

## The Numbers Don't Lie – But You Can Change Them

We recently listed our home for sale. Beforehand we did some painting – organized storage and generally “dressed things up” to get the best price possible. Business owners contemplating a transaction often take this approach too – dressing up the business for sale.

But there is a fundamental difference – what we did with our house was largely cosmetic – business owners need to focus on issues that are truly material to their performance. A colleague of mine, who is an M&A advisor says it simply, “the numbers don't lie” – I would add -- that you can't hide the numbers either. Consistent revenue growth and solid margins are fundamental drivers of performance. If your sales infrastructure is not producing – it will certainly reflect in your valuation and may make it impossible to find a buyer.

### Struggling businesses often report these types of issues:

- “We just don't know who our best customers are.”
- “Sales is a revolving door – we just can't keep good people on board.”
- “We are paying the sales team too much for mediocre results.”
- “The only thing they are good at is low price selling!”

### Even companies that are growing – are often not scaling to their potential:

- 65% of small business operate without a formal sales plan.
- 75% have not completed a competitive market analysis.
- 54% do not review sales team compensation plans annually.

The good news in this story is that all these challenges are correctable in the short term and don't have to wait for the start of a fiscal year to be addressed. Today is a good day to begin the process.

### Steps to consider as you begin to build your Sales Action Plan:

#### ***Know your customer and define your value:***

- Develop your positioning within the industry – what do customers see in your company?
- Identify your competitors and their market position.
- Clarify your value position and points of difference.

#### ***Have Clear Tracking and Team Focus:***

- Hold the team accountable to SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely) goals.
- Employ a CRM tool to track and measure performance.
- Develop clear territories / channels –seeking to balance opportunity.

If all this seems daunting – it's not. These are simple steps which build upon one another into a solid Sales Action Plan. A plan that will help you generate consistent revenue and margin growth.