

THE 12 TYPES of Sales Call Reluctance

Sales Call Reluctance (SCR) – the way forward...

OUR PREVIOUS THREE editorials have looked at the causes of SCR and how the 12 different types can dramatically affect the productivity of sales people.

In this, the final editorial of this series, we will show you what all this can mean to individuals and organisations and, more importantly, also provide an overview of how it can be cured !

First of all, then, lets take a look at the stark financial impact that SCR can have on your business:

Business Costs

These fall into two main camps, and we will use a business with 100 representatives as a working example:

1. Cost of existing staff:

(Loss of business to competitors due to medical representatives' SCR)

- Scientific Research * has shown that, on average and across industries, an individual with SCR will lose around 15 pieces of New Business to Competitors each month. i.e. a person with SCR will miss out on seeing around 3 extra prospects a week - their competitors will not! That's over 180 sales lost each year.
- So, being cautious and using an example of an average 6-month Cardio Vascular script with a small cost of only £15 per month, that equates to £1,350 per month (15 x £15 x 6months) or £16,200 per year.
- Our experience within the Pharma Industry to date shows that around 40% of medical representatives and managers are actually Call Reluctant at this moment and therefore:
Total costs per year for a business with 40% staff suffering with SCR - **£648,000**

But you know the costs of your own business – please do the maths

A. Cost of your drug	£	
B. Average script duration (months)		
C. Value of script (A x B)	£	
D. Business lost per year (C x 15 x 12)	£	per representative
E. Number of Medical Representatives		
F. Total business costs (D x E x 0.4)	£	

Can you afford this cost . . . ?

2. Recruitment costs:

For a business with 100 representatives, a cautious calculation shows that it could be in excess of £200,000 per year (based on average salary of £25,000; agency commission of 15%; notional attrition rate of 15% due to SCR and 'In House Training' spend of £10,000 per individual)

Total recruitment cost: **£206,250 per year**

But how do we know that people actually leave due to their SCR?

Staff Attrition and Sales Call Reluctance

It is well documented that attrition rates for medical reps within Pharma are at present around 25%, and we all know that people tend to move around from company to company.

Have you ever stopped to consider why this is the case? (we know it's not just because of improved packages!), and have you ever wondered why the 18 to 24 month period for a new recruit seems to be such an important time for 'dissatisfaction' and attrition?

Well, the answer may be that SCR often really 'hits' individuals as the 'honeymoon period' of their new job starts to wear off!

Can we all relate to the sales manager who, whilst acknowledging the existence of a 'settling in' period for the new recruit during the first 9 to 12 months, then starts to ask certain uncomfortable questions of them in terms of business production! The pressure of having to increase business at this time generally means that the new recruit will be forced to consider initiating contact with people on their territory that they have managed to ignore or avoid up to now. They have been able to successfully cultivate the parts of their territory that they feel comfortable with, **but they must now face the real challenge of overcoming their fears and reluctances by approaching the groups or individuals that they have not yet developed.**

For many this is a bridge too far, and they prefer to leave and experience the safety of another honeymoon period with a new company. **Sound familiar.....?!**

Cultural contamination

Having looked at the financial impact of SCR, perhaps it is a good time to also look at another, less obvious, cost.

The surprising thing that many organisations don't expect to discover from investigating SCR, is the way that it can actually leak into a companies culture and affect the way that 'sales' is approached at policy making levels. The SCR of Senior Managers can influence the sales style of the business.

It is often very subtle, tends to occur over a period of time, and can manifest itself in many forms such as:

- A reluctance to acknowledge that sales is actually part of the

job - how many of your business cards have the word 'Sales' on them?!

- A strong sense that telephones don't play a part in the prospecting process - "we don't actually make appointments by phone in this industry..",
- An unofficial dress policy that demands a certain 'standard that sets us apart' to be achieved by all.
- A company car policy that prides itself in offering a high standard of vehicle - never the normal 'fleet' cars!

This is potentially a very dangerous situation for a company as restrictive prospecting policies can be continually reinforced and affect, not just individuals, but an entire sales force.

How businesses can benefit

1. **Existing staff** - all sales people can cure their individual types of SCR; improve their comfort with the sales role, and bring increased productivity and success.

Most sales organisations can very quickly see the benefits to be derived from increasing prospecting activity by improving the emotional state of their staff.

Case studies demonstrate improvements in productivity of up to 40%

2. **Recruitment** - by profiling potential sales staff prior to employing them, and ensuring that they actually have the propensity to sell for you!

Organisations worldwide profile their potential recruits to help their recruitment decisions. As well as measuring a candidate's

potential suitability for the sales role, it can then be used at the interview stage to help the recruiter ask very specific questions around highlighted areas of concern. The interviewer is then able to gauge how serious the SCR is - should they recruit and cure, or decline the candidate.

Recruitment Agencies offer 'Added Value' to their clients. Alongside the standard c.v. and interview notes etc, they provide proof that their candidate is not Call Reluctant!

The Cure

There are two ways to overcome SCR.

1. **Self-diagnosis**

Diagnose the problems yourself, then use "Self Talk" to combat SCR whenever and wherever it occurs.

Warning - The avoidance behaviours that have developed over time are there to avoid the "discomfort" and "energy draining" effect that initiating contact with clients has on them in certain situations. The emotional cost of facing the truth may cause sufferers of SCR to find lots of other rationales or excuses as to why they don't prospect in certain ways or certain markets.

2. **Formal Profiling**

The more effective way, to tackle SCR is to work with trained individuals who can psychometrically profile you and prescribe appropriate countermeasures to address the conditions inhibiting your prospecting success.

An example profile is shown below:



Details about the individual's current energy levels and clarity of career goals

This indicates whether an individual is currently suffering from Call Reluctance. Red indicates that they are

This shows the types of SCR (red) that will be presently causing an individual some problems

Three filters allow us to say how accurately and honestly the questionnaire has been undertaken in the first place!



Summary

Our journey through the concept of Sales Call Reluctance is near its end. Over the last 4 features we have looked at:

What it is – an emotional short circuit preventing sales people reaching their full potential by denying themselves the opportunity to initiate contact with ALL potential clients.

The 12 types of Sales Call Reluctance – how it hides behind passionate, well-rehearsed arguments and excuses in every pharmaceutical business in the UK. You won't necessarily identify it as an epidemic within your business. However, it is the same illness but with different symptoms.

The Cost to business if it is not dealt with – in terms of recruitment; lost business to competitors and Cultural Contamination.

The Cure – by either formal profiling or by self-diagnosis.

A Final Thought for you...

So whether you are reading this article from an individual or company perspective you have now reached a crossroad where the next move is yours.

If you are dismissing the whole concept as "Pixie Dust" then good luck – you probably have quite toxic levels of SCR within you already!!!

The emotional short circuits through coping, blaming, denying and avoiding have already kicked in, and we would even be so bold as to guess at some of the ways it is leaking out depending on which call reluctance you suffer from (answers above and to the right!). What are you thinking at the moment....?

1. "This sort of "stuff" never really works, no point in trying this time.."
2. "I'm going to need to research this more thoroughly before I'm convinced.."
3. "This may affect lesser salespeople – but not me. Who on earth is scared to prospect..?"
4. "Whoever wrote this article really doesn't understand the complexities of the Pharma industry and the people we deal with."
5. "The only reason I don't do group presentations is because they're not successful – nothing to do with SCR.."
6. "Just more unethical pushy sales trainers trying to force people to prospect in aggressive ways – scum of the earth!"

If you are not SCR (but would like to prove it to yourself); think that

you may be Call Reluctant and want to solve it; want to cure SCR in your organisation, or are considering how it may help the recruitment within your business, then we would be very happy to talk to you about the subject.

* (Behavioural Science Research Press International Study 1992)

Answers:

1. Doomayers
2. Overpreparers
3. Hyperpro
4. Social Self Conscious
5. Stage Fright
6. Yielders

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Remap specialises in Managing Business Performance, and is run by Directors Martin Perry, Tim Tolman and Ian Saunders. To discover more information about overcoming Sales Call Reluctance and to find out what else they have to offer your business, you can contact them using the information below.

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