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What are 'outsourced sales' and how can they be beneficial? by Justine Fitton

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Full 'sales outsourcing' is the process of a company hiring a fully external third party sales force. Also known as 'channel' or 'indirect' sales, it can be based on shared risk, although there are models where the outsourcer is paid for all of their activity, but the outsourcer covers speed and flexibility also as well as experience in the field.

This sales function gives the best return on investment. However you must be fully confident with the field marketing agency that you select as you must put a high level of trust in them. There is also a great deal of commercial sensitivity involved in handling clients' accounts so confidence in the ability of the outsourced sales team to retain client confidentiality, to operate with ethical standards while improving the sales of the company and exceeding those of the in-house sales team is the challenge at hand.

On the plus side with outsource sales , you are entering into a contract, one that the third party must also uphold. Which means that once you have shaken hands they must deliver on the agreed level of sales for said price. This can also be a motivating factor for the sales team simultaneously.

Once this process is under way, your business can concentrate solely on management and direction allowing you to make decisions without pressure skewing them. You are released from the day to day commitment of running salespeople, training them, recruiting and employing them, applying best practice, sales planning and meanwhile you benefit from all the advantages of achieving sales targets and growth without the worry. You can concentrate on the future- new product development, researching how the customer and market is changing and formulating a way ahead. It is estimated that up to fifteen per cent cost savings can be made through outsourcing the sales function to the field management agency.

Often when financial pressures are on marketing is where the firsts cuts fall. However it actually makes more sense to outsource the whole sales function. They are a way of justifying your spend to a CEO or financial director with the measurable ROI. Results can be predicted and the contract as I mentioned earlier can be locked in to ensure that targets are met.

If considering outsourcing your sales with a field marketing company perhaps try a short term project first. A professional chartered marketer will not need long to establish from market research, the offer, brand values and buying process from which a sales process is constructed. For clients of a smaller business this can actually be achieved in a matter of days.

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