How to build a scalable sales force

Every business exists for one sole reason – To make money! At its core, it is all about expanding, scaling up and increasing revenues over time. Your marketing department is the only revenue source for your company, while your other functions attract cost. Within your marketing team, your sales force is the heart of your revenues. The reliability and scalability of a team depends on them. So how do you go about building a scalable Salesforce? Follow these four steps and you are on your way:

Hire the right guy

For most people, recruitment is about gut feeling. However, going by your gut is possibly the worst approach you could apply. The desired traits and characteristics of salespersons vary from industry to industry. You will have to sit down with your HR and carefully list down the characteristics and traits your ideal candidate should have.

It could also be useful to assign a scale to these characteristics and gauge the overall scores of candidates. This would be an objective and efficient way to go about recruitment.

Compare your top cream and low ranking performers to see if your desired characteristics and scale are working out for you.

- **Finding Quality Salesforce**

A good salesperson will never have to create a resume. They never actually have interviews, they are just recruited through simple exercises. Your best candidates can't be found directly on hiring portals or through agencies, they have to be poached.
So how do you end up recruiting them? It's important to utilize the connections of your sales force to the extreme. I'm talking about connections within the profession. Leverage the contacts of your new hires and seasoned employees to find those people who work for you. Look through your employees' LinkedIn contacts and find the person with your desired experience and skill set. Train new hires consistently and measurably
Even when your sales team is great, each individual tends to be great for very different reasons; most are great at one aspect of sales and mediocre at others. If you are serious about building a sales force, align the skill set of your sales team with your milestone. Make it a point to have a week or month's long induction programme that consists of both classroom and practical sessions. Have a year's certification course with examinations available, this is something like on-the-job training, so your staff is always updated with your products, services and knowledge. Certification courses can be both external and internal to the company. These exams and certifications ensure that new hires will leave training with the same foundation of skills.

- **Consistency in Lead Generation**

Once you've got all those great leads, how do you go about exploiting them? How do you decide how to effectively assign and work leads?

The answer to this question is simple- make use of your database. By this time, you should have a rich database and call recordings of conversations with potential, converted and cold customers. Filter them out on the basis of the conversation and the conversion tactic used. A pattern should become apparent that should reveal to you what tactics will ensure the greatest possibility of success with those hard-won, high-quality leads. This will allow your salespeople to focus their energies on more strategic questions, like how to break the ice, what the prospect's most pressing needs are, and how you can best help them.

It is never safe, no matter how successful a company may be perceived to be, to assume that everything is working optimally and that it's unnecessary to meddle further with how things work. Meddle constantly! Forever poke at the numbers, prod the data to tell you more. Always try to find out what's working, why it's working and what can be done better. Now go out there and build an amazing Salesforce.