

Drone Technology Company Scales Sales Team Rapidly by Tapping Unique Rising Stars Program

Introduction:

Drone technology is a largely untapped source of analytics and intelligence for businesses in nearly any sector. However, implementing drone technology in a business setting is a complex undertaking. Companies must obtain and maintain drone hardware, train qualified operators, and understand how to turn the data gathered into actionable business intelligence.

Measure, a leading aerial intelligence company, removes those barriers. **Measure works with businesses in all industries, including energy, infrastructure, architecture, and construction, providing a range of solutions** — from complete, outsourced “drone-as-a-service” offerings to resources to help businesses develop and maintain drone programs of their own.

As regulations began to loosen around the legal use of drone technology, Measure had the opportunity to expand both within its established business sectors and into new verticals. However, as a startup, the company faced the challenge of scaling its sales team intelligently — bringing on team members who could speak to complex technology and adapt in a quickly changing industry.

About Measure:

Through highly skilled flight operations, a specialized data engineering team, and a comprehensive software solution, Measure helps corporations deploy drones at scale, saving thousands of hazardous man-hours and providing millions of dollars in operational benefits. Established in 2014, Measure grew to the top 5 percent of drone firms based on revenue within just five years. Measure has completed thousands of commercial flight operations while maintaining an industry-leading safety record. Recently, Measure translated its operational expertise into a software platform that helps enterprises successfully manage their in-house drone programs.

Business Challenge:

When Measure was first established, regulations limited the commercial use of drone technology. Growth across the industry was slow. Measure focused its efforts on policy and acquiring federal waivers that allowed first-of-their-kind operations in public safety, logistics, and media.

When regulations opened up in 2016 to allow more widespread use of drone technology, Measure brought on Abigail Lacy to lead and expand the sales team as the vice president of sales. In the startup environment, Lacy was starting from scratch; not only did Measure lack a sales team, but it had no marketing function to generate leads.

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In absence of an existing inbound leads function, Lacy prioritized hiring team members focused purely on pursuing outbound leads. She aimed to keep everyone focused on outbound activity for a very specific reason.

“When you have full-cycle sales reps responsible for outbound and inbound follow-up, their response time to inbound leads won’t be as quick, and their focus on a healthy pipeline will get consistently put on the back burner — which could lead to lost opportunities,” Lacy explained.

“Having someone focused on prospecting makes sure you never miss those opportunities.”

In addition, Measure needed sales reps who would be comfortable with change — because that’s simply the nature of the drone industry. As an alumna of memoryBlue, Lacy knew that the company where she started her career would be the perfect source for members of her new team.

 **The Solution:**

Lacy began her career with memoryBlue, so when it came time to build her sales team at Measure, she knew that's precisely where she could find passionate, well-trained sales representatives. "memoryBlue is exceptional at finding great sales people and training them to become even better," she said. "I know the training they've gone through, because I went through it myself — so I know exactly what I'm going to get in a new sales hire."

memoryBlue's extensive training and ongoing coaching molds early-career sales professionals into confident high-tech sellers. "The sales development representatives (SDRs) we hire are highly motivated and willing to learn. As they succeed and decide it's time to take the next step in their career, we're happy to facilitate their move to a role with one of our client companies," said Kristen Wisdorf, managing director at memoryBlue.

Already familiar with the quality of memoryBlue SDRs, Lacy chose to hire through the Rising Stars program. This unique sales talent outplacement program provides companies with access to pre-qualified candidates who have been through the memoryBlue training program and have 12 to 18 months of sales development experience. Rather than paying a large headhunting fee upfront, companies taking part in the Rising Stars program pay a low \$500/month fee for the first two years of the hire's employment — a benefit that's especially important to a growing startup that needs to strategically allocate its funding. If the hire's employment ends for any reason during that time period, the monthly fee stops immediately.

And for a company that's looking to expand quickly, Rising Stars provides a quick path to a productive team and mitigates the risks associated with talent acquisition fees.

"The hiring and training process is quick and efficient," said Lacy. "I don't have to screen them, because they've already been screened by memoryBlue."

"And when it comes to training, there's a night-and-day difference between a Rising Star and an outside hire. memoryBlue instills a tenacity in people — they're not afraid to jump in and pick up the phone."

Lacy quickly moved forward with her first Rising Stars hire, and two additional SDRs soon followed.

 **Results:**

Measure's first Rising Stars hire was Andrew Zell. He had been an adaptable, high performing member of the memoryBlue team, and Lacy knew that could benefit Measure. She brought him on board, and he quickly proved his worth while working with each of the business verticals.

"Andrew was one of the most versatile outbound prospecting reps," she said. "Over his years with our company, he picked up the nuances of each of the verticals and rapidly proved that he could handle a role as a full-cycle sales representative within one of those verticals."

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— Abigail Lacy, vice president of sales at Measure

When a position opened up in the government sector, Lacy promoted him to account executive, and he has contributed significantly to the team's success. Overall, between 2017 and 2018, Measure saw 150 percent growth year-over-year across their leading indicator metrics on the sales team and a 70 percent increase in unique customers — a testament to increased adoption in the market and diversification within the current customer base.

At the end of 2018, Lacy was in a position to hire more SDRs after Measure brought on a vice president of marketing, whose efforts increased the company's flow of inbound leads five-fold. **To address those leads, Lacy hired two additional Rising Stars through memoryBlue: Houston Brautigan and Jack DiBattista.**

The two SDRs handle all inbound leads, ensuring immediate responses and the right number of touches to nurture those leads. Within the first quarter of 2019, the Measure sales team exceeded its quota by 161 percent, with 16 percent of that revenue coming from inbound and outbound leads pursued by Brautigan and DiBattista.

Brautigan and DiBattista have also increased the quality of sales leads. Measure tracks lead scores on a scale of 1 through 5, with a 1 being an unqualified lead and 5 being a lead likely to close in 30 to 90 days. **Brautigan and DiBattista have consistently averaged a lead score of between 4.0 and 4.5.**



The Future:

Measure is settling into its sweet spot, due largely to the hard work of the sales and operations team over the last four years. Lacy is confident that success won't slow down. "Given the people we have on board, I am optimistic about hitting the goals we have set for the year," she said. "I have rock stars on my team."

With Measure's continued growth, Lacy fully expects to hire additional team members from her go-to source: the memoryBlue Rising Stars program.

"I'm able to find the right fit for my team without the lengthy hiring or training process," she said. "I trust that their raw talent and drive has been vetted. They've proven that they can jump right in and make an impact, and that's critical for a startup like Measure."

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About memoryBlue:

memoryBlue is a sales development consulting firm based outside of Washington, D.C., that specializes in helping a wide range of high-tech clients accelerate new business growth. With nearly two decades of proven results, businesses trust the firm to help gain a competitive advantage in the reach and effectiveness of sales development efforts. The company has worked with over 850 high-tech companies to provide outsourced sales development services, sales management expertise and strategic sales talent acquisition assistance.

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