The Ultimate Guide to

Rep Management

INSIGHTSQUARED

Introduction

Most sales leaders will tell you managing reps is the most time-consuming and exasperating aspect of their job, but when the team succeeds, it's also the most rewarding.

Hiring reps is a little like the marketing adage: "I know half of my budget is wasted. I just don't know which half." You know half of your reps are going to complete ramp -- you just don't know which half.

Although we look for patterns in rep hiring (e.g. former athletes, a particular university, past experience in a specific vertical, employee referrals), all are susceptible to "small data set" vagaries, leaving you feeling like success in hiring, ramping, coaching, and growing reps is a matter of luck. And yet your number depends on successful management.

If you've ever wished you could make data-backed ramping, coaching, and sales-play decisions, this guide is for you. We walk through the challenges that plague these aspects of managing your team and present detailed, actionable solutions to overcome them.

By following these steps, the hardest part of your job will suddenly be a whole lot easier. Since the first hurdle you have to clear with every rep is onboarding, we'll start with the challenges that make ramping new hires such a difficult problem.

Priority 1: Solve Ramp Time

THE CHALLENGES

When you consider the problems involved with onboarding new reps, what comes to mind is:

1. It takes several months for the average new hire to hit full quota -- longer for enterprise sales
2. For every three reps you hire, one won't make it through the onboarding process
3. Replacing fully-ramped reps is one of the most expensive challenges sales leaders face
4. It feels like you have no way of knowing who's going to fail and who's going to succeed

THE SOLUTION

Identify and replicate what makes successful reps successful. Identify the common attributes and behaviors shared by your top reps when they first started with your company. Set benchmarks based on their performance, and develop an onboarding and training plan that pushes new hires down the same path. Here are the three steps that help you do that:

1. Calculate a trajectory
2. Decrease variance in your rookies
3. Take corrective action early

STEP 1: CALCULATE A TRAJECTORY

To start, set goals for new hires. Choose behavioral KPIs that correlate to high performance, then look back at how your superstars performed against those KPIs as they ramped. Use those benchmarks to construct a ramp trajectory for future hires.
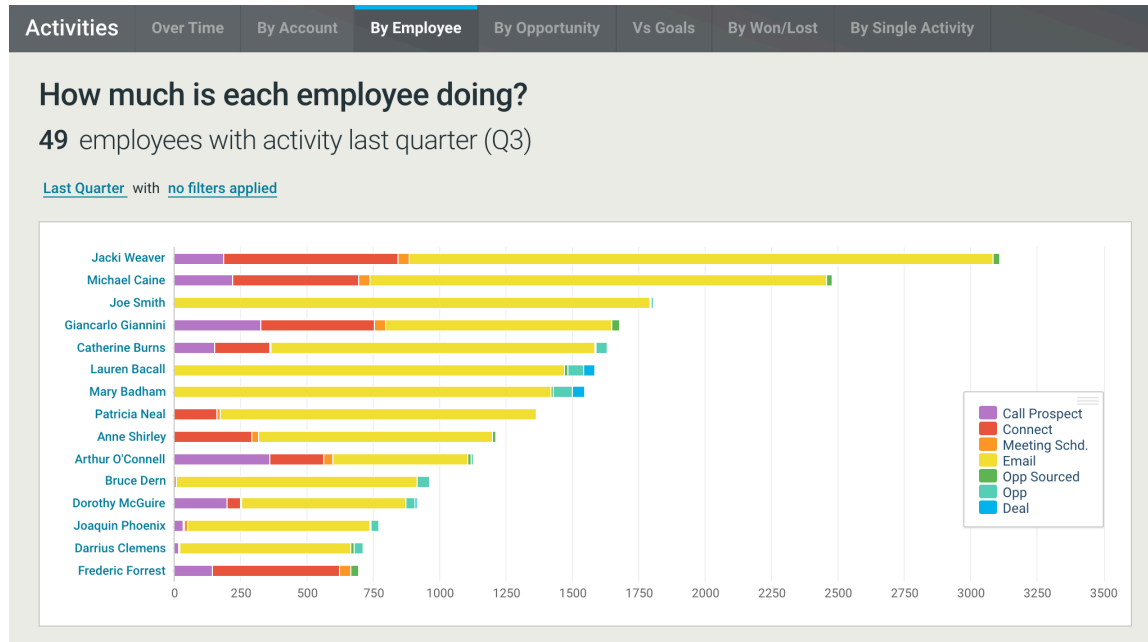

Reports demonstrating the current and historical activity level for individual reps are indispensable tools when developing your onboarding process.

STEP 2: DECREASE VARIANCE IN YOUR ROOKIES

Once you start a group of rookies on your new training plan, pay close attention to their activity KPIs. Use these metrics as a guide for where they need coaching and address shortfalls in real time. Use targeted coaching to keep the new class at 100% to goal as they ramp, and increase their individual goals each month.

STEP 3: TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION EARLY

If a new hire falls behind, put them on an improvement plan and exit them if they don't catch up. Remember, at this stage we are focused on activity KPIs not outcome metrics. It should be entirely within the control of the rep to hit these goals. Trust your data to provide you with an accurate look at who will hit quota later based on today's activity levels.
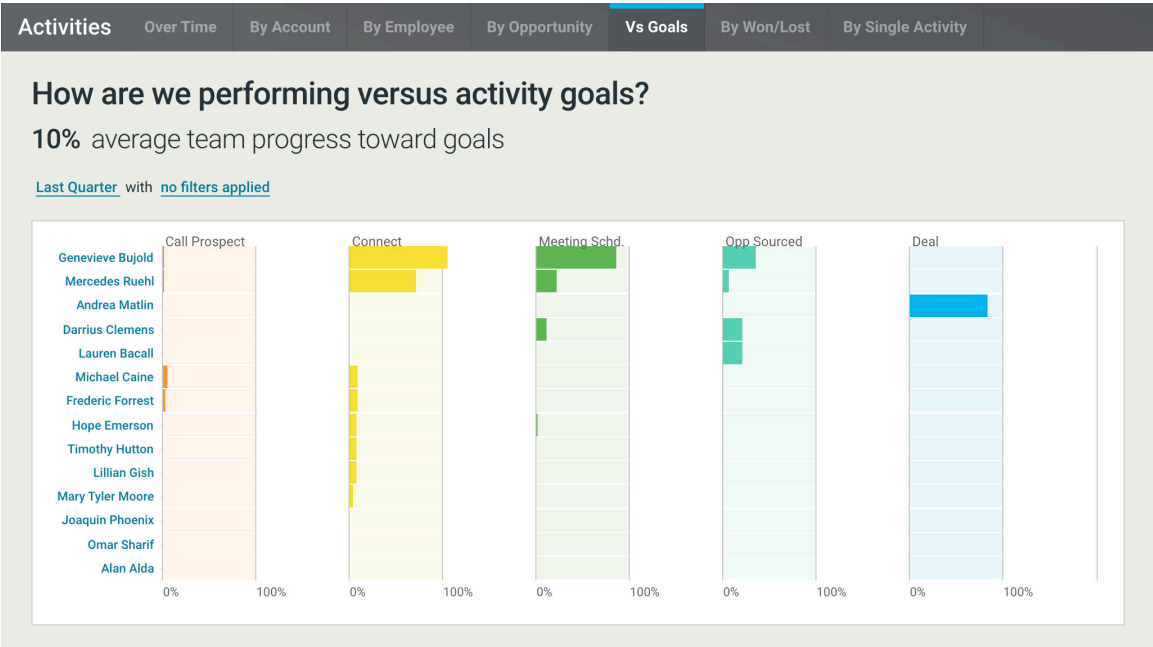
Visualizations compiling the performance of individual reps against team goals make it easy to pick out who needs help.

CONCLUSION

Once you have a system for objectively evaluating and ramping new hires, you've eliminated much of the cost involved in maintaining and growing your sales team. However, even the reps who make it through onboarding and become productive members of your team need ongoing coaching to maximize their performance potential. The next section tackles best practices for getting the most out of your fully-ramped sales reps.

Priority 2: Maximize Your Team's Potential

THE CHALLENGES

Most sales leaders say coaching is a challenge for the following reasons:

1. It's hard to pinpoint exactly where your reps need to improve
2. You have to invest a lot of time and effort to coach individuals effectively
3. Tracking meaningful improvement over time is extremely difficult

THE SOLUTION

**Create a template for success and put systems in place to measure performance against that model.** If you set benchmarks based on the behavior of your top-performing reps, it's much easier to identify where your team needs coaching and take appropriate action. Here are the steps to realize this approach:

1. Identify the behavior of top performers
2. Create a template
3. Implement individualized training plans

STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE BEHAVIOR OF TOP PERFORMERS

Figure out what your top reps are doing that makes them successful. Review their metrics, chat with them to hash out their approach, then review the numbers again and ensure they reflect your top reps' behaviors. If they don't, implement new measurements that better represent what top performers are doing to be successful.
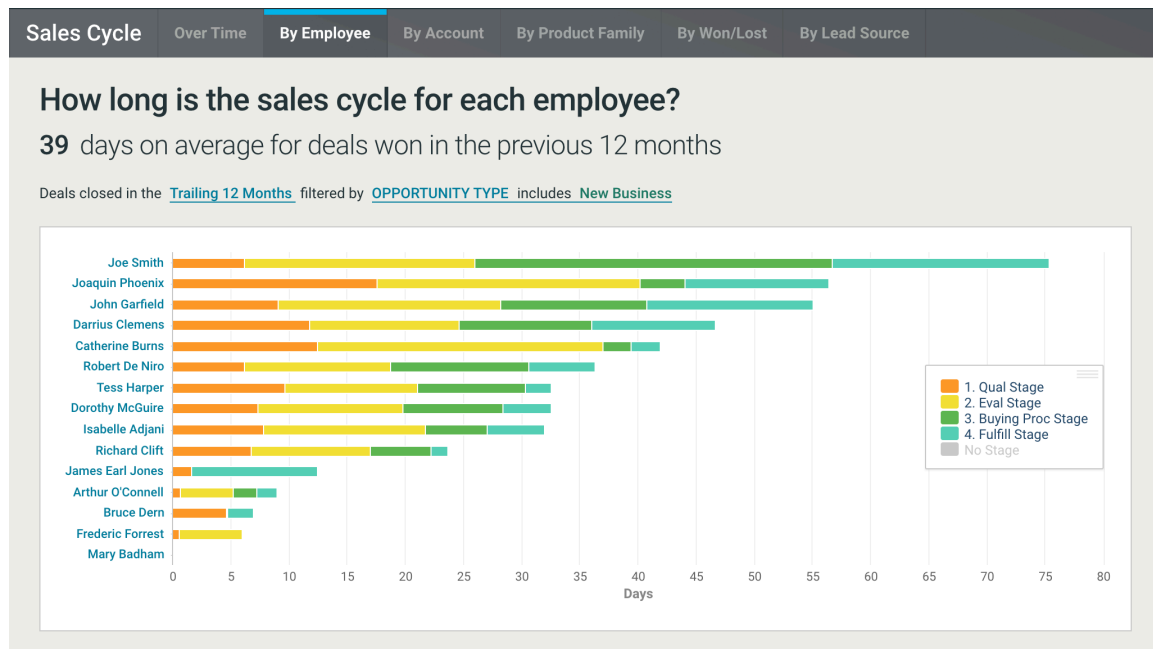
One way to drill down on the tactics of your top performers is to break down their sales cycle by stage and examine how their opportunities convert down the funnel.

STEP 2: CREATE A TEMPLATE

Use the common patterns of your top reps' behavior to develop a set of goals for the rest of your team. You may have one rep who's an expert at sourcing quality leads and another who's your top closer. Combine their performance at different stages of the funnel to develop a set of goals that defines success.

Sales Funnel — By Stage — Over Time — **By Employee** — By Value

How do our employees' opportunities move through our sales process?

22% win rate for opportunities closed in the previous 12 months.

Trailing 12 Months filtered by OPPORTUNITY TYPE includes New Business
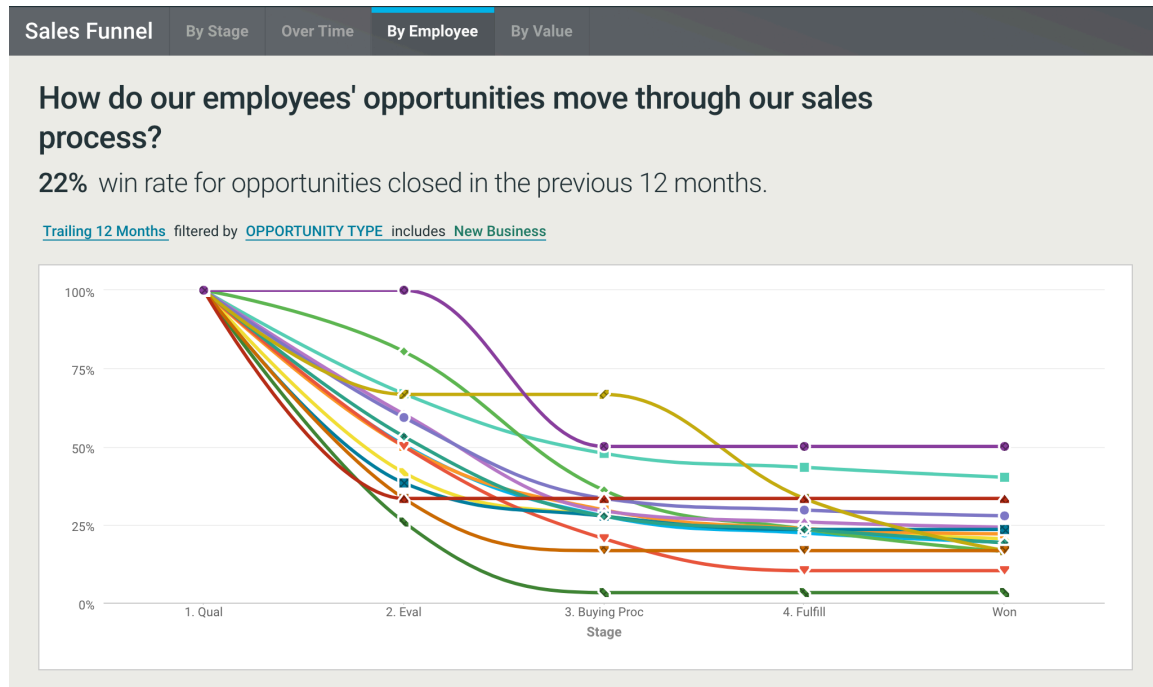
Creating a side-by-side visualization of each rep's conversion and win rates is an effective method for establishing benchmarks and developing a template for success.

STEP 3: IMPLEMENT INDIVIDUALIZED TRAINING PLANS

Now that you have a standard for success, you can compare individual performances against that benchmark and immediately see where each rep needs help. In other words, standardizing the areas of focus provides the opportunity to individualize coaching and drive improvement. The performance benchmarks you set are the platform that allows you to create tailored, actionable training plans for each rep.

CONCLUSION

By creating a success framework for both new hires and reps on full quota, you cut the cost of growing your team and shed light on all the ways to maximize productivity. You've already solved for two major factors that inhibit your ability to manage effectively. However, to push your team even further, you have to shift your focus a little bit.

Up to this point, we've provided tips on how to ensure your reps execute the plays you've given them, but how do you make sure your plays are effective? How can you guarantee that you've created a winning game plan for your team? The next section focuses on the details involved in developing a sales action plan.

Priority 3: Set Your Team Up For Success

THE CHALLENGES

When creating a process to systematize the way your reps generate and manage opportunities, the questions you have to answer for each stage are:

1. Are your reps working efficiently and maximizing the use of their time?
2. Are the actions you ask them to execute the best options for that stage?
3. Can you hold your team accountable to meet the goals you set for them?
4. Will you be able to motivate your team to follow the process you create?

THE SOLUTION

Provide evidence that shows your blueprint is effective and be willing to make changes if it's not. Getting your team to follow your lead is straightforward: prove that your approach works. Here are the steps for laying out a blueprint, holding your reps accountable to it, and earning their trust.

1. Prove your points with data
2. Maintain accountability
3. Find the right way to motivate

STEP 1: PROVE YOUR POINTS WITH DATA

Dashboards and analytics give you the solid proof you need to show that your approach works. Use reports to compare results before and after you implement your playbook and keep an eye out for significant changes in performance. If it turns out your approach isn't moving the needle, change it. After all, you now have the data and benchmarks to know what levers to pull.
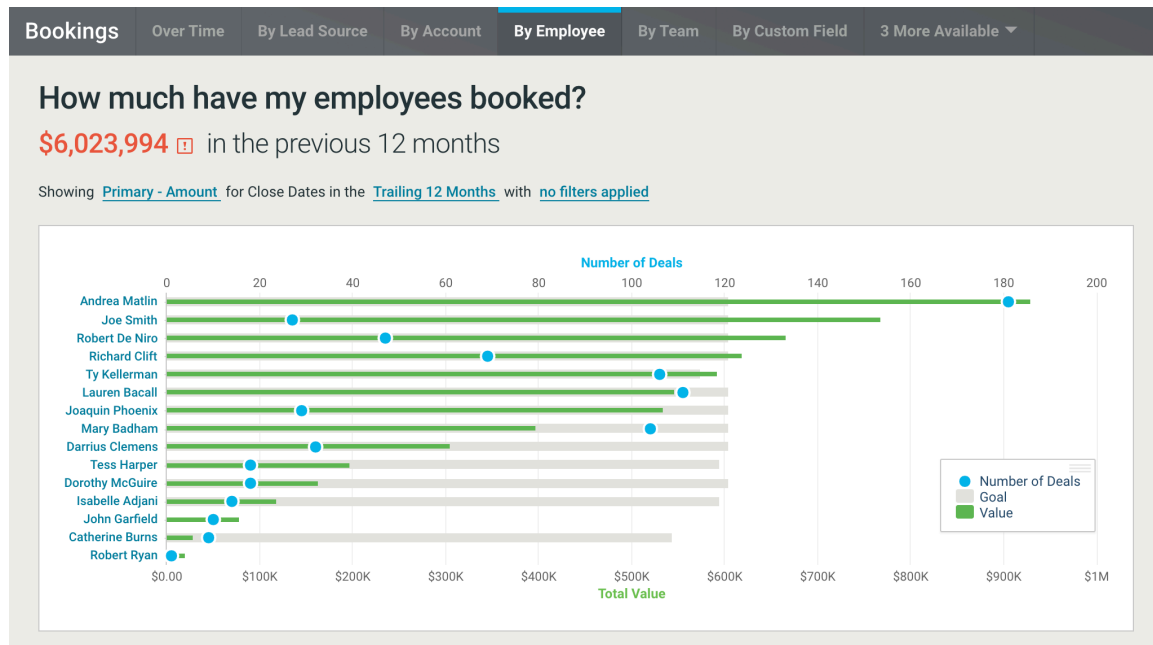
Put bookings by rep up on big screens around the office to create transparency, drive a culture of accountability, and foster competition.

STEP 2: MAINTAIN ACCOUNTABILITY

Once you nail the best approach for your sales team, don't be afraid to enforce it. Reps tend to be susceptible to a recency bias that leads them to over-value the process they ran in their last win. But data trumps opinion. Creating visibility across your team and keeping team KPIs aligned with business outcomes is the most reliable way to ensure the team adheres to your process. Over time, your process instills the right habits, and those habits are the foundation of a high-performance culture within your sales team.

| Employees | Overview | Annualized Bookings | **Quota Heatmap** | Ramp Rate |

How often do employees make quota?
44% average quota attainment

Trailing 12 Months by Month with no filters applied

Employee	2016 Nov	2016 Dec	2017 Jan	2017 Feb	2017 Mar	2017 Apr	2017 May	2017 Jun	2017 Jul	2017 Aug	2017 Sep	2017 Oct
Andrea Matlin	313%	231%	234%	137%	168%	214%	186%	133%	197%	14%	10%	21%
Joe Smith	38%	328%	18%	109%	367%	114%	175%	27%	210%	131%	20%	0%
Robert De Niro	30%	89%	134%	85%	50%	19%	100%	34%	59%	24%	318%	390%
Richard Clift	99%	98%	101%	69%	112%	53%	211%	215%	30%	98%	59%	93%
Ty Kellerman	26%	109%	81%	91%	27%	46%	281%	170%	231%	8%	73%	75%
Lauren Bacall	0%	24%	28%	133%	12%	54%	105%	102%	113%	108%	88%	325%
Joaquin Phoenix	59%	7%	4%	34%	193%	62%	33%	56%	413%	14%	0%	192%
Mary Badham	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	25%	112%	41%	100%	138%	27%	351%
Darrius Clemons	17%	0%	81%	0%	70%	5%	43%	34%	32%	179%	12%	138%

Maintaining data on quota attainment and sharing it across your team forces reps to own up to challenges they are facing and helps establish a culture of accountability.

STEP 3: FIND THE RIGHT WAY TO MOTIVATE

The visibility you create with your sales data shouldn't just be used as a stick -- you should also encourage friendly competition and provide rewards for leaders in different KPI categories. Weekly challenges, team-based competitions, and performance-based incentives are all different ways you can leverage shared data to boost production.
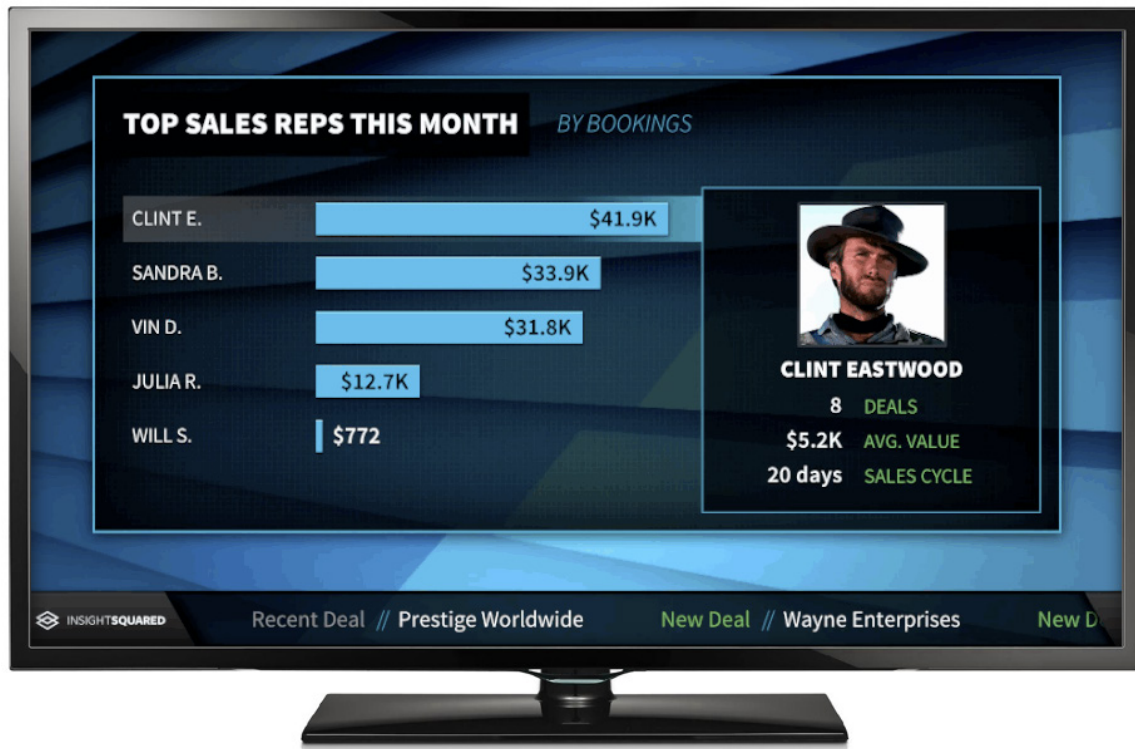
Animated leaderboards that activate each time a rep wins a deal or hits a goal are a great way to gamify your sales process and create productive internal competition.

Combine a sales process that's objectively proven to work with motivated sales reps and your job as a sales leader becomes more rewarding -- personally and financially.

Conclusion

Here are the results you can expect to see over the long term now that you've solved for the challenges of managing a sales team.

Shorter ramp time for new hires and lower attrition of ramped reps
Setting specific goals and tracking individual performance during the onboarding process will help weed out reps who are unlikely to last, increase the high-performer yield from each new sales class, and create a data-first culture across the entire sales organization.

More consistent sales results and a higher ceiling for your reps
Combining full visibility into your team's performance with benchmarks from your top performers enables you to deliver timely, precise coaching to your reps. That leads to fewer deals lost in the closing process, improved pipeline management, and more consistent bookings.

Motivated, winning sales reps
As long as you're helping them close deals, reps will adhere to the framework you provide. You'll see fewer slumps, faster recoveries, and most importantly, a sales team that's excited to come into work every day. After all, the easiest rep to retain is the one who hits his or her number.

As a sales leader, you're only as good as your team. Regardless of how good you are as a salesperson, you will never last at the top of a sales team if you don't know how to manage effectively.

The good news is you don't have to be a "born leader" to be a top-notch head of sales. In fact, the charismatic, top-closer-turned-VP types are often the worst managers because they don't know how to structure a process and diagnose performance. They can't turn other people into winners.

By following the steps in this guide, you've armed yourself with all the know-how you need to not just be a top-notch leader, but a great manager as well. Your reps know the difference and they'll know you can make them successful. Let them take you to new heights!

About InsightSquared

InsightSquared helps sales operations professionals break the cycle of spreadsheets by equipping them with actionable, real-time reporting on virtually all sales KPIs. Fast growing technology companies like, Bazaarvoice, Gainsight, and Pendo rely on the company's solutions to forecast more accurately, better manage pipeline, tailor rep coaching based on individual performance, and conduct data-backed planning and analysis. For more information, visit www.insightsquared.com.