



THE ROLE
OF A
SALES LEADER

Uppercut First

Don't count the day , Make the days count

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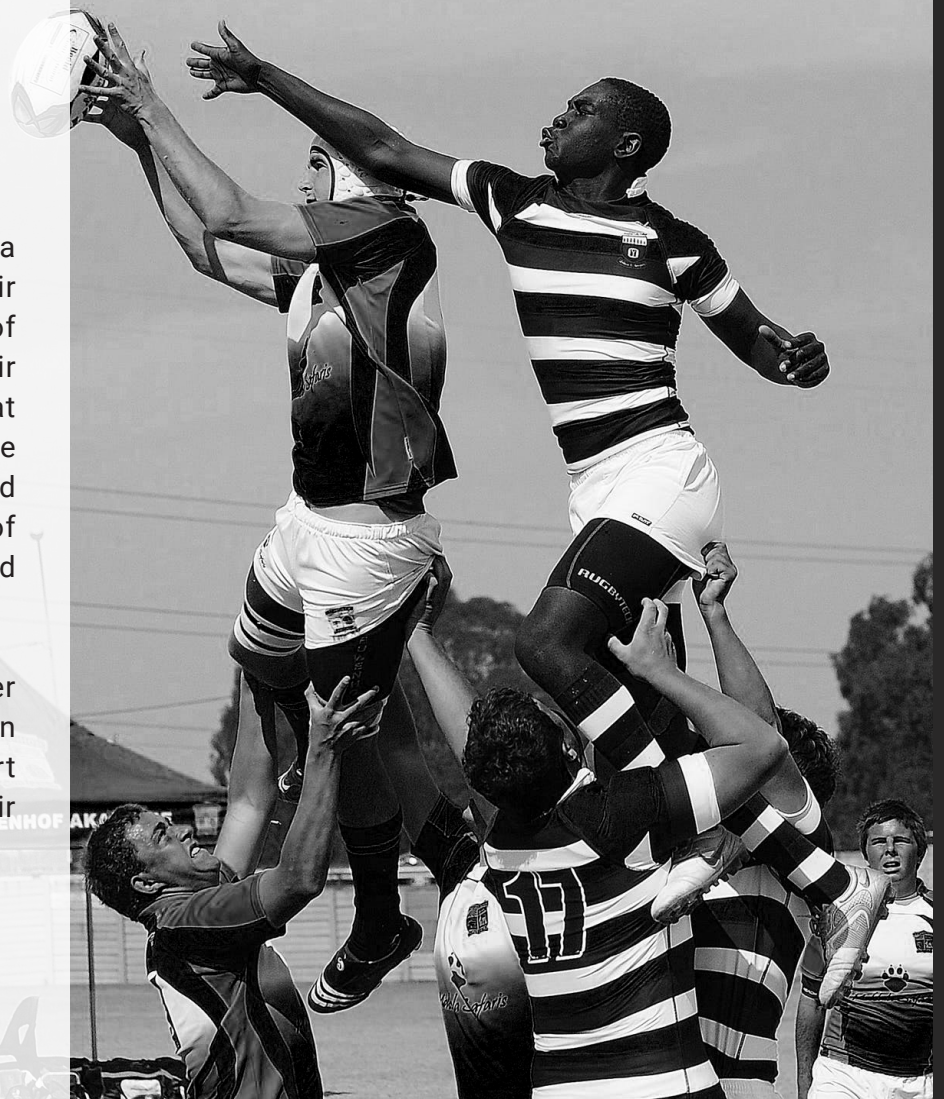
Many founders lack a background in sales. They can get past the MVP stage, winning their first customers, but when a startup scales, the art, passion, and dedication of a CEO are no longer enough to close deals.

At this point in startup life, co founders tend to hunt for exceptional talent to help everyone deliver. But is providing deals the only thing you should expect from a sales leader? **What are the top five things they should excel in?**

PIPELINE & GROWTH

A sales leader will create a robust pipeline. They will help their team be creative and find new ways of hunting deals, whether by using their network, grabbing a few speakers at the end of an event, or spending time thinking about marketing – demand generation, the fundamentals of an online acquisition, and the lead generation process.

While your sales leader should accompany their team in meetings, it should only be to support development, never to sell on their behalf.



FORECASTING

MEDDIC is not the sole methodology out there to manage a forecast. It is, however, an undeniably powerful tool when it comes to conducting a diagnostic and a checklist. You should expect your sales leader to forecast quarterly and to update you weekly in the last month of the quarter. They should make a call at the beginning of the quarter accurate to within 5% of the actual closing.

Too often, a deal is forecasted based on a sizable objective theme such as 'the prospect wishes to engage in Digital acceleration.' Although the theme is an excellent ice breaker in the discovery phase, it is not grounds enough for the deal to figure in your sales forecast. Your sales leader's role will be to understand the possible impacts of not digitizing fast enough, such as losing revenue and market share or increasing operating costs. These negative business consequences are the motivation to find a **budget allocation to your solution and a date and time to buy** and avoid digitizing delays and associated impacts.

A sales leader can see through fake deals and will be able to pivot back to the discovery phase, at the very beginning of the sales process, where necessary.



DEFINE AND EXECUTE ON AN 'OPERATING RHYTHM.'

Sales are, by definition, chaos. Execution is imperative in such a dynamic environment. To prevent double-booking and focus on delivering successful meetings, your sales leader must define an 'operating rhythm' and therefore set expectations before every session.

A sales leader should:

TWICE A WEEK	Interact and brainstorm with peers (R&D, Customer Success, Marketing)
ONCE A WEEK	Conduct a one-to-one with each sales representative, with KPIs (number of meetings conducted and booked, pipeline created, forecast progression and accuracy, actions around personal development, etc.)
	Conduct a forecast review (they should use a methodology and stick to it for each opportunity review)
	Organise a team meeting with a predefined and shared agenda (they should choose someone in the team to share a particular successful story – making sure peer-to-peer learning and sharing plays a part in the team meeting)
QUARTERLY	Organise a territory plan and a business review (holding their team accountable for the quarter number and delivery while committing non-sales groups and resources to support the growth and closing strategy)
AD-HOC	Participate in keynotes and PR events and transformational projects and technology implementation (call-recording, forecasting tools, sales automation, effective content generation, management, etc.)



RECRUITMENT

Experienced sales leaders know you need a **pipeline of candidates** as much as you need a customer pipeline because:

1. You might promote someone.
2. Someone might leave.
3. You might need to get rid of someone performing poorly.

And if you wait for one of these to happen to start looking for the perfect candidate, you will lose nine months. Being on the hunt for the perfect candidate at all times makes someone a good sales leader. You should not delegate the search entirely to someone else; it should always be a shared strategy. Top sales reps work hand in hand with their SDRs, and leading sales leaders work with their recruitment agency or internal HR department to identify top candidates.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

All of this will only work if your sales leader is adaptable. The world changes at an incredible pace, and this is why you must hire someone with tremendous learning and unlearning skills.

How can you tell others what to do if you are not willing to learn, not ready to dedicate time to becoming a better version of yourself?

A sales leader should take time to read up on what others are doing, attend webinars, watch videos from peers, and have mentors. No matter what your background, there is always something new to learn. Something you should expect from any member of your team no matter their level of seniority.

Nelson Mandela: 'How do you inspire your team to do their best?'

Francois Pienaar: 'By example. I've always thought to lead by example, Sir.'