

6 Easy Ways to Foolproof Your Next NSM

It is time for your annual National Sales Meeting or Sales Kick-Off. Those three words can strike dread into sales leaders who have been tasked to lead them or plan them. However, it's not quite time to panic.

Remember, it's been done before; in fact, last year's meeting was an absolute smash hit. That said, you now need an encore performance, and there are specific tactics you can follow to ensure you're on the right path to ultimately produce a meeting that your sales team will be talking about throughout the year and one that inspires them.

We've done our research and used our own experience to distill five can't miss tips to help you set a baseline, set the course, and get started on planning and executing your next sales meeting successfully.

TIP #1: Location matters

This might be a no-brainer, but choosing the right location could mean the difference between a packed sales meeting or an empty one. True, most sales meetings are required, but make it at least tempting. Here are four best practices:

- **Pick a location relevant to where your team resides.** For example, if most of your team is on the West Coast, consider San Francisco, San Diego, or Los Angeles. Each of these cities can provide the geographical center but also the room for your team.
- **Send your team somewhere warm.** Are most or many of your team on the East Coast? If your sales meeting is in the winter, send them west or south where it's warm. You want to inspire them, right? Start there.
- **Tie your sales meeting into your company's culture.** For example, does your team like to ski all winter? Are they wine or craft beer enthusiasts? Consider a location where they can regale in their hobbies. Skiers? How about a ski resort? Wine people? Sonoma. Craft beer drinkers? Portland or Seattle. You get the picture. Make your sales meeting an experiential one.
- **Choose a suitable space.** Once you've nailed the location down, consider the type of space to book. Look for spaces that offer room to roam between meetings, room to collaborate, and areas to decompress at the end of the day.

TIP #2: Have measurable objectives

Yes, national sales meetings are a great way to get the team all in one room, see each other in person (we're optimists and believe most will be in-person), but you need better results other than feedback that says, "I enjoyed the breakfast." So here are three measurable objectives to ask yourself to get started. Answer these three questions before starting to plan:

1. What do you want from the sales meeting?
2. How would you define success?
3. Will the event tie back into increased sales? If not, why?

TIP #3: It's OK to set high standards

Let's pull off the Band-Aid: national sales meetings can be costly and high-risk, but huge benefits come with that risk and costs. You can go big and book hotels in major cities, provide your team with lavish rooms and amenities, or you can book a room at a smaller hotel and offer the continental breakfast. Either works, but you want the most out of your team at the end of the day. So, wow them and inspire them!

TIP #4: Set an agenda

Let's put on a sales meeting and talk for 8 hours and see where it goes, said no one ever. This seems like an essential 101 tactic. However, for the sanity of your team (and your own), set an agenda and stick to it. Here are tips to ensure your schedule stays on track and provides inspiration:

Provide time for everyone to present. It's crucial for all departments to have a say at your meeting (and trust us, they will want their time to shine, and that includes HR, marketing, the accounting department...everyone). Planning your sales meeting shouldn't be a siloed affair anyway; work with each department as you plan.

Ask your team what they want.

Why are you planning a national sales meeting? Ask your team what they want out of the meeting before you set an agenda. Do they want a connection? More time with the sales leaders? More training? Again, don't plan your meeting alone—tap into the whole organization for feedback before planning.

TIP #5: Make your sales meeting engaging

We've all been there. You're pumped, peers surround you, sales leaders are roaming the aisles, the music is going off, and then...the PowerPoints come out, and the room's energy deflates. So here are four hints for increased engagement:

- **Hint 1:** Skip the PowerPoint presentations or at least keep them to a minimum of no more than ten slides.
- **Hint 2:** Think like a TED Talk. You've no doubt seen a TED Talk, so consider the presentations to be more like a 15-minute, engaging, inspiring story from your presenters.

- **Hint 3:** Consider external speakers and experts for unique insight and information that you can't provide. These speakers can bring fresh, new insight to your sales organization. In fact, people like us!
- **Hint 4:** Provide breakout and Q&A sessions. This is where the magic happens. Small groups can dive into meta topics, Q&As provide more in-depth conversations from your speakers, and deep hallway meetings can provide real-world examples of success for your team. It doesn't matter where they get inspired from at the sales meeting.

TIP #6: Do an evaluation

This ties back into your ROI and the "why" behind your sales meeting. Your team is still pumped; the meeting is still fresh in their minds, so now is the time to ask them for their feedback. You'll get great feedback, and you might get negative feedback, and that's OK. Negative feedback helps you pivot for next year's meeting.

Hint: Having trouble getting your sales team to return their evaluations? Offer an incentive. Starbucks' card. Free lunch. Cash. Want to ensure candor from the team? Engage an outside survey company to protect anonymity. It's not that expensive, and you get better input.

Remember, don't panic.

You've got this. Use our tips to get started, use your own experience from previous sales meetings you've attended, and ask yourself what resonated or didn't resonate with you. And there's help if you need it with numerous independent sales meeting planners that can help you. For example, a quick search for "event planners" on LinkedIn will source 100's of individuals who can manage it all.

Good luck and have a great sales meeting!

To learn more about us, our Level Five Coaching System, and how we can make your national sales meeting shine, [contact our partners at Advantage Performance Group](#).