

## Ten Practical things Sales Managers must do to improve sales

It takes just three weeks to break an old habit and create a new one. In just three weeks you can begin to improve your sales success by adopting the behaviours outlined below. Don't take our word for it, try these practical tips for just three weeks and see what a difference it makes to your team's success in selling.

### Success comes through Sales Management

#### 1 Think and Act like a Sales Manager

Managing your team to sales success is about focus. It is about you, as the Sales Manager, thinking and acting and focusing on getting the most out of your people. Being a sales manager means acting like one - leading the team, enabling the team, coaching the team. It does not always mean you have to be their best friend; respected yes, liked yes but not always their best friend

Think about what you need to do as a manager to ensure your team is as successful as it can be. Having thought about it then write a 250 word max plan that will support and enable success

*Habit 1: Ensure all your activities with your team support your plan*

#### 2 Managing and leading a super sales team is the key to success

It is a real conundrum. Most Sales Managers are promoted from within. So we have a highly competitive sales person one day and the next we expect them to change the habits of a professional lifetime and become a planner, a manager, a coach. How does that work? With little or no training you are expected to completely change your role.

You have a sales team. They are employed to sell. You are employed to manage their selling. Stop telling them how you do it and help them improve the way they do it. Get out to as many calls as you can in the next 3 weeks. If they sell on the phone then listen to their calls. Watch and listen how your sales people are with their clients.

*Habit 2: Observe (or listen to) each team member on at least one call every month! (Don't count those you have to go to as a member of the sales team)*

#### 3 Have a plan. Communicate it. Act on it.

The old adage is "fail to plan, plan to fail". How true this is for selling. Without a plan there is no structure, no way of knowing whether you are on the way to achieving your forecast.

Use your time with your people effectively to review achievement against your forecast/plan and recalibrate if necessary and to communicate and agree what actions the sales team will take to get you back on track. Use your regular weekly sales reviews to listen to how your people are making the plan happen. Ask for feedback and tweak as necessary based on the feedback from your team and from clients.

*Habit 3: Review your plan at a set time each week*

## Behind every successful sales person is an effective coach

### 4 Decide who you invest time in

Coach those who deserve some of your time. As someone once said “you cannot teach a pig to sing, it is impossible and trying it annoys them”. Not everyone is coachable, not everyone is worth coaching.

Where do you start when it comes to coaching? The best place is with those that are currently low on the productive scale but high on the potential axis. These tend to be new sales people who are willing and capable but inexperienced. Use your best sales people and yourself to help those who can increase their productivity with a little help and support. Remember the 80:20 rule - 80% of your sales will come from 20% of your people. That means your best people are 16 times more productive than your least productive team members - you could double your sales by converting just 20% of your people to be as successful as your current best.

*Habit 4: Schedule a monthly session with each team member you intend to invest time in - DO NOT CANCEL*

### 5 Be objective not subjective

How many times have you heard sales managers say “she is one of my best sales people, always does her number”. That may be so but what if she just is just plain lucky? Lucky enough to have customers that regularly need to buy your products.

Understand what your people do by regularly observing what they do when they are with customers. Measure them on their ability to questions effectively, listen to your customer’s concerns, issues and problems and measure them on how they demonstrate value and solutions to customer’s problems.

*Habit 5: When you observe your people in action, be consistent about your approach, focus on the steps they have taken to achieve the desired outcome. Measure everyone to the same standard!*

### 6 Less can be more

How do you know you have the right number of people in your sales team? Should it be more? Surely then you can sell more and achieve your number. Or maybe you need less people to focus on which means you can provide more focus to each individual who is being productive. Maybe you only need 40% of the people you currently have.

Do a quick feasibility check on how reducing the team might work for you - look at the downsides and the upsides.

*Habit 6: Measure productivity and effectiveness on a monthly basis.*

## Effective measurement enables successful sales engagement

### 7 Qualify out more than you qualify in

Too often we see sales teams chasing every “opportunity” to “keep the pipeline healthy”. How healthy is a pipeline that is full of so called opportunities that you haven’t the slightest chance of winning? Qualifying out is more important than qualifying in, in the early stages of opportunity management. Focusing on those you can win and ditching those you cannot is the most effective way of managing your pipeline

*Habit 7: Review your forecast weekly and try to qualify out all opportunities; those that stay deserve to stay!*

## 8 Measure the things that will make you successful

What gets measured gets done is another one of those annoying truisms. Unless you can accurately measure your critical success criteria you will not know whether you are on track or not. Decide what your key success criteria are, ensure you can measure their progress against plan, use these measures as the only ones you use on your weekly progress calls. Make all of your reports focus on these.

*Habit 8: Review your monthly reports, if you do not act on the information, use it or stop measuring it!*

## 9 Act on what you have measured

Having a sales strategy is key as is adopting sensible sales tactics. Using your progress against your plan to adjust your tactics is key. Your strategy is akin to the destination you want to arrive at and the direction you are heading for. Your tactics are gentle movements on the tiller based on your progress.

*Habit 9: You cannot change the strategy each month, but you can change the tactics, every quarter challenge your tactics and make appropriate changes.*

**And finally.....**

## 10 Adopt a Positive Attitude

More than 90% of what we do is unconscious, habit driven behaviour. Having a positive attitude, believing in what you do, expecting success, having "good" habits will lead to success. Think of one "bad habit" you have at present. Maybe it is not spending enough time with your people in front of customers, maybe it is something else you know you could do better or differently. Whatever it is, pick one bad habit and change your behaviour for just 3 weeks and see how this improves your effectiveness.

*Habit 10: Each month focus on a bad habit and make it a good habit!*

*The Accredit approach starts from the point of view that sales managers are busy people with conflicting priorities. They are also the key to sales success. We therefore have developed a range of tools and resources that makes this process simple; helping busy and stressed sales managers identify and focus on the vital areas of support that their people need and putting a structure in place to make longer term development a part of day-to-day management. We can show you how you can create a long-term pattern for development so that all those in your team that have the ability are being guided towards their potential.*

*We have tools and resources that can be used 'out of the box' to help you towards your goals. We are also happy to discuss more customised solutions. Just give me a call.*

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