

## **Looking Ahead – 7 Sales Trends for 2017**

While 2016 was quite the year as a whole, 2017 is already looking like an exciting year for Richmond Hill businesses. Many of the trends that we are seeing for this year are excellent opportunities for small businesses to leverage for their sales goals.

We are betting these trends will turn your sales organization around in the coming year:

### **Leveraging Data**

This is a trend that we have seen gain steam in the past couple of years, and it is going to continue to grow in 2017. The ability to analyze data will lead to better leads, improved closing ratios, and more efficient territory planning. Traditionally, we relied on available data rather than engineered data. Does your data tell a story? If it's doesn't, it's time to rethink your data approach.

### **Building an Efficient Technology Stack**

The ability to drive efficiency through technology is a blessing for small businesses as we don't have the same depth of human resources as large enterprise businesses. By building an efficient technology stack, you are able to level the playing field. Look to collaboration tools, prospect scoring software and sales analytics to gain efficiency throughout your sales process.

### **Embracing Mobile**

You do not want your sales executives handicapped by a lack of mobility. An old-school approach to the office will only hinder your sales team. Instead, equip your reps with the tools necessary so that they can make deals on the go. There are countless apps that help keep sales manageable yet mobile, such as Evernote for taking notes, Docusign for getting that closing signature on the spot, or Dropbox so they can move files around without a laptop present. More than just the apps it's the mindset – sales is an on-the-go job that needs to adapt to the client's schedule.

### **Merging Sales Roles**

In 2017 we will continue to see the traditional sales role adapt and evolve into one that reflects the changing business landscape and what that means for the customer journey. What was once a very linear sales cycle has completely transformed, and sales roles need to reflect that. This is particularly true for sales in small businesses, where the ability to wear many hats has already been necessitated. Sales and Marketing, or Sales and Technical Sales, where they once had clearly delineated lines are in some cases becoming one role as the buying cycle changes. As the roles of marketers and technical sales gain prominence, sales training will become a critical onboarding component so that

the ability to close deals is merged with the knowledge and skills necessary for the new client journey.

## **Being Social**

Social selling is a growing trend that is poised to really break out in 2017. Many people assume that this style of selling, which leverages social media to build relationships, is restricted to B2C sales. This is not the case. B2B sales are just as dependent on building long-lasting, trusting relationships and “getting social” online is an efficient and cost-effective way to deepen your key sales relationships. In addition to relationship building, continue to expand your use of social media in sales to generate awareness for your brand. In the old days, we used to build pamphlets and brochures; now, a social media campaign is a key component for disseminating information to clients while keeping your business top of mind.

## **The Recurring Revenue Model**

The business landscape is a product of its times, and we are definitely in a period where change is the only thing that is reliable – that and the recurring revenue model. Unlike the traditional business models which see periods of great fluctuation, by keeping to a recurring business model finances remain steady. This allows for greater predictability of your business’s financial outlook, which can greatly help financial and sales planning. We are seeing the effects of this trend in popular media where much of the content distribution has moved to a subscription-based streaming service.

## **Agility**

In today’s sales climate, trends move quickly and sales executives need to be able to adapt just as fast. An agile sales team is prepared to go with the flow and is ready to modify as necessary depending on the circumstances. As we said earlier, the customer journey has greatly changed and an agile team is best prepared to adapt accordingly. While the changing needs of your customer’s journey are one thing, an agile team is also better prepared for any external environmental changes. This can mean being ready to compensate for a trend that is not in your business’s favor, or it can mean being ready to jump on the next wave before your competitor.

We here at Change Connect anticipate a robust 2017, and Richmond Hill businesses should as well. These trends are excellent opportunities for small businesses to drive exciting changes and meaningful growth in your sales.