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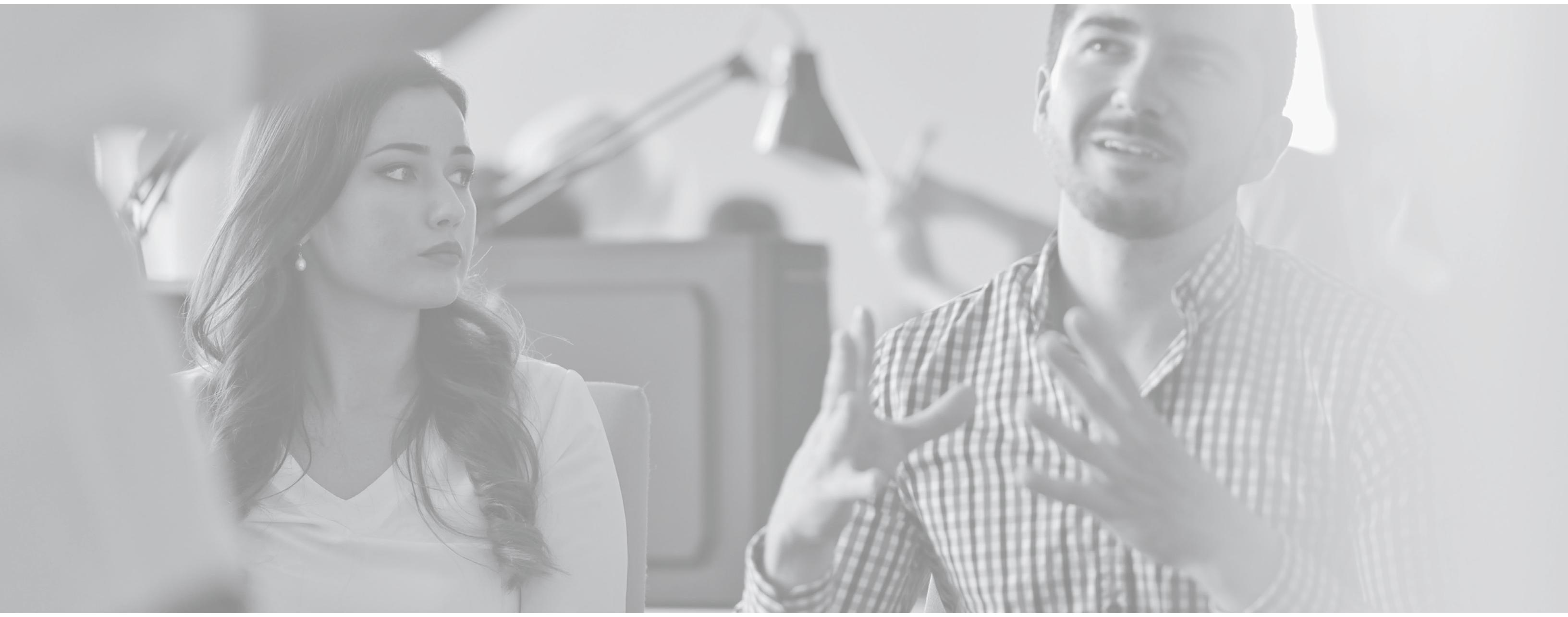

10 Ways to Ramp SDRs Faster and More Effectively

Build an SDR machine that helps your new team members ramp faster and more effectively, setting not just your team up for success, but the organization as a whole

10 Ways to Ramp SDRs Faster and More Effectively

Sales development managers arguably have one of the toughest jobs in a sales organization. Their Sales Development Reps (SDRs) are often young hires that have significant potential to grow in their careers and eventually become full quota bearing sales reps. So while they can be true rockstars when it comes to inbound and outbound sales development, their roles are often short-lived. In fact, The Bridge Group says that the average tenure of an SDR is only 1.4 years. At the same time, today's SDRs have fewer than two years of experience, with an average of 1.3 years, causing even more challenges.

While the career development potential of starting out as an SDR is usually quite high, it means that the SDR manager has to constantly hire, train, scale, and then replace reps on a continual basis—while also meeting qualification numbers for the month, quarter, and year. And because the sales organization relies on the inbound and outbound activity of SDRs as a major portion of business, SDR managers have more expectations than ever before.

In this guide, we'll outline 10 ways that you can build an SDR machine that helps your new team members ramp faster and more effectively, setting not just your team up for success, but the organization as a whole.

1 Clear and Measurable Goals

SDRs are coming into organizations with less experience than ever before. That means setting them up for success and ensuring that they understand what they are measured on—both individually and as a team—is a major key to success. Many effective SDR organization measure performance on several factors, each weighted based on importance:

- Emails sent
- Opportunities created
- Meetings booked
- Opportunities by stage
- Calls made
- Significant interactions or events
- Demos scheduled
- Number of deals closed (by their partner Account Executive)

In order for SDRs to be successful, they need to know exactly how they are being measured and how they stack up against top performers. Unlike their counterparts in traditional sales, their performance is typically much more immediate, meaning they can (and should) be driven on targets that are daily, weekly, and monthly—not just quarterly.

Tip: **Make goals and performance visible to the entire team to create camaraderie and competition. Consider fun incentives (think gift cards or an extra day of PTO) for SDRs that hit their targets or go above and beyond.**

2 Focused Accounts to Target

There's nothing more overwhelming for an SDR than to have an infinite amount of targets available to them for outbound prospecting. While having a massive region may seem compelling, it offers little focus, which can derail an SDR quickly. If she has 1,000+ options of accounts to call, she may only contact an individual once or twice before moving on, meaning there's likely significant opportunity left on the table. In addition, she'll likely spend much of her time pulling together lists and building contact information instead of calling and emailing. Even if an SDR's focus area is huge, help them to narrow down their focus to approximately 80 accounts per month (check out the science and math behind that number here).

Tip: **If an SDR's outbound target list is too large, help them focus by choosing a specific demographic so that they can hone in on a certain persona, business size, geographical area, or even pain point. This not only will help them focus their time, but will help them become more confident in their message, too.**

3 Detailed Yet Simple Admin Processes

You've heard the stat that sales reps only spend 36% of their time selling. Between meetings, preparing documents, CRM documentation and more, less and less time is actually spent selling. And while SDRs have fewer "selling" responsibilities, the trap can be the same—and if they're not hitting their numbers, then everyone down the line suffers.

SDR managers can have a tendency to over process their teams. Yes, it is critical to ensure that everything is tracked in the CRM, but disjointed integrations and too many steps can mean that data isn't captured correctly or that SDRs simply won't complete all of the tasks (or that they'll forget or put it off until later, which usually equals incorrect data or partial notes).

Tip: When determining what the ideal process, consider these steps:

- Articulate your ideal customer profile
- Develop a uniformed logging structure for your CRM
- Determine your outreach cadence (emails + calls + other channels)
- Make the entire process easy to follow and repeatable

4 Customer Stories, Stats, and Quotes

Prospective buyers love to hear stories of how others with similar challenges and goals have found success with the product or service. Storytelling is a fundamental art when it comes to establishing credibility, captivating audiences, and ultimately winning trust—and it's not just for sales professionals. In fact, if SDRs don't captivate the contact enough through their series of emails and calls, then it's unlikely the sales rep will even have a chance to share more in-depth successes with the individual.

Tip: Create a matrix of customer stories that are relevant to various personas, geographies, company sizes, and even pain points or opportunities—this way every story that your SDRs share is relevant to the prospective buyer on the other end of the call or email.

When SDRs are able to hone in on a prospect's interests and share stories and case studies that are directly relevant not only to the sales process, but to the stakeholder personally, the contact will pay attention and picture themselves achieving the same level of success. Sharing customer stories is also a great way for SDRs to talk about the product and its features in a non-threatening, non "salesy" way because, essentially, it's the customer telling the story—your team members are just relaying it.

5 Ample Marketing Resources

It's no secret that sales teams have strengthened their relationships with marketing over the years, and SDR teams are no different (in fact, many SDR teams actually report up through marketing nowadays!). The past decade introduced field marketing teams, which support sales team members specifically by creating tools, such as collateral, case studies, messaging templates, and even organizing prospect events.

Now, the two teams are becoming nearly inseparable—and for very good reason. The recent introduction of Account Based Marketing (ABM) platforms along with hyper-targeted campaigns means that marketing teams need to work hand-in-hand with SDRs and other sales counterparts to ensure that the right audience is targeted and the right value-based messaging is used. As an SDR manager, be sure that your communication is constant with marketing so that they are well aware of what's working and what isn't so they can help you tweak the messaging—after all, what good is marketing if its function isn't aligned to converting deals?

Tip: Hold a weekly or bi-weekly meeting with marketing leaders to discuss specific tools and messages that are working (or aren't working) and determine tactical steps for improving the messaging and templates. Be transparent about your SDR goals and progress so that marketing leaders can help hold themselves accountable (or so that they adopt the very same metrics for even closer alignment)!

6 Weekly Team Training Sessions

When SDR teams get in their grind, it's easy to put aside regular training sessions for fear of pulling them away from outbound and inbound prospecting. Even still, it's shocking how little training many SDR managers provide to their team members. Rather than send a one-off email with a list of sentence-long updates or new customer stories, stats, or competitor positioning, set aside time to review these items once a week during a dedicated session where SDRs can bring up issues, ask questions, and share success stories. This type of safe environment allows them to ask questions and learn from each other.

Tip: In addition to an open forum for questions, select one success and one failure that occurred with a prospect during the previous week and have the SDRs share details of what happened with the rest of the team—both the good and the bad. This level of transparency creates a safe environment and demonstrates that everyone is learning and growing together.

7 Objection Handling Training

There's nothing more paralyzing for an SDR than to be asked a challenging question without proper guidance or tools to help them respond appropriately. Improper objection handling training (or lack of training at all) is one of the fastest ways to catapult SDRs off-script during calls and into a downward spiral of tactical nonsense. It's a best practice for companies to develop a roster of common objections, along with some stats or guidance on how to respond. Even better, savvy SDR managers help their team members integrate the most applicable objections into the sales process so they can address them head-on, without waiting for the prospect to bring them up.

Tip: **Keep a running count of objections and, with the help of other sales teams, continue adding to the list each week. Rather than come up with correct responses yourself, work with other sales and marketing leaders to determine the best responses, and share with the entire team (or even the entire department or company, if appropriate).**

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8 Extensive Role Playing

As we shared in a previous post, [the first 10 seconds of a phone call] can be downright paralyzing. SDR managers may not realize that many of their team members freeze in those first few imperative seconds—especially if they're fairly new to the role as many are. They second guess their scripts, they forget to ask the important questions, they treat the individual as if they're a different persona, or they face an objection they haven't had before. A single call can go one of a few different ways, which can either be exhilarating or terrifying (or more than likely a combination of both) for the SDR handling the call.

Tip: **Role playing doesn't have to be a big deal or something that causes the nerves to soar. Rather than making a production out of role playing in front of a group (which isn't natural), consider having your SDRs pair off and practice 1:1, giving each other helpful feedback. This regular practice will not only help your SDRs have a sense of ease on phone calls, they won't dread role playing nearly as much.**

That's why practice, practice, and more practice is key. Each SDR will develop her own sense of style and tone to make the script her own (and so it doesn't come off as robotic), but understanding the nuances of the playbook is absolutely critical. As we'll discuss in our next point, scenario-based playbooks will help your SDRs stay on track, but the more comfortable they are having conversations about your product or service with others (hence the role playing), the better their conversions will be.

9 Scenario-Based Playbooks to Guide Conversations

The best SDR teams are able to effectively guide a conversation, stay present on the call, and tailor the messaging to the person on the other end. But doing all of that at once can seem overwhelming... especially for an SDR that doesn't have years of experience under her belt.

SDR teams should incorporate scenario-based messaging into sales playbooks, allowing them to stay present in the conversation and guide themselves through the call by asking the right questions, handling objections, and sharing the most appropriate customer stories—all while the call is taking place. With playbooks, they don't have to try and sort through various tools or documents to find the right thing to say—they're always on message and can relax and stay tuned into the most important task at hand: the conversation with the prospective customer on the other end of the phone.

Tip: As an SDR manager, you need to keep an ear to the ground to monitor sales playbooks and SDR performance in real-time. While previously it's been difficult for managers to confidently roll out new messaging or changes to the SDR process, real-time sales playbook software allows SDR managers (and sales leaders in general) to monitor results and business cases in real-time and make adjustments proactively to always stay up-to-date with the many influences that affect the sales process.

10 Consistent, Individualized Feedback

Weekly 1:1 coaching sessions is where the SDR magic happens. But, thanks to busy schedules and conflicting priorities, they often get cancelled or moved to quick 15-minute check-ins that are meant to prevent fires versus providing strategic time to work through prospecting nuances. That reactive approach is counter-intuitive to making sure that each SDR is equipped to handle her active prospect accounts.

Weekly coaching sessions is where good SDR managers are separated from high impact ones. 30-minutes spent with each SDR on a weekly basis may seem like a significant investment, but it's one that allows both the leader and the individual to focus on learning and growing together—especially if the end goal for the SDR is to grow into a quota bearing sales rep.

Tip: 1:1 coaching sessions don't have to take significant preparation. Rather than take on the burden of preparing an agenda, put together a list of 5 topics or questions that each SDR should come prepared to discuss: problematic prospects, ideas for new messaging, working through a tricky objection together, and so on. You'll be a lot less tempted to reschedule or cancel these important 1:1 sessions if you don't have to spend your resources preparing for each one.

About Costello

Your sales professionals know what to do. Costello just helps them remember in the moment. Prep for conversations, ask timely questions, tell relevant stories, and easily sync key insights back to your CRM.

Manage deals proactively. Show managers and sales professionals the gaps in every deal so they can work together to move them forward. Turn tedious pipeline reviews into productive strategy sessions.

Know what's driving deal outcomes. Identify what's working on the frontline and replicate it across your entire team. Give your CEO and board confidence in your sales forecast. Integrated with platforms you love. Costello integrates seamlessly with Salesforce, G-Suite, Microsoft Outlook, and more.

Upload your template to Costello's real-time sales playbook platform and start closing more deals today. Learn more: [www.andcostello.com.](http://www.andcostello.com)

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