

GEEWIZ...

Sales Coach or Menacing Sales Manager?

How many times have you worked for a sales manager who is in charge of either the sales team or the customer service team, who tries to manage by fear, threats, targets, budgets, and perhaps even a little bit of shouting, and maybe even the odd bit of personal abuse? And their sales meetings are just rants and raves, with no motivational stimulation whatsoever?

Hopefully there's not too many of these 'old style' sales managers around, however many new sales managers, when faced with budgets to meet, and revenue targets to meet, get exasperated when their sales team just doesn't seem to be performing.

You may like to consider that the role of a sales coach is actually more suited to getting the sales team to recognise their potential and deliver promises over and above budget.

What does a sales coach do?

Firstly, the definition of a sales coach is helping the sales team see their potential over and above what they're currently achieving.

To help your sales team see their potential, you first of all need to fully establish the existing base level. This is done by analysing the customer base, analysing the customer purchasing trends, and face to face visits analysing the personal sales skills of the members of the sales team. A good sales coach will spend 80% of their time out with the sales team, coaching on the job, adding to skills and fixing faults.

A good sales coach can sit in a sales interview with a sales person, and let them lose a sale if their skill is not good enough, because the adverse is to jump all over the sales rep and prove to the customer that you really are an idiot coach because you haven't identified what skills you need to help the salesperson. You can always go back and revisit the customer to achieve the results.

A good sales coach will look at the daily call reports, alongside the salesperson, to help them understand how they have used their skill, their professional ability, and challenge them to do better.

A good sales coach will have sales meetings that have positive beginnings and positive endings. That is, they may start with the "Wins of the Week", and they finish with the objectives to be achieved during the coming week, and look towards the future rather than back into history when examining trends and customer results.

A good sales coach will match up the best performing sales member in a “buddy system” with the weakest performing sales member to see how they can grow the result and lift the performing result of the sales team up a few notches to maintain the overall growth.

It's also worthwhile coaching people to maximise the business opportunities within existing relationships with clients, rather than always focusing on new prospects that take a while to develop full revenue opportunities. It's always easier to get more spend out of an existing client by giving them more reasons to purchase, identifying their problems, and finding solutions.

I once attended a sales meeting where the sales manager started off by telling the sales team that he was sick and tired of their poor results, and they'd all be fired next week if they didn't start pulling in some sales. As expected, most of the sales team resigned or were quickly out looking for jobs instead of dealing to the real issues, which was why the company's products were not being bought by the customers.

Remember, people are your greatest resource, and if you can coach them to see their own potential as being better than what they're currently achieving, you will indeed have better performance. Be a sales coach, not a sales management menace!

This article contributed by Richard P. Gee, sales and marketing coach, www.geewiz.co.nz.