

Time Out

By Kelly R. Thompson

I recently received a request from a client to provide an opinion on how many hours a sales professional should spend on different activities.

What follows is an excerpt of my response.

As to my thoughts on reasonable time allocations, it was different for me. I spent most of my time creating my own business and building relationships.

Determining how employees should allocate their time

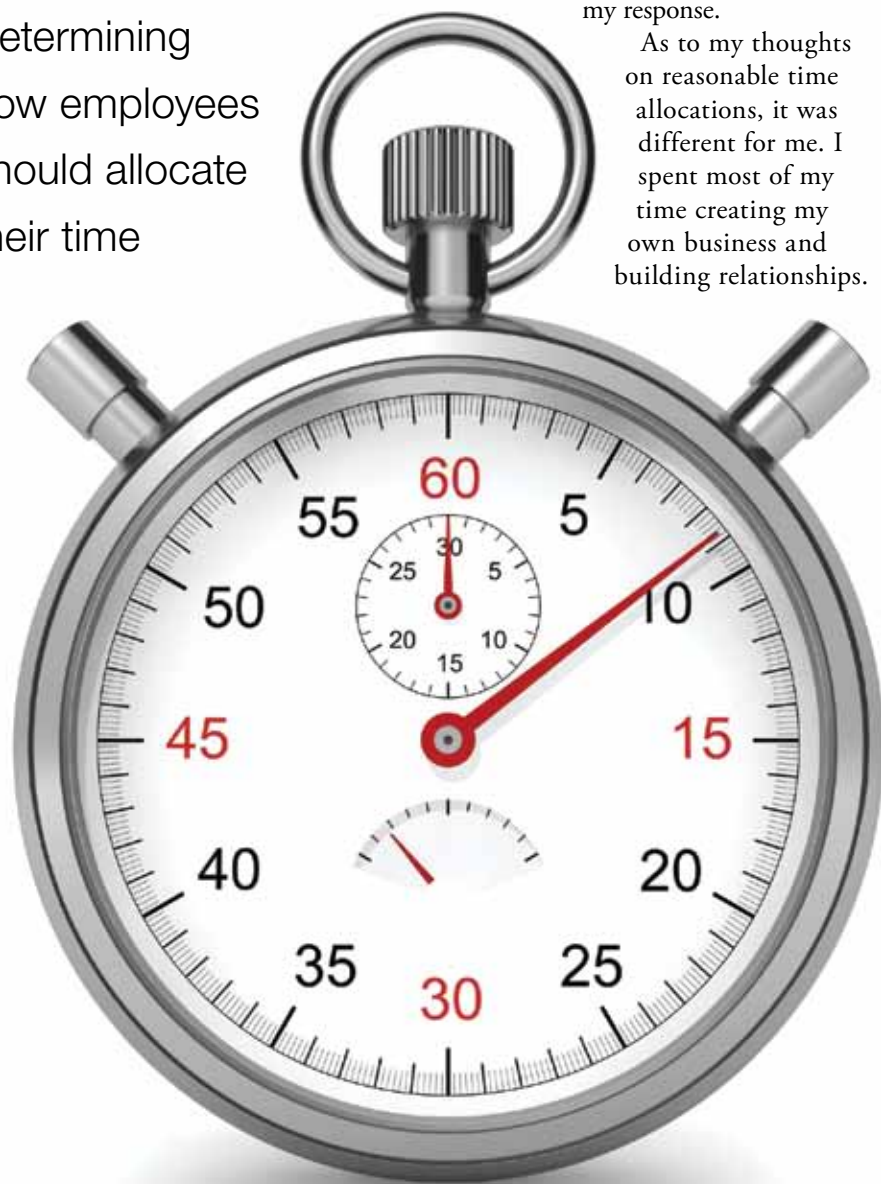


Figure 1. Salesperson Time Allocation Per Week

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Totals
Prospecting Time	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	10
Demo Time	4	4	4	4	2	4	0	22
Phone/Mailers (hours)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0	2.5
Follow-ups (hours)	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	6
Drive Time	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	0	9
Education (hours)	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0	0	1.25
Total Time Worked	9.25	9.25	9.25	9.25	7.25	6.5	0	50.75
Phone Contacts	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	25
Special Events	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	-
Mini Checkup/Follow-up	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	5
Total Appointments	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	12

I have worked with several dealerships that provide the vast majority of leads to the salespeople, but even after these experiences, the majority house lead concept seems foreign to me. If I were a sales professional, I would appreciate the free leads, but would feel uncomfortable relying on the dealership to feed me. I would spend as much time as possible trying to develop my own opportunities because I would have far more control over whether or not they remained consistent.

That being said, I understand the benefits from a dealer's perspective of providing sales leads to a team of salespeople. Theoretically, at least, it is far easier to manage a team when it relies on you to provide for it. Accountability is an important factor in managing a team, as you know. Obviously, the time allotment suggestions may change with increased knowledge of the existing policies and procedures of your dealership, but I would start with the breakdown shown in Figure 1.

Prospecting Time

I realize that with many house lead-running teams, it is unrealistic to immediately expect that salespeople will begin prospecting for their own business. If you can find a true sales professional, however, he or she should be willing to spend a little time each day stopping in and talking to well drillers, builders, plumbers, appliance shops, kitchen and bath stores, or any number

of businesses or individuals that can be lead sources. I have assumed two sales appointments per day in Figure 1. If they are receiving three or more appointments, I can see this prospecting time being more difficult, but on slow

days, I would definitely encourage some type of prospecting.

Demo Time

This is the time actually spent in front of the customer. I have been liberal here—I believe a thorough presentation can be completed in 1.5 hours, but sometimes they run long. While there are always exceptions, if the appointments are less than an hour, closing ratios are usually lower as well.

Phone Calls/Mailers

You have thousands of customers that may not have heard from you in years, except for maybe when a filter change is due or there is a service issue. Many companies spend the vast majority of their marketing time and budget on earning new customers and put little effort into keeping the ones they already have.

I recommend that each member of your sales team calls at least five existing customers per day. Activity creates productivity. They are not selling anything on these calls; rather, they are simply checking in to make sure everything is OK and thanking the customers for their business. Your database will become more accurate, you will catch problems before they occur, referrals will be earned, and, at the very least, your customers will feel "wowed." Simple handwritten "just because" thank you cards work too. Each salesperson should be producing a minimum of five of these per day.

In-Person Follow-Ups

These should be done for every sale or rental with no exceptions. If they are considered part of the sale and are scheduled at the same time as the installation, then there is no reason not to complete them. Most follow-ups can be completed in 15 to 30 minutes. I estimate one to two follow-ups per day. Do not forget sales that may be made by service technicians. These especially can become great opportunities to sell reverse osmosis systems or other equipment. Many of my clients hold back a percentage of commission until the onsite follow-up

is completed. I have one client that does not pay any commission until the follow-up is done.

Drive Time

Unfortunately, I see a lot of companies that provide most of the leads to their sales teams forget to factor in drive time. I have seen salespeople spend hours in the car between appointments. I strongly recommend assigned territories or some other sort of geographical organization. Ideally, there should be less than 45 minutes between appointment locations.

Education

This is a critical part of being a professional. Sales professionals should spend at least 15 minutes per day learning their skill and trade, whether that means reading a magazine article or listening to a sales CD in the car.

Special Events

These could include home shows, water clinics or even speaking at the local Rotary Intl. or Optimist Club. When we hire and train new sales professionals, we encourage them to be in a minimum of 10 homes per week and to speak to a minimum of 50 contacts per week about water. This goal can be met easily by presenting at a school, community service group, realtor's meeting or water clinic.

Mini Checkup

If salespeople do not have a follow-up scheduled, they should schedule times to go out to existing customers' homes and do a quick water and equipment check. Your customers will be wowed; your salespeople will stay busy, and, without really trying, they will find additional sales opportunities.

You will notice that this all adds up to more than 50 hours per week. If your team expects an above-average income, it should be willing to put in an above-average effort.

Regardless of how you keep track of these things, or what accountability programs you have in place, because most sales professionals do not punch a time clock or work set hours, some of my clients have used one or more of the following things to establish full-time employment and eligibility for full-time benefits:

- Minimum units sold;
- Minimum dollar amount sold;
- Minimum number of appointments;
- Installation of GPS units (I am

- not a fan of this one);
- Minimum closing ratio; or
 - Daily time sheet submission.

In general, if salespeople are really working and doing the things they

need to be doing, the need to track them is lower, because the numbers will reflect the efforts. *wqp*

Kelly R. Thompson, CWS-VI, CI, is president of Moti-Vitality LLC.

Thompson can be reached at kellyt@moti-vitality.com or 810.560.2788.

For more information on this subject write in 1002 on this issue's reader service card.

REGAL™
GAS
CHLORINATORS

GREEN

MACHINE

REGAL leads the industry in green technology. The REGAL Gas Chlorinator lowers energy costs and chemical costs by using 100% chlorine which is a natural element.



SAFE, RELIABLE, EFFICIENT AND ECONOMICAL

- ALL-VACUUM DESIGN • EASY TO MAINTAIN & CLEAN
- ENGINEERED FOR LESS DOWNTIME & CORROSION RESISTANCE
- FEWEST PARTS • FAST DELIVERY • MADE IN THE USA

For Gas Chlorine, Choose Regal's GREEN Machine!
For more info, call Anna at 1-800-327-9761

@chlorinators incorporated
 1044 SE Dixie Cutoff Road, Stuart, FL 34994 USA • Tel: 772-288-4854
 Fax: 772-287-3238 • www.regalchlorinators.com • Email: regal@regalchlorinators.com

Write in 756

MADE IN THE
USA



RED, WHITE,
BLUE and
GREEN too!

The REGAL™ Gas Chlorinator is made with pride in the USA and sets the standard for **safety, reliability** and **economy**. REGAL also leads the industry in green technology: **lowering energy costs** and **chemical costs** by using 100% chlorine which is a natural element.

- ★ ALL-VACUUM DESIGN
- ★ EASY TO MAINTAIN & CLEAN
- ★ ENGINEERED FOR LESS DOWNTIME & CORROSION RESISTANCE
- ★ FEWEST PARTS
- ★ FAST DELIVERY

For more info, call Anna at 1-800-327-9761

@chlorinators incorporated
 1044 SE Dixie Cutoff Road, Stuart, FL 34994 USA • Tel: 772-288-4854
 Fax: 772-287-3238 • www.regalchlorinators.com • Email: regal@regalchlorinators.com

Write in 757

Opening
the door
for the
needs
of the
composites
industry.



Filament Winding Machines
 Machine Controls ~ Auxiliary Equipment
 Pattern Software ~ Fiber Delivery Systems
 Tensioners ~ Retrofitting and more.



McCLEAN
ANDERSON

Advanced Filament Winding Systems

www.mccleananderson.com

Write in 755

The German Electronic
Anti-Scale System



Your eco-friendly alternative
to water softeners



Removes scale, rust and biofilm
Stops new deposits from forming
100% D.I.Y Installation
Works on all pipe materials

CWT Christiani Wassertechnik
Made in Berlin- Germany
www.vulcan-descaler.com
sales@vulcan-descaler.com



No Salt
No Chemicals
No Maintenance

Distributors wanted in USA
Call us on (917) 300 0494

WWW.WQPMAG.COM • APRIL 2014 9