

Sales Training Article: Qualification Is An Ongoing Process

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There comes a time for most people when annual physicals become a routine in trying to maintain good health. Seeing doctors every year increases the chance that major afflictions can be diagnosed early and treatments can start before conditions progress.

In my experience, companies would be far better off if sales managers were more effective in making sure that new opportunities entering each seller's pipeline were better qualified. One of the many responsibilities of a sales manager is to have sellers work on opportunities that have a high probability of resulting in orders.

For those organizations that are effective in this endeavor, the health of pipelines should be evaluated on an ongoing basis. As with an annual physical, developments can cause previously viable opportunities to devolve into low probability. In some cases it may make sense for sellers to continue withdrawing. Some of the causes are that sellers:

- Are unable to gain access to Key Players
- Are unable to uncover desired business outcomes
- Are unable to establish potential payback/value
- Have offerings that aren't a good fit for buyers
- Can't get budget allocated

A core concept of CCS® is that bad news early is good news, meaning that early disqualification is better than going the distance and losing. Most sellers want pipelines with many opportunities in them. Left to their own devices they may knowingly or unknowingly focus more on quantity than quality.

Managers would be well served to realize that pipeline health should not be based upon one-time qualifications as opportunities are entered. As with regular physicals, monthly looks at opportunities are necessary to do sanity checks on whether or not they are moving forward.