Sales Manager’s Checklist for Quarterly Account Planning

Using Account Plan Pro

Account planning, reviews and implementation are the foundation of account growth. This checklist provides an overview of sales manager’s account planning activities to be performed each quarter.

The focus is to help you achieve your objectives for each of your key accounts and across them as a group. These objectives often include specific account rev[1]enue targets, a percent increase in revenue or share of account spend in your product/service area, winning high profile opportunities, net new accounts won, percent increase in business with existing accounts and increase in pipeline.

There are certain activities that will only be performed in the first quarter of using the app/ approach. These are in the set up section. Thereafter, the sales manager implements a repeating set of account planning, review, and implementation each quarter.

Having a process for managing all of the account planning activities is an important Best Practice that sets world class sales organizations apart from the rest. This process should include what needs to be done each week to ensure the team successfully implements their plans and stays on top of changes in the accounts as they unfold. And, of course, account planning must include the entire group that works with the customer.

There are a few management activities that will not make sense until there has been at least one quarter of use (indicated as “Q2 & beyond”).

Best Practices

The Sales Manager’s activity related to account and opportunity management are pursued throughout the entire quarter. The following stages define the primary focus of his account management sales activities during a typical 13 week quarter:

Stage 1: Create and/or update account plans

Stage 2: Review and revise plans of action for each account

Stage 3: Identify and communicate trends and support requirements

Stage 4: Meet with internal organizations and stakeholders

Stage 5: Coach Sales account teams

Stage 6: Target and close key opportunities and account objectives

Stage 7: Close current quarter; Prepare for start of new quarter

[1] A

In the first quarter, generate account plans for a few key accounts per account manager. With each subsequent quarter, add the next most important accounts.

One of the manager's critical roles is to observe and identify trends, communicate them to the team and disseminate guidance to improve the account planning process and results.

We recommend implementing regular quarterly business reviews with customers in each top account. This is a great way to engage key players in the account, understand their strategic initiatives, capture/ resolve issues and accelerate results in the account. In your first quarter of using the Account Plan Pro app and process, conduct these reviews with a few top accounts and add next most important accounts each quarter.

This Checklist is meant to be a template for your use. Feel free to adjust it to your business, team size, account manager assignment and calendar. For example, you may want to move the sales meeting suggested in week 4 to week 3 or 5. Further, you may have regularly scheduled sales meetings. The meetings suggested in the checklist are designed to support the account planning and implementation process.

Manager's Checklist for Account Plan Pro (APP) Implementation

Set up

- ☐ Set up users in Salesforce.com and assign APP licenses to each user.
- ☐ Sales manager creates a sample account plan in APP to use during user training.
- ☐ Establish the focal sections of the account plan or topics that will be reviewed regularly with each account manager.
- ☐ Conduct user training at a sales meeting. Explain account planning process, review sample plan, dashboard and select reports. Set expectation of creating and updating account plans regularly.
- ☐ Respond to usage questions quickly so users stay positive about using the app.

Sales Manager's Account Planning Weekly Checklist

Stage 1: Create and/or update account plans

Week 1

- ☐ Assess prior quarter' s results
  - Review sale results from the previous quarter for each account for which an account plan has been created in APP. Use APP dashboard/reports for review.
  - Review usage report, APP; Account Plan Summary by Date trend report. (Q2 & beyond).
- ☐ Identify effective activities and required corrective actions
  - Progress and set-backs identified.
  - Determine the accounts that require creation of account plans or updates and will be reviewed throughout the quarter. Make account plan assignments.
- ☐ Create/update plans
  - Update account plans from previous quarter's activities
  - Each account manager to add (at least) one new account plan in APP.

Week 2

- ☐ Conduct in-depth review of updates of pre-existing account plans.
- ☐ Schedule quarterly business reviews with customers in top accounts. Use Account Plan Pro reports and other information to prepare for the meeting.
- ☐ Align account plans with company strategies and product/market objectives
- ☐ Sales meeting: communicate objectives
  - Communicate quarter's goals and expectations regarding account plan, app usage.
  - Share how account plans have driven activity, results in accounts. (Q2 & beyond).

Stage 2: Review and revise plans of action for each account

Week 3

- ☐ Review account plans that are new this quarter.
- ☐ Continue to review updates of pre-existing account plans.
- ☐ Check Account Plan Pro Usage Report to ensure new account plans are generated and existing plans are updated. Send reminders to appropriate team members.
- ☐ From account reviews, synthesize input from the team to disseminate learning to improve the account planning process.
- ☐ Schedule and conduct sales calls in targeted accounts. Identify next steps in account, opportunities.
- ☐ Account manager updates account plan and opportunity advancement strategy. Review call and coach account manager. Identify next steps to close opportunities- especially this quarter.
- ☐ Conduct quarterly customer business reviews. Set quarterly goals. Generate a joint action plan to keep key account members engaged in the process. Continue to schedule and implement customer business reviews over the next few weeks.

Stage 3: Identify and communicate trends and support requirements

Week 4

- ☐ Sales meeting: review account planning app, process with the team.
  - What's working: show value of using account plans/the account planning process
  - Review dashboard, usage report and other reports with team.
  - Instruct team to have a complete plan for each per account manager's top 1-3 account (depending on assignment) by the end of week 6.
  - What needs improvement: discuss team's questions. Provide guidance regarding a common challenge across the team.
  - Provide instruction on how to use the app/process effective.
- ☐ Select one key account to review it with each account manager- in 1 on 1 meetings. Have account manager update the plan. Inform team members of update.
- ☐ Schedule account visits for manager and/or other account "team members." Account manager presents account plan for that account and pre call plan for the meeting prior to the visit.

Stage 4: Meet with internal organizations and stakeholders

Week 5

- ☐ For the most critical accounts, review with internal and partner stakeholders, solicit input and solidify engagement. Continue over the next few weeks. Secure support and resources for specific account requirements.
- ☐ Examine newly revised/ submitted account plans. Provide feedback to account managers.
- ☐ Account manager revises plan based on internal stakeholder input. Manager reviews it.
- ☐ Manager meets with their management to review status. Use APP reports and dashboards.
- ☐ Update forecast for accounts with plans.

Stage 5: Coach Account teams

Week 6

- ☐ Manager supports implementation of account plans; providing guidance and resources as needed.
- ☐ Assess APP and sales reports, forecasts. Match to account plans. Send guidance to appropriate account managers, team members, executives.
- ☐ Identify accounts on-track and off-track to revenue and other objectives.
- ☐ Schedule and conduct account plan reviews on accounts at risk of not meeting objectives. Involve team members. Discuss challenges. Set action plan. Update account plan.
- ☐ Schedule/ conduct account sales calls. Identify next steps. Update plan. Provide coaching.

Week 7

- ☐ Sales meeting: mid-course correction
  - Tell the team about your plans to support activities for the rest of the quarter.
  - Share one plan/success story- look for representative account challenges. Account manager discusses how account plan/process has helped drive activity and results.
  - Review a few other account plans- presented by account managers.
  - Review usage report, APP: Activities, Strategies by Plan report with team.
  - Set the number of complete plans per account manager expected by end of week 9.
  - Give feedback to team regarding what needs to be done to meet expectations.
  - Solicit feedback on resources and needs for quarterly implementation of account plan

Stage 6: Target and close key opportunities and account objectives

Week 8

- ☐ Referring to your account plan reviews and reports, generate an updated forecast.
- ☐ Conduct account plan reviews on accounts not yet reviewed this quarter or recently updated. Discuss challenges and provide guidance. Identify additional resources required. Set action plan. Update account plan. Inform team members of update.
- ☐ Identify focus accounts, opportunities, and meetings needed for quarter close

Week 9

- ☐ Check progress on forecasted opportunities and update forecast.
- ☐ Review updated account plans. Check APP: Activities, Strategies by Plan report and APP Goal and Amount reports to track progress.
- ☐ Meet with account managers to gain consensus on plan of action for quarter close.
- ☐ Plan end-of-quarter activities to achieve quarter's account goals.
- ☐ Coach or guide account plan implementation with one-on-one meetings with account managers.
- ☐ Conduct account meetings and phone calls to close opportunities this quarter. Continue through to the end of the quarter.

Stage 7: Close quarter

Week 10

- ☐ Check APP reports to track progress in targeted accounts, opportunities. Make course corrections.
- ☐ Sales meeting: prepare to close quarter
  - Identify what is needed for quarter close
  - Establish activities required to close forecasted opportunities.
  - Identify those opportunities and activities than can be deferred to next quarter.

Week 11, 12

- ☐ Check APP reports to track progress on end-of-quarter activities in targeted accounts, opportunities.
- ☐ Manage account teams to ensure they are executing on priority quarter closure activities.
- ☐ Meet with customers, partners, internal leaders to move account plans forward towards objectives.
- ☐ Adjust resource assignments to win important opportunities.
- ☐ Provide leadership team with projection of quarter results.

Week 13

- ☐ Focus on activities to close target account and target opportunity objectives for quarter.
- ☐ Check APP: Activities, Strategies by Plan report and APP Goal and Amount reports to track progress.
- ☐ Estimate quarter results. Advise management team.