



Greetings Sales Professionals,

This is it! Finally, the fifth critical sales activity (and a big one!) that sales professionals need to become proficient in: **REPORTS ACTIONS**.

I've been on a strategic mission since last September, 2010 when I introduced the five critical sales activities for sales professionals: Evaluates Accounts, Plans Strategies, Sells Growth, Protects Profits and now Reports Actions. I hope you've found this to be helpful as selling continues to transition into a whole new dimension. The age of "data intelligence" is now among us via technology. The problem is the "experts" still don't know what to do with it! I'll save this discussion for next month. (Now, where were we?)

Now that the sales function is being held accountable, I think most of us can agree it's been a hard pill to swallow. Remember, only 47% of us hit quota! Reports Actions is all about metrics and analytics. How do you measure your sales success? Why does it have to be so complicated? And, why do so many CRM systems not meet expectations? I could go on and on. The point is the technology curve is catching up with us and there's no point in fighting it. However, we're still in its infancy and I hope I continue to live to see this technology explosion! It's still a tool, and only as good as the people and processes behind it.

Why do we resist and hate to do activity reports? Not you? I have enough problems just doing my expenses and keeping them current! I see so many sales organizations struggle with new software systems that are great in theory, but so hard to implement.

It's the old saying, "You must input to get output." To me, Reports Actions is about communication and data that's relevant to the sales growth we're trying to achieve. It doesn't have to be sophisticated or complicated. Reports Actions is about developing a "scoreboard" in order to keep track of your sales score. If sales is a numbers game

can we track, monitor and predict? Dah! You've got to stay focused on your numbers and pipeline activity. The better disciplined you are the more accurate you become. Trends and correlations can determine probable outcomes before they happen. The sales teams that have the confidence in their reporting activities are the ones that respond to their customers faster and gain market share while doing it. When you own your scoreboard you start competing with yourself, hence self-improvement occurs.

I mentioned earlier that communication plays a big role in this critical sales activity. Not just externally to our customers, but internally within our own companies as well. I was just with a company in December who came to the conclusion it was harder to negotiate internally for approval than externally with their sales partners. As with most sales teams coordination of communication rests with the account managers. You are the quarterback and must delegate accordingly. You delegate to your selling team through communication. The larger the customer account requires more delegation on your part. The key is to communicate to all members! Sounds simple? Yet, it's still the number one issue facing all companies today - the lack or absence of communication. I've found and taught how important feedback is when you communicate. Recap, summarize and get the person to "teach it back" to you. That's what I mean by feedback!

Lastly, Reports Actions is all about forecasting. Over the last couple of years I have a much better understanding and appreciation for sales forecasting. It made me aware of how important cash flow is as a business owner! Play the game like I do. The more accurate my forecast is to plan, the more I feel I win. And, believe me, I like to win!

So, sales professionals take note of these five critical sales activities and develop what's needed to master them. It will be necessary as we continue our transformation in this changing era of selling. Indeed, we live in interesting times. Get ready for next month as I attack "data intelligence" for The Sales Professional.

Good Luck & Good Selling!

Bob Butler, TSP  
and the BLS T.E.A.M.  
Together **E**ach **A**chieves **M**ore

**Send your information, ideas, thoughts and  
suggestions for monthly sales  
tips to [info@butlerlearningsystems.com](mailto:info@butlerlearningsystems.com)**

**Butler Learning Systems ~ 1325 W. Dorothy Lane ~ Dayton, OH 45409**

Phone: 888-298-7462 ~ Fax: 866-298-5022

[www.butlerlearning.com](http://www.butlerlearning.com) ~ [info@butlerlearningsystems.com](mailto:info@butlerlearningsystems.com)