Breakthrough, Inc
Accelerating Revenue Profitably

A Sales Process Adoption Manifesto
Seven Steps to Ensure Sales Process Adoption
By Ron Snyder

Wouldn't it be nice if you could select a new method or tool and not have to do anything else to have your team use it and produce dramatic improvement in performance? Unfortunately, members of the team are already busy and having them do anything different takes effort on their part and yours. Resistance within the organization- especially the user base- and poor management of the process are the two biggest reasons new methods and tools fail to produce their intended results.

However, the effort is well worth it as it can dramatically:
- Increase sales
- Improve predictability / forecast accuracy
- Enhance sales efficiency and effectiveness
- Drive team effectiveness

The following process helps people rapidly embrace the adoption of new tools and methods. Missing any of these steps slows progress and increases time and cost. Though this process largely sequential, some steps can occur in parallel.

1. CREATE URGENCY
- Identify user needs and how you help them do their job faster, easier , better
- Understand competing pressures area

Obstacles:
- Dismissing the approach because, "we tried it before and it didn't work"
- Organizational arrogance
- Complacency due to lack of visible crisis, low performance standards and insufficient feedback perpetuates clinging to the status quo
- Thinking steps in this process can be skipped
- Not clarifying how the approach solves the problem and improves results

2. GATHER SPONSORSHIP
- Put together a leadership team with enough power to lead the change process
- Ensure the sponsorship group works together toward a common objective

Obstacles:
- Underestimating the challenges in engaging adoption and the importance of a strong, guiding coalition
- Trust issues among members of the sponsorship team
- Not addressing conflicting metrics, goals and agendas
- Cultural issues, including arrogance and the "not invented here" syndrome

3. DEVELOP A VISION AND STRATEGY
- Create a vision to guide the effort
- Develop strategies for achieving the vision
- Optional: establish a pilot group for testing and fine-tuning the approach

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- Establish clear metrics and how / when they will be measured

Obstacles:
- Underestimating the importance of having and selling a clear vision and reason for the change… and the role it plays in helping to direct, align and inspire action
- Failing to emphasize the value of individual and team learning for on-going success
- Cultural issues, i.e. taking short cuts or insufficient focus on any one initiative

4. COMMUNICATE THE OBJECTIVE
- Communicate the intended outcome and why you are excited about it
- Use every vehicle possible to constantly communicate
- Make sure sponsors and managers model the expected behavior

Obstacles:
- Not clarifying what each person needs to do, the support they will get and how performance will be measured
- Thinking you have communicated enough
- The sponsorship / management teams don't examine their actions / "walk-the talk"
- Leadership loses enthusiasm for this project and moves on to the next new idea

5. ENSURE ACTION
- Have people use the new methods/ tools
- Remove obstacles that undermine adoption
- Encourage and reward risk-taking and nontraditional approaches
- Provide needed support and promote learning
- Monitor progress and act quickly to improve adoption

Obstacles:
- Allowing barriers and breakdowns to block use of new methods and tools
- Failure to examine existing systems and create new ones that support the vision and eliminate those that don't
- Insufficient leadership engagement to generate broad based action
- Resistance to change and fear of undesirable consequences

6. PUBLICIZE SHORT-TERM WINS
- Measure performance and identify "wins"
- Engage management to enable success of the new approach
- Visibly recognize and reward people who achieved wins and made them possible

Obstacles:
- Failing to focus on short-term wins
- Lack of celebration, acknowledgement and rewards for those who achieve the wins
- Without feedback, the team assumes no progress has been made

7. BROADEN ADOPTION AND CHANGE
- Articulate the connections between new behaviors and organizational success
- Use increased credibility to change systems and procedures that don't support the change
- Reinvigorate the process with new initiatives and change agents
- Hire, promote, and develop people / leaders who can implement the needed changes

Obstacles:

- Declaring victory too soon
- Not leveraging the progress already made to broaden adoption
- Failing to connect specific new behaviors and attitudes with improved performance
- Lacking the necessary leadership and management capabilities

You need this kind of process to ensure you get the intended results from new methods and tools!

This was informed by John Kotter's <u>Leading Change</u>.

About the Author
Ron Snyder
President of Breakthrough, Inc.

As a sales and marketing consultant, for the past 22 years, Ron has helped companies dramatically improve their sales and marketing results in complex selling environments. Results include:

- Achieving sales targets
- Improving conversion rates
- Better sales process velocity and predictability
- Controlling costs of sales and marketing

He has worked with industry leaders, such as HP, Cisco, Siemens, Philips, Alliance Imaging, Synopsys, and rapidly-growing companies such as NetSuite, Zeus Technology and Zonare.

Prior to that, in his 11 years at HP, Ron was consistently recognized as a top performer in sales, marketing and management roles related to medical, computer and software solutions.