



Breakthrough, Inc

Accelerating Revenue Profitably

The Ultimate Predictor of Sales Success

By Ron Snyder

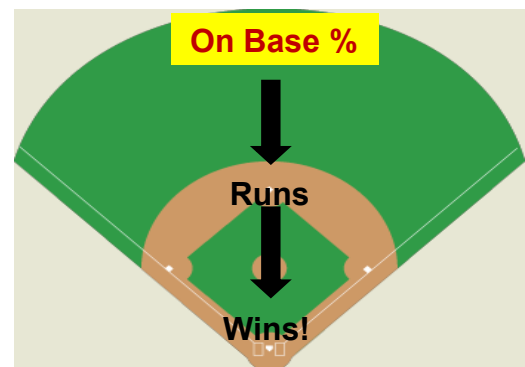
In the movie, “Money Ball,” a young Yale graduate who has never played or managed baseball, comes up with a better measure to predict a team's success. Rather than the traditional measures of batting average, home runs, hits, etc., he said the objective is to get on base more often. If you get on base more often, you will produce more runs and more runs will produce more wins. So, they managed to “on base percentage” and took the Oakland A’s to the American League playoffs spending much less money than other teams. Two years later, the Red Sox used this approach and won the World Series.

The “Advance” is the analogous measure in sales. An Advance occurs when a potential buyer commits to do something specific in a specific time frame that moves the sale forward. If you earn more Advances and progress through the sales process more readily, you will win more sales. So, the Advance is the key leading indicator of sales success.

It is important to create a clear picture of the stages in the sales process and the key milestones within each stage. Management’s role is to use this to help the sales team navigate from one stage to the next; achieving more Advances more efficiently.

To track progress, you can create reports that show:

- Account, opportunity
- Stage in the sales process
- Most recent Advance
- Length of time in current stage
- Revenue produced
- Revenue potential



By measuring how your team manages the process and where they get stuck, you can glean powerful insights. For example:

- Prospects to target and which to avoid
- Products that your team is having trouble selling
- “Stall points” in the sales process
- Who gets stuck more often and why

With this understanding in place, you can identify what solutions are needed, such as: adopting clear target prospect criteria (i.e. by product line), improving territory and strategic account management/ planning, leveraging best practices, providing coaching, training and/or selling tools.

Take these 5 steps:

1. Identify the stages and milestones in your sales process.
2. Train your team on how to most efficiently and effectively progress from step to step.
3. Measure Advances achieved.
4. Identify the top issues constraining progress through the sales process.
5. Provide solutions (see the paragraph directly above).

Use this clear measure of progress (the Advance) to drive sales success!



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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, Mentor Graphics, Adobe 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.