



AA-ISP

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AA-ISP DRAWS FINDING FROM RESEARCH OF INSIDE SALES LEADERS AND REPS

The American Association of Inside Sales Professionals (AA-ISP) recently published a research study of inside sales leaders and representatives on what they saw as their top challenges. The research indicates that inside sales is moving past the profession's early challenges of what selling models to deploy, compensation design, and simply selling the value of inside sales among others. The AA-ISP's research indicates that the current top leadership challenges are finding, hiring, training, and developing quality candidates.

The AA-ISP's research was conducted nationwide, across all types of industries and selling models and included over 850 respondents. Of all the respondents, 98% stated that their organizations deploy an inside selling model. Selling models represented include team, discrete, hybrid, and channel/distribution, with respondents most commonly reporting that their company used a team selling model. However, both discrete and hybrid models seem to have been increasing in popularity over the last several years. This increase was attributed to the increased responsibility and ownership of a maturing inside sales profession. In a discrete selling model, inside sales representatives own the quota and are responsible for selling without any field reps involved. In a hybrid selling model, inside reps work primarily inside but travel as needed, sometimes frequently, for face-to-face meetings.

As a first of its kind research, the AA-ISP included individual contributors (Inside Sales Reps) in addition to leaders. Top challenges among reps included lack of quality leads, need for additional training, career advancement opportunities and too much red-tape. One inside rep who took the survey commented, "The amount of computer work and reporting is seriously keeping me from face time with the customers. There aren't enough hours for all they want." Another respondent commented, "My marketing team just doesn't get it. There's no nurturing programs at all. No email marketing to speak of. No content generation. 7 leads a day being generated. Weak." Yet another top challenge was lack of meaningful recognition for inside sales professionals, with an inside rep stating that "senior management seems caught up in their own issues and lacks knowledge of how much Inside Sales is doing..."

Despite these challenges, inside sales professionals are expected to be skilled at the full sales cycle and solution selling, among other things. Thus, it is unsurprising that hiring and training people who possess these skills is the top challenge facing inside sales leaders. On the challenge of hiring quality candidates, one inside sales leader said, "There are a great number of people available in the market who have telemarketing and/or

telesales experience but few really have been held accountable for a goal and consistently achieved it. I expect that experience to be in the backgrounds of those I hire, yet it seems hard to find.” On the challenge of training quality candidates, an inside rep said, “Being someone that was a relationship manager first, the transition into sales was basically lacking on the knowhow of basic sales and prospecting. PPT presentation and webinars are simply not enough. I believe that shadowing top sales folks in the field brings the results – practice makes perfect.” Although hiring and training quality candidates, in addition to other challenges, may have a temporary negative effect on the inside sales profession, the AA-ISP is committed to seeing these challenges as opportunities. Opportunities that, like the many challenges the inside sales profession faced years ago, can be overcome with positive outcomes for the profession.

The full research study, a 20 page report, is available to all association (AA-ISP) professional level members. Please visit www.aa-isp.org or call member services at 800-604-7085 ext. 110 for membership details and registration.

About the AA-ISP

The AA-ISP is an international association dedicated exclusively to advancing the profession of Inside Sales. The association engages in research studies , organizational benchmarking and leadership round tables to better understand and analyze the trends, challenges, and key components of the growth and development of the Inside Sales industry. Our mission is to help inside sales representatives and leaders to leverage our information and resources through published content, local community chapters, national conferences, career development, and an Inside Sales Accreditation program.

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