



Tips for Sales Managers

By Richard P Gee:

How do you motivate your sales team to consistently perform above budget, meeting your goals, and not requiring a lot of handholding to help them implement successful sales strategies.

The top range sales rep sells on his personality, uses his skills to build relationships with customers to ensure that they repeat, and has very little attention to the administration details often required by controlling Sales Managers. To motivate the members of your sales team you need to consider investing in the following:

Invest in people – only through the selection of the right people, who can match with the right target customer segment, and have a proven ability, to sell themselves through their personality, sell confidence in their ability to plan the sales communication and most of all, have a willing 'can do' attitude.

Most top sales reps are motivated by self-achievement, self-actualisation, and praise for having completed a job well done. Most sales reps want to be individuals, managing their customers, managing their territories, managing product or service sales to both customers and territory targets, totally on their lonesome, however, they crave for and need a team environment to be competitive, get weekly stimulation from, and is somewhere to show off their personal results.

A good sales manager recognises these needs in their top sales people and works to provide the structures, support services, and praise and recognition for jobs well done.

The provision of brand new cars, latest telecommunication equipment, e-mail access, laptops, palm pilots, are all useful if they are treated as a sales aid, however, they will not motivate the sales team to perform any better – they simply enhance the presentation value which helps the sales person to get the customer to make a buying decision, on their own they do not sell anything.

Mastering the customer challenge also motivates the sales team, particularly when customers need relationship-building, perhaps manipulation to accept trading terms and pricing, and most of all enjoy a bit of good fun working with you as a supplier.

Another strategy to motivate your sales team is to provide plenty of training, this can be product training, service knowledge, internal skills training, or external courses, seminars, workshops or personalised training sessions.

Sales people, more than anybody else, respond rapidly to sales skill development as they recognise they have to be constantly sharpening their sales communications tools in the market place.

To critical measurements for performance within the sales team are the call reporting sheet, and the sales plan.

The call reporting sheet is essentially a record of what the sales person has completed during the day and it should show the customers called on and for each customer an objective that was set for the meeting and the result of the meeting contact and whether the objective was met.

It does not need sales dollar value, analysis of product information; use your computer to print that out for you on a nightly basis. When it comes to reading the call report the sales manager can make notations about the successes, pick up on any negatives, and then give a photocopy back to the sales rep to motivate them by your thoughts as to how well they worked during the last week.

The sales planning process is the method by which the sales rep structures the sales calls, communicates the benefits, and helps the customer to make a decision to close. Two well known sales plans are AIDA which is a four stage plan, attention, interests, desire, action.

You need a good opening introduction to grab the buyer's attention, well planned questions to identify their needs and wants to build interest, a sound product or service knowledge to communicate benefits and build the desire, and most of all some proven closing techniques to help the customer to make an informed closing decision.

A very effective plan for selling services is S.P.E.N.D. The structures within this plan are a current situation, understanding what position the buyer is in at present, the current problems that the customer faces either with their existing supplier or about where they would actually like to achieve with their service response or quality, then you summarise what you already listened to in the situation of the problems by talking about the effects of no action taking place, then introduce the needs of your company and ability to supply the service, emphasising the benefits, and then ask for a decision to be made.

Top sales people use these plans as a way of ensuring that they guide the conversation with the customer to help them make informed buying decisions.

The motivation comes from successfully helping the customer make that informed buying decision.

When it comes to recognising sales people for performance always make sure that you do it in front of other people in the sales team, their peer group, and/or involve customers or other team members so that the motivation remains.

Enjoy motivating your sales team – these ideas contributed by Richard P Gee, Sales Trainer, www.geewiz.co.nz.