **Section 1: Current Situation**

The Current Situation section should begin your plan. It is a clear, concise review of the specific accounts you service. In this section, you will provide an analysis of the current trends, challenges and opportunities affecting your accounts and the local marketplace.

Special emphasis should be placed on the exact factors and trends that are affecting your top or key (we recommend a minimum of 10) accounts in 2018. In this section, you will also cite, as a benchmark, your individual sales production for last year. In short, how your production for 2018 will be vs. 2017.

## Section 2: Competitive Analysis

The first step in delivering a competitive analysis is to identify the specific competitors you individually lose business to. Next, review how your services compare with your top 3-5 competitors. When writing this section, focus on the areas where your competitors are the most effective and where they are competitively vulnerable.

**The sample chart below will help get you started.**

Provide your best estimate, as to your company's market share, for each of your top 5 - 10 key accounts. For example, we supply 38% of room nights, meetings or widgets, this client buys locally each year. This is frequently called your "share of wallet". You can also estimate that your company receives 45% of the total "spend" from company XYZ within your market.

Next, provide an overview of these competitors' sales, marketing, social media and e-commerce and pricing tactics and strategies. Finally, review your specific offensive and defensive sales strategies to attract market share away from these competitors in 2018.

### Grade Your Competition

	Your Company	Competitor 1	Competitor 2	Competitor 3	Competitor 4	Competitor 5
Reputation						
Customer Service						
Value						

	<b>Your Company</b>	<b>Competitor 1</b>	<b>Competitor 2</b>	<b>Competitor 3</b>	<b>Competitor 4</b>	<b>Competitor 5</b>
<b>Price</b>						
<b>Location</b>						
<b>Social Media</b>						
<b>Web</b>						
<b>Marketing</b>						
<b>Shipping</b>						

### Section 3: Revenue Goals and Sales Objectives

The foundation of your 2018 sales plan is establishing challenging sales and net profit goals. A total sales revenue goal should be reported in this section for the entire group of accounts you personally call on. You should also add any additional goals / metrics that you are responsible for achieving (Guest service, renewals, local market-share etc.). Next, you should have an individual revenue goal for each of your top 10 key accounts. Finally, you should cite a revenue goal for both new (first time) and dormant accounts.

Remember, your personal sales goals are not necessarily the same targets supplied to you by your employer. In this section, you should cite more aggressive “stretch” goals that you set for yourself. In the next section, you also spell out the specific sales goals for each of your top accounts-by month, quarter and year.

In this section, you will also be asked to report on your “personal sales objectives” for 2017. Sales objectives specifically define what you intend to achieve, how and by when, in pursuit of your portfolio’s revenue goal. Objectives are also referred to as performance or action goals. They are more closely tied to your individual account management plan.

**Example:**

- Increase by 25% vs. 2017, the face to face time I spend with the final decision makers for my top 15 accounts
- Aggressively target 10 accounts currently serviced by Competitor X or Competitor Y
- Increase my average net profit per sale by 27% in the second quarter of 2018
- Reactivate a minimum of 13 dormant accounts each quarter during all 2018

Objectives, or action goals, are the rocket fuel that propels you to achieve and exceed your 2018 revenue target.

To set objectives, you must have a clear understanding of the tasks you currently undertake and the number of times you execute them to generate a sale.

**Among the most impactful:**

- ✓ The number of voicemails required to generate a return call.
- ✓ The number of emails required to generate a return call or appointment.
- ✓ The number of phone calls required to set an appointment
- ✓ The number of face to face meetings required to generate a sale
- ✓ The number of presentations delivered in person or via the web to generate a sale
- ✓ The number of sales per quarter per key account required to achieve your quarterly sales goal.

Attached are two sample worksheets that will allow you to begin easily tracking your personal sales metrics? Once you have defined and begun tracking your own metrics, you can create and incorporate a specific quarterly action calendar for 2018.

**Section 4: Key Accounts**

In this section, you will can describe in detail your goals, tactics, and strategies for each key account. Write about one key account at a time. Begin by providing an overview of the accounts' sales and net profit production during 2017. Next, cite the 2018 revenue and net profit goal you have set for this account, both yearly and quarterly.

**As part of each key account review, you may wish to address the following:**

- ✓ The type of account- Corporate, Association or Govt etc.
- ✓ What is their current decision-making process?
- ✓ Can you help them with their 2018 business goals?
- ✓ What are the top issues or critical trends that could affect their production in 2018?

- ✓ Do they have other divisions, departments or competitors that you should target in 2018?
- ✓ Finally, provide an overview of the account specific sales objectives you have committed to in 2018.

**Example:**

- Obtain three internal referrals from Mary Smith, local HR Director for IBM
- Increase market share with Allied Insurance by 25%
- Expand my account penetration through Smith Inc. by targeting their Marketing and Training divisions
- Increase by 24% the average net profit per contract with AAA Mid-Atlantic

## **Section 5: Business Development**

### **New Business**

In this section, report on the objectives and sales tactics you will undertake in 2018 to meet your new revenue goal. 2018 is forecasted to be the most active year for “client churn” since 2007. Job promotions that were on the back-burner, are moving forward in 2018. Corporate departments such as Procurement, Human Resources, Training and Meeting Services will be outsourced far more aggressively than in 2018 and 2017. Corporate recruiters and headhunters will be taking direct aim on your buyers to fulfill a wave of recent openings. In short, all sales professionals should conservatively plan to replace a minimum of 14% of their key decision makers.

Business development is the first thing that must happen for you to significantly increase future sales and net profits. Experts agree that every minute of every day that you’re not servicing an existing account or writing an order, you should be looking for and cultivating new customers.

### **Dormant Clients**

You should single out 5-15 dormant accounts per quarter. Next highlight your overall strategy to jump-start these accounts and the specific sales tactics you will employ. Recent studies have concluded that it now takes 7.6 times longer to win a new customer than to jumpstart a dormant account.

According to American Express, the best source of new revenue is lapsed customers. The American Express approach is simple; ask customers to come back and then give them a damn good reason to come back. It generates results rapidly! Why? You know exactly who they are and you have their contact information. More importantly you know what they have bought in the past.

In summary, if you take the time to design your individual sales plan, utilizing the outline provided; you will be well prepared for 2018 and beyond.

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