

VIRTUAL SELLING 2021

Case Study

Vice President of sales generates a record increase in contracted business by introducing a handful of cutting-edge virtual sales tactics.



Situation:

In the spring of 2020, the pandemic required sellers and buyers to quickly isolate in their homes. At that moment in time, most sales professionals had to master virtual selling. As a result, the Internet became overwhelmed.

Each day, like clockwork, millions of workers and students simultaneously logged on to the Internet in the morning and spent the rest of the day online. The average time spent on the Internet skyrocketed by 40% in April of 2020. Previously reliable home Internet connections slowed to a crawl, resulting in frequent outages.

For example, in December of 2019, there were only 10 million Zoom calls. By April 2020, that number jumped to over 300 million. Virtual selling from home offices became so problematic that many salespeople simply gave up or cut back.

Problem

Jeff Bell, regional vice president of sales for a national chain of storage facilities, had convinced his fourteen-member sales team to embrace virtual selling from home. Within one week of implementation, he was dealing with his team's negative feedback on their logistic problems reaching clients.

Poor home lighting and spotty audio were also major contributors. 60% of his team had older laptops with poor-quality cameras. Three of his sales veterans had to use personal desktops because their aging laptops had no cameras. Several salespeople received negative client feedback that their images and audio were choppy due to slow upload and download speeds.

Solution

Jeff Bell realized that he had neglected to provide training for his staff on virtual selling. This was partially due to the fact that *he* had never been trained. In short, he did not have the virtual skill set to bring his team up to speed.

He decided to invest in Bill Todd's online course, Virtual Selling in 2021. Immediately, he realized that his team's problems were quite common and could easily be addressed with no investment in additional technology or expensive broadband upgrades.

After concluding the course, he authorized each of his sales managers to also take the online course. He shared what he learned. First, each time they are about to initiate a virtual sales call, they needed to ensure that no other software programs or apps were running. Specifically, they could not be logged on to the company's network or email provider.

Why? The strain from programs running in the background was the major culprit of the slow response time.

Next, he instructed his team to ensure they were connected to the Internet via a cord vs. Wi-Fi. Connecting directly to the router with a physical cord delivered an immediate boost to their Internet speed.

He also asked his team to politely ask family members not to be online when they had a sales appointment. For example, one veteran salesperson was continually competing at home with three children streaming videos on the family's two smart TVs. Across the board, Internet speeds increased immediately.

He authorized each salesperson to buy two inexpensive LED lights from Amazon. This step had an immediate impact on the quality of the video being delivered to clients.

For those members who had older laptops, he arranged for delivery of a very affordable microphone recommended within the course.

The three salespersons using a personal desktop received a small camera that attached to their screen. This dramatically increased their video quality. The camera recommended in the Virtual Selling in 2021 course was less than \$25.

During the pandemic, the volume of traffic on Zoom had increased by 400%. Nationwide, virtual sales calls had started freezing up or being dropped altogether. This specific problem was thoroughly covered in the online training. The sales team implemented the suggestion provided in the course to get off of Zoom and embrace a new, free service.

Results:

Once the team concluded their training, improvements began immediately. The sales team reported feeling more confident now that the quality of their audio, video, and bandwidth had been addressed. Better yet, clients who had been difficult to get an appointment with pre-pandemic were now accepting requests for virtual sales calls.

The time required for a virtual sales call was reduced by 38% vs. a traditional face-to-face call. This enabled his team to increase the number of calls they could schedule each day.

Several competitors were slow to embrace the streamlined simplicity of virtual sales calls. Many competitors were simply waiting for the pandemic to end and for things to get back to normal.

As a result, the regional vice president instructed his sales team to take direct aim on each competitor's top twenty-five accounts. Within ninety days, the sales team had romanced away a large portfolio of accounts who previously purchased from the competition.