

Business 101

Breaking Down The Axe Vs. Chainsaw In Arming Your Staff

by Ronald E. Lang

Which one will win cutting down a forest of trees? It is an obvious choice, but many companies do not

apply this analogy to their business. For example, you have a sales and client account management process that your sales and/or client serv-

ices team follow. Have you considered how much time it takes for them to do their job and/or respond to their clients needs? If not, your

company is using the axe, when it should be using the chainsaw.

One of the biggest complaints from sales teams is administrative work. Sales reps often spend too much time making calls or sending e-mails to retrieve client information or fill out forms. If this is true, why wouldn't a company invest in technology to increase sales by scaling down paper work?

By reviewing your sales teams' activities and identifying areas that can be automated, you could save several workdays per month. Using the average sales per workday for one sales rep this would be a significant increase in sales for the month and year. When multiplied for the entire sales team, this productivity increase will benefit the entire team. Based on the increase in sales, the project investment could be justified in less than 18 months. What is the net business impact to your top-line revenue? The figure will not only be significant but might stun you when you review where the lack of productivity is.

Training plays a significant role with the application of technology. Just because you provide a laptop and an excellent software solution doesn't mean they will use it effectively. It's similar to presenting a chainsaw they don't know how to turn on. At that point, you'd think the axe took more effort, but at least it worked. Even with sharpening, the axe won't cut them down quicker. Without training, this is exactly what would happen to your organization. Always budget 30-40 percent over your overall project for training on new software.

What if you purchased a chainsaw but it wasn't as effective as you expected? Many organizations think a basic database will solve all their problems by having information in a central location, but this is mostly incorrect. In business, a technological solution must solve basic requirements and reduce dependency on human, financial and infrastructure resources. It is important to take a step back, reassess, get expert advice, develop a plan and then execute it.

A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, will store the business intelligence and can help drive a sales rep through the process. But the vision of the business and the leadership will be the motivating force on the direction the company.

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