

7 Tips For Conference Calls Your Sales Team Won't Hate



Successful salespeople are at their best in one-on-one conversations. They connect with customers by listening actively, leading a conversation, and expressing themselves with body language. Conference calls present a different challenge.



You're also up against the unique challenges of conference calling:

- Participants can be hesitant to give their opinion, because they don't get the positive feedback of head nods and smiles that they would in person.
- Discussions can get confusing if many voices chime in at once. Sometimes you aren't sure who's speaking. Is it the boss, giving a directive? Or a junior salesperson, offering a suggestion?
- Technical challenges can delay calls or make it hard to hear what's being said.

Conference calls require more preparation and firmer guidance than in-person meetings. But since your sales staff is out selling rather than in the office—we hope—only a remote meeting will work. Here's how to have one your employees won't despise.

1) Give Your Team Time To Prepare

No meeting should happen without an agenda. Complete the agenda and send it to your team at least two days ahead of time—more, if your salespeople often lose full days due to travel.

An agenda keeps people on task, makes clear why the call is being held, and gives the meeting a clear end point—so your salespeople can get back to selling.



Communicate Like A Leader. "They are checking email, or talking to other people in the office."

For every sales meeting, identify at least one agenda item that a member of your team can lead. This will ensure their engagement and make the entire team feel more responsibility for participating. When it's their turn to lead, they'll want their colleagues to do the same.

2) Start On Time, And With A Burst Of Engagement

Many conference calls start with a thud—the few minutes after the supposed start time when everyone waits for stragglers to join the call. Don't let this happen on your call.

Waiting for latecomers only aggravates the problem—if people know you'll wait for them, they have no incentive to be on time.

Worse, you lose the attention of the audience you already have. "As you wait," says Booher, "the people who were on time get distracted."

Instead, start right on time with a question that gets your team talking. A few suggestions:

- What's the most interesting sales call you made this week?
- What was the first big sale you ever made?



3) Set Ground Rules

Conference calls require a unique set of ground rules. You'll want to establish the ones that work best for your sales team, but the two most important are:

- Announce your name whenever you speak.
- Mute yourself unless you are speaking.

Announce these rules at the start of every call, and you'll lessen the confusion that can make conference calls frustrating.

"If people aren't sure who is speaking, they worry about who said what and what that means, rather than focusing on their role in the call," says Dianna Booher.

4) Recognize Performance

Every sales staff meeting should reserve time for success stories. "Salespeople love recognition," writes sales expert Mark Hunter. "Don't make it something you get to only if there is time. By being consistent and doing it every meeting, your sales team will look forward to attending."

Design a form of recognition that will cycle through the team—you don't want to just reward your star performers every time.

5) Keep The Conversation Rolling



visual cues that might otherwise tell them they've wandered from the point.

Step in:

- When discussions go on too long. Suggest that the people having the endless discussion continue it later, in a separate call.
- When more than one person talks. Recognize both speakers, and establish an order for each to have their say.
- When anyone finishes speaking. Recap the person's statement, then redirect the conversation toward someone else. "Good point about getting more consistent with our expense guidelines, Connie. How about you, Steve, are you having the same problem?"
- When someone's unmuted phone disrupts the call. The barking of a sales rep's agitated Chihuahua will unravel all the hard work you put into leading the call. Politely identify the noise and suggest a solution. "Sounds like someone's dog is hungry, could you please mute your phone and pour out some kibbles?"

6) Record The Call

For busy sales teams, getting six out of ten team members on the same call is sometimes as good as you're going to do. A recording may be the only way that a sales team member can get the information they need.



expectation that they are responsible for knowing everything that was covered on the call.

7) Follow Up With A Recap

A written recap of the call, delivered within two business days, reinforces what you said and decided on the call.

Within the recap, assign responsibility and due dates for any action items. Sharing these items with the entire group will help motivate your employees to complete the items on time—they won't want to let their colleague down.

Your leadership is the key to a successful sales staff conference call. As the leader of the call, you have to work hard to make up for the limitations of the technology. Sales team conference calls are the one time you can share important product updates and successful sales techniques with your whole team. Done right, they will make your job easier, and your sales number grow.

CONFERENCE CALL TIPS

SHARE:





AUTHOR

Kurt

Kurt Birkenhagen heads up sales and marketing efforts for conferencing and collaboration company - Vast Conference. As an enthusiastic client advocate, Kurt is focused on design and product development working to deliver useful new features to our conferencing services.

 COMMENTS 0

 THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO COMMENTS.

Add your comment here...

Name (Required)

Email (Required)

Website URL

