



### ***Ditch The Nets, Pick Up A Harpoon***

*How we've increased profits by 10% in <90 days*

By Mark Faust

How often have you challenged your team or yourself to do more or sell more by focusing on productivity factors like setting more appointments or completing more customer calls per day etc.? Yet have you ever looked at your results and known in your gut that you could be selling much more in revenue, or that you could be getting much more valuable work accomplished?

Too often I have seen leadership get too focused on ginning up productivity with a net effect that results suffer as the team begins to focus on being more “busy” and not accomplishing great results.

In less than 90 days I have seen many companies dramatically increase their sales funnels and ultimately revenues by shifting the focus from quantity to quality of selling efforts.

One story had to do with a third generation product company. Compensation was tied to number of sales calls almost as much as it was to sales results. The sales team had developed ingenious ways to fill their calendar with a high quantity of “sales” calls that were of little value but helped them to earn extra bonuses.

We made three small changes. First we directed the sales team to no longer focus on making calls to prospects that could not amount to more than \$50,000 and to redirect those opportunities to inside sales. Second we told them to replace the time spent with those small customers with six and seven figure prospects. Third we shifted the productivity bonuses toward each sales rep’s identifying a healthy qualified list of those larger “whale” prospects and bonuses for verified clarification of opportunities that were identified by those whale target’s checking off a list of prioritized opportunity and improvement areas from a checklist that we developed.

If the sales rep had more than 20 qualified leads and saw even just one or two of them every week and had the check list filled out by the prospects, not only did sales compensation increase by more than 40% but the growth rate for the company was many times what it ever was before.

The fact is that **most any company could fire some percentage of its worst customers, prospects and practices and redirect that time and energy toward growing or acquiring their largest of ideal customers with great results.**

I recommend that you complete a quick analysis of how much time your sales team spends on average with your largest account potentials and your smallest account potentials. There will be some line of demarcation that will segment your targets into



three or four echelons of value. Make and communicate your decision of what to stop doing and where exactly to redirect that time and energy that has been freed up.

This practice has its roots in Peter Drucker's Five Most Important Questions for Every Business. Question number 2 and 4, Who is your customer? and What are your results? I would just add the qualifier, who is your IDEAL customer. I've seen ratios where 95% of the results are coming from 5% of the customers and only 5% of the sales team's activity is with those 5%. In one company we were able to double in 18 months by simply firing the bottom 10% of customers and doubling the time on those top 5% of customers and prospects.

After you and your team start to get the taste of big game hunting, you will find that your better reps will begin to have a gleam in their eye that is more akin to Captain Ahab going after Moby Dick than a fisherman baiting a number 12 hook.

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Since 1990 Mark Faust has run [www.EchelonManagement.com](http://www.EchelonManagement.com) a growth and turnaround consultancy, providing facilitators and speakers who've worked with clients from the c-level of the Fortune 500 as well as owners of multi-generational family owned companies. For a free Problem Solving or Innovation Growth Session and a copy of **Growth or Bust!**, Mark can be reached at: [Mark@EM1990.com](mailto:Mark@EM1990.com) or [513-621-8000](tel:513-621-8000) Copies of Faust's book, **High Growth Levers** are available at a discount from Chad Davidson at [859-581-2000](tel:859-581-2000) for bulk orders for team reading.

