

Prospect team meets Sales Head of Reward

The Prospect sales network met Sam Flowers BT's Head of Sales Reward in June. Sam has taken over this Group wide role in the last year and the network welcome the fact that she has come from a BT sales background so has that real life experience.

We had a good discussion around many of the key initiatives and issues for sales folk in BT and will continue to have ongoing dialogue with Sam in future. We also have discussions with the LOBs about key sales issues.

Sam spelt out that her key focus so far had been to try and make sales pay plans simpler with a consistent design across the LOBs based on best practice. There have been significant strides on this with ideally no more than 3 or 4 measures and an earlier publication of targets.

All payplans were simpler and published on HR home together with new guidance and FAQs. Prospect has been involved in discussing these so welcome that clarity.

Sam also discussed her plans for a new centre of excellence within Reward which will manage all bonus calculations, guidance and governance. In the longer term she wants to improve the performance/bonus information to sales folk so they get virtually real time information about the impact of their sales on bonus.

Targets and thresholds

We had a good discussion around targets and thresholds. Broadly BT group guidance is that this should be set at 85% but the credibility of that needs to be set against whether the targets are realistic and achievable. Equally, some units have set their own higher thresholds eg 95% which could act as disincentives especially if the targets are wrong in the first place. It also links into performance management where we continue to see 'automatic DN' marks if people fail to hit thresholds.

/...continued page 2

Steering Group Members



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Cont/... Prospect team meets Sales Head of Reward

Sam acknowledged that work needs to be done to get target setting improved. Some improvements have already been made but broadly Prospect's position is that targets need to more bottom up, set in discussion with those who know the market place and set based on previous year's performance.

Consideration is being given to training and guidance on this. Improving target setting would also improve the proportion of sales people hitting 100% achievement where BT currently lags behind external comparators. Roughly 25% of BT sales folk hit 100% whereas outside that is usually more like 40-60%.

Targets also have an important psychological effect so getting them pitched better is key. We also discussed 'nesting' where targets are increased as they are rolled down. Sam confirmed BT are aware of the issue and whilst a small contingency of 3-5% would be appropriate at the top level the general practice needs to be improved. Partly this was cultural but the guidance says this shouldn't happen and BT B&PS are doing lots of work to try and identify and correct where too much nesting is happening.



Work is also being done to ensure that targets are also reflected in role sizes so more junior grades should not be expected to carry bigger targets than more senior grades. Sam is clear that role size targets shouldn't be set according to a hard and fast rule but should reflect different markets.

Certainly targets have come out much quicker this year and that is really positive. All targets should now be out – well ahead of last year. Members of the network also reported that their own targets were also much better than in the past.

Finally, late changes to targets is a real issue in BT – we have often reported this happening amongst the community. Sam acknowledged this is an issue and the new Group team will have a stronger role in governance. Again some of this is behavioural but late changes are especially demotivating and there will be much stronger sign off in future to ensure proper justification and a conversation takes place.

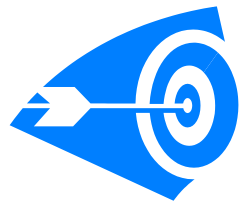


Integration -

EE has quite different approaches to sales targeting and reward so integration will need to address whether there will now be opportunity or role based targeting. They still have their own sales pay plan but with a move to a single sales organisation there will be a need to realign over time. That will include looking at what targets are based on eg revenue or market share or ICV.

Overall the network discussion with Sam was welcome and very useful. We hope to continue this and are already giving examples of issues around inappropriate targets and renewals which get in the way of sales people getting out there and selling to customers.

For further information about any of the issues raised in this report please speak to a member of the Sales Network Steering Group or contact btsales@prospect.org.uk.



Reward for 'renewal' contracts

Prospect understands that there is a certain type of business as usual work that BT expects its salespeople to undertake outside the structures that earn ICV. Many people work on contracts which are classed as 'renewal' and these do not attract ICV payments.

The 'renewal' classification was introduced to cover resigns of existing business on the understanding that these were reasonably simple and quick to effect. As a rough guide a new customer contract for a suite of services which is of a similar value to the preceding contract cannot be classed as 'growth' or 'new business'

Over recent years it has become apparent that there are a multitude of very complex deals which are classified as 'renewal'. Often these deals are in highly competitive situations and are often responses to an ITT. They involve sales of new technology and solutions. They can have long time scales and can be very time consuming. To win these deals BT needs to rely on the highest levels of salesmanship.

Yet as a business we don't seem to want to reward people for this selling effort and we in the Sales network believe that this is damaging BT's ability to succeed. If a competitor is giving a significant reward in a competitive situation and we are offering none, then surely we are on the back foot from day one?

BT hopes that as they move to have clearer roles and responsibilities AM's are paid on Renewals and if those on New Bus profiles need to work on Renewals then this can form part of their Critical Focus target so they can be rewarded for their contribution. If an individual has an issue with working on a renewal deal and not getting rewarded then it won't be in their targets but they should raise with the Line Manager and Sales Ops team as this is fixable. If you are still experiencing problems you can talk to one of the Network Steering Group or contact btsales@prospect.org.uk.

'Working in silos'

The creation of B&PS has in effect led to the existence of three lines of business where previously there were two. There is a clear business justification for this but there could also be a clear impact on business efficiency. A good example is how teams of sales specialists are allocated into each LOB.

There is a lot of specialised resource that supports the account management community. That resource is now being allocated into three silos instead of two. We all want to be successful and the Sales network is keen that BT ensures that efficiency and effectiveness does not deteriorate.

Typically we are doing more work with less people and it is vital that salespeople can still have speedy access to their skilled colleagues.

Working in silos can lead to much longer lead times in getting customer responses out. Geographically diverse communities of AM's and specialists are finding it hard to get the right people on a call or at a meeting at the right time. It can often lead to customer meetings being pushed out because BT diaries cannot match.

Getting proposals out to customers can take weeks because there is no effective cover if a team member is absent. There is often a tipping point where the amount of specialist resource becomes overly thin. Once this tipping point is passed BT will win less business as sales effectiveness is damaged.

If this is an issue then let us know at btsales@prospect.org.uk and we can reflect that back to the business. It is still early days for this new way of working so there is an opportunity to influence things for the better where there are real issues to be addressed. Talk to your line too.

Primary objectives' We are still seeing examples of salespeople being allocated the wrong type of pay plan profile. The pay plan role profiles are written for a reason ie the authors of the pay-plan want account managers and specialists targeted in a specific way that suits business needs. Targeting an individual in a fashion that they believe clearly benefits both BT and the line of business. It's strategic and important.

For example an account manager's key role is protecting and increasing profitable revenue. For specialists typically they are expected to focus on winning new business.

Yes we have a responsibility to be both hunters and farmers but the business understandably requires a primary objective. Any deviation from clear BT group guidelines needs a very strong business justification. What's the point us all winning ICV for example if existing more profitable revenue is leaking out the business?

Our advice is that an individual should understand their profile and why they are assigned to it. If they don't then they should talk to their line manager. Contact btsales@prospect.org.uk if you need advice.



BT Sales Network

As you will know we re-established the Sales Network last year as Senior Prospect sales representatives were concerned there were a number of issues in the sales environment across all Lines of Business affecting the interests of salespeople and in some areas could even be acting as a disincentive to selling.

Our senior reps then set up a Steering Group for the Sales Network to provide a forum where issues can be dealt with through the union so that these in turn can be raised with BT, either at a line of business level, or at a national level, depending on the issues.

As you will see from this and other newsletters some progress is being made but we do need more input from salespeople across the union to make the network more representative of your views

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Join the Sales Network - We're looking for sales members from all line of business to be our eyes and ears on the ground – to let us know what is happening in your unit and any issues of concern.

We already have a number of members who have put their hands up to join the Network - **so why not you?**



Members at local level



We need members from among the sales community to become more involved at a local level to support colleagues. You can do this a number of ways:-

- ◆ Become more involved with your local BT branch – you could just do a bit of desk-topping or put a few posters up in a building near you!
- ◆ Talk to colleagues in sales about the Network and encourage them to join
- ◆ Talk to non-member colleagues about joining the union
- ◆ Train to deal with personal case issues and become a Prospect case handler

If you would like to join the Sales Network or support colleagues at a local level contact mary.hurley@prospect.org.uk.

Help us build your union and get a just reward and a big thank you ... Make it your biggest target during the next month to recruit a colleague!

For every new colleague who is recruited, members will be able to choose from a £10 shopping voucher or making a donation to charity -

For further details visit: www.prospect.org.uk/mrm

Remember, the more members we have the more effective we can be supporting and representing members - so if you know colleagues who are not yet members [please send this newsletter onto them and ask them to join us at the link below](#)



Join Prospect—www.prospect.org.uk/join