



Stalling Software Sales?

Seven ways you may be impeding your growth

by: Kristal Cook, RockRoot

Software can be the growth engine of the modern office technology dealership. It can create recurring revenue. It can help you close bigger bundled deals with higher margins. It can embed you further with your customers, increasing retention. Yet for many dealers, software sales remain inconsistent, reactive and heavily dependent on vendor reps. If software revenue feels stalled, here are seven ways you might be accidentally stalling your own growth.

(1) You may be carrying too many software solutions in your portfolio. More software does not necessarily mean more opportunities or more revenue. When you have too many solutions in your portfolio and sales reps are tasked with learning and selling all of them, they never become proficient in any of them. A lower number of solutions paired with specific talk-track training helps reps stay focused and confident when talking to customers about solutions.

(2) Your leaders do not talk about software. Your sales team members listen closely to what your leadership emphasizes. If your sales meetings revolve around hardware placements and equipment quotas, and software is never mentioned, sales reps are never going to prioritize software sales. Your sales leaders should be asking their reps about software opportunities, sharing wins and losses, coaching sales team members on their software talk tracks, and setting software sales goals. As sales reps get more comfortable talking about software, they will identify more opportunities.

(3) You are selling software like it is a copier/MFP. Selling software is not the same as selling boxes. Copier/MFPs have set functions and software is much more customized to the customer. Your sales reps have the opportunity to present themselves as business consultants and workflow experts when they can ask the right discovery questions and position software solutions as a way to solve a customer's workflow pain. Customers want someone experienced to help them navigate security risks and compliance requirements while solving inefficiencies, saving them future headaches and money.

(4) Training is inconsistent and vendor dependent. While vendors do a great job training their resellers, your sales reps need more than one or two vendor trainings a year. Software sales require a rhythm of ongoing training, coaching,



story sharing, goal setting and internal accountability. Schedule a training session with your vendors for the start of every quarter and have your sales leaders reinforce the messaging in weekly meetings. Know who your vendor contacts are and stay updated, and practice talk tracks with sales team members to incorporate new features.

(5) Your compensation plan says software does not matter. Sales reps know what they make in commission when they sell an MFP, but they usually do not know what they would make from software on the same deal. Creating sample packages is a great way to simplify software sales for your reps while showing them what pricing and commission to expect. Look at your comp plan honestly. Does it promote software? Do reps get renewal credit? How are they paid on recurring revenue (subscriptions)? Are solution wins celebrated and awarded? Are software sales required for your President's Club? The more clear you can make commission on software, the more motivated your sales reps will be to learn and sell it.

(6) Past installations went poorly. Nothing kills future software sales more quickly than a bad implementation. Installations tend to go poorly when they drag on, when there is a lack of communication, when the implementation requires something different than the customer expected it to or when the software does not work as expected. Reps and sales managers remember — and they hesitate to sell it again.

You can reduce these risks by working with your vendors to create installation checklists and “What to expect” documents for your sales reps and customers. These lists will include what the vendor is responsible for, what the dealer is responsible for and what the customer is responsible for, and the timeline they can expect for the project. This will allow the sales rep to confidently discuss the installation process and keep everyone on the same page from the start, with no surprises.

(7) No one takes ownership of driving software sales.

In many dealerships, software is everyone’s responsibility, which means efforts may not be aligned. Hiring a full-time solutions director can cost \$120,000 to \$200,000 annually, and qualified leaders are hard to find. Without a leader aligning your teams and driving software growth, software becomes a vendor-driven effort — a side conversation instead of a growth focus. ■

Kristal Cook is a solutions sales executive and the founder of RockRoot, where she helps office technology dealerships grow

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profitable software revenue with confidence. Through RockRoot, Cook serves as a virtual solutions director, providing leadership alignment and onboarding, solutions portfolio evaluation, vendor coordination, sales enablement and presales support. Her work includes assistance with demos, trials and POCs, installation supervision, customer training, and the creation of customized sell sheets and sales resources.

With a dealer-first approach, Cook aligns software strategy to each dealership’s KPIs, goals and priorities. RockRoot offers a “Virtual Solutions Director” package for dealers who would like to bring a software veteran on board to help them drive software growth. If you would like training and alignment for your current leadership, RockRoot offers a software sales growth course with a workbook to create a tangible, actionable plan to implement, and includes coaching sessions. Cook can be reached at kcook@rockroot.biz. Visit <https://rockroot.biz>.

