

## Your Sales Incentive Used to Work...What Happened?



### You might not know it, but your sales incentive strategy probably needs a health check.

Let's assume you are part of a 15-year-old company. There are so many things that have changed since you opened your doors – the economy (many times), governmental regulations, the competitive landscape and especially, technology. You may have even gone through a merger, acquisition or divestiture along the way. It's safe to say your business goals have also changed. And what about the people helping you reach those goals? Your sales team, customer service, and distribution channels look different now. And you can bet they are motivated by different things.

Many incentive program stakeholders are at a loss to truly understand why they are struggling to meet their sales, engagement and business goals. At times, program disparity or confusion on rules and eligibility can lead to low participation and furthermore, fail to deliver critical results. A sales incentive program audit will shed light on gaps of engagement and motivation and put the power back in the stakeholders' hands.

To boil it down, an audit consists of lots of research, analysis, some creative thinking, and if done correctly, valuable insights.

### Why Do An Audit?

As changes affect the operation and direction of your organization, it's important to keep a pulse on your sales incentives to make sure they are delivering on their initial purpose. This might be more nuanced than you think.

We helped a client uncover a wide range of program definitions at the senior leadership level – including large differences in opinion and understanding of what the program is designed to do. This further revealed a disconnect between what leadership “thought” the program accomplished and what it “actually” accomplished.

An incentive audit is a comprehensive way to examine the purpose and effectiveness of your sales incentive programs. By analyzing and evaluating the program components – timing, rules, goal thresholds and eligibility – you can make the necessary tweaks to enhance its effectiveness and ensure there is complete clarity about the program.

Ask yourself this: “Is there a **better** way to motivate, educate, reward and engage my audiences, with a more focused and customized approach, and *still* support individual stakeholder goals?”

An in-depth sales incentive audit will answer this for you and what’s more, give you the steps required to enhance the program.

## Getting Started

While Google can answer most questions in less than a second, this process – if done thoughtfully – will take a little more time. Depending on the complexity of your incentive strategy, an audit could take anywhere from six to 16 weeks. It’s helpful to bring in an expert that can keep the project on track and serve as an impartial third-party when collecting interviews from stakeholders, leadership, and participants. They will also work with you to analyze your current program data to ensure you are maximizing your program ROI.

After completing the audit, you will have validated your incentive strategy through a research-based approach, instead of a gut feeling. You’ll also receive the data that allows you to stand in a defensible position to answer tough questions from your leadership. And most importantly, you’ll be seen as a positive force and thoughtful steward of company expenditures that affect both top-line and bottom-line growth.

## What You Will Know (and Achieve) After an Audit

- If there’s a return on a specific program and what it is
- If the strategy is aligned with organizational goals and objectives
- If the program motivates the largest percentage of your audience
- If you can leverage awards across programs and initiatives to drive greater performance and better budget allocation
- If your spend is optimized on performance improvement initiatives across various activities

Once the answer is “yes” to all of those questions, you’ll be confident your sales incentive program is set up for success. And unlike other audits – ahem IRS – you’ll feel good about the money you’ll make and save as a result.

## The Right Time to Do an Audit

Through our proven methodology, Creative Group designed a [sales incentive program](#) for a client that enabled them to:

- Increase sales
- Grow distributor participation and market share
- Increase cost savings

In a survey done by [Innosight](#), 66% of executives from 20 industries agreed or strongly agreed that their “organization recognizes the need to transform—that is, to change our core offerings or business model—in response to rapidly changing markets and disruption.”

So really, the time to ensure you’re maximizing your company’s performance is now. Ready to dive in?



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