

Special Edition

Developing a Winning Sales Program Part 6

Over the last 5 weeks, I've discussed how to develop successful sales people. I've indicated that successful sales people need to be;

- Focused.
- Consistent.
- Have objectives.
- Ask for the orders.
- Set high goals.
- Follow up, but most importantly;
- They must also be an effective listener.

I reviewed the obstacles that need to be overcome when dealing with a decision maker. I also discussed that if a sales person only has price to sell, then it's not a sales person that you want representing your company. One of the key criteria for a successful sales person to be successful, is they have to keep reinventing themselves. They have to be;

- Persistent.
- Strong willed.
- Dedicated, and;
- They always have to have the ability to learn.

I also stated that sales people have to dress properly, in a professional atmosphere and act like grown ups not children, and have professional accessories, be crisp and clean and need to get to the point quickly, ask the right questions and then listen. Enthusiasm is such an important part of a sales person's success.

In other words, over the last 5 weeks, I've discussed goals and objectives that each sales person should accomplish and I provided ways in which a successful sales person can separate themselves from their competition.

I discussed relationship building, doing what you say you're going to do and doing it consistently. A successful sales person never quits;

- They put passion in their presentation.
- They focus on their buyers needs, and;
- Their main objective is to get one word – yes!

MANAGEMENT CONSULTING • OPERATIONAL REVIEWS • DIVESTITURES • ACQUISITIONS • MERGERS

THE AHERN ADVISORY

in this issue

Developing a Winning
Sales Program Part 6



Ahern & Associates, Ltd.

Accredited Member
National Bureau of Certified
Consultants Inc.

May 12, 2009

As part of the “sales process”, as an owner or manager of your trucking/logistics company, you need to focus on what you need to do to assist your sales staff in becoming successful. As an owner or manager of a company, the first thing you need to do is;

- **Establish specific goals and objectives.**
- **Define** the specific goals and objectives.
- **Provide a time line** in which the goals and objectives have to be achieved, and;
- **Always** put your sales staff on a “short chain”.
- **Make** them productive.
- **Make** them think “out of the box”.
- **Make** them be creative, and;
- **If they accomplish their goals and objectives,** reward them accordingly.

I’ve never been a proponent of placing people on straight salary. A straight salary leads to complacency, for that individual gets paid whether he/she produces or not. I am also not a proponent of straight commission, because a successful sales person needs to develop relationships. **Relationships take time, and time takes money. Therefore, I believe it’s very important,** in your sales compensation package, that it has two components:

- a) Salary, and;
- b) Bonus/Commission based upon achieving specific goals.

In other words;

- It’s important for management to establish a concise sales program; in written form.
- The sales program must provide specific goals and objectives.
- The program has to be driven by results and time frames.

In many instances, a company simply;

- Hires sales people.
- Tells them to go out and generate activity, and;
- Makes them complete sales reports, but that’s the end of the process.

If sales people don’t respond, they’re criticized. If sales people continue not to respond, they’re terminated, yet in many instances, that sales person;

- Has not been properly trained.
- They’ve not been provided specific goals and objectives and time frames to succeed, and;
- They have not been “mentored”.
- Or they should simply not be part of your company.

As we continue to discuss how to create a successful sales program, it's important that management create a program that is driven by success. We've been told that 20% of sales people generate 80% of revenue. I believe those statistics are accurate, **but I also believe it's a direct result of management not properly preparing and executing specific objectives.** How many times have you interviewed a sales person, and;

- You felt the sales person was a "perfect fit?"
- The sales person had excellent experience, and;
- Based upon the references, you hired them and then they failed?

Why? Some of the fundamental reasons are:

1. They have not been properly trained.
2. The sales person is not properly prepared.
3. The sales person didn't take the time to survey your company, in the marketplace, before they took the job;.

In every potential sales interview, you should be probing to determine if that sales person has done their homework on your company.

- Do they understand what your company does?
- Have they researched your competition?
- Can they provide a presentation that's compelling and creative? And/or;
- Do they simply sell price.

If they can't convince you they're different and understand your market space, they certainly won't impress potential customers. Early in my articles, I indicated that it's important for a sales person to know their territory. **If you're interviewing a sales person for a specific geographic area,** the first question you should ask is:

1. List the 5 largest competitors in your territory. If he/she doesn't know who they are, he/she has not done their research and they're certainly looking for a job, not a career.
2. **List the 5 largest customers in your territory. Again, a very important question that needs a (very) appropriate response.**
3. List your 5 largest prospects.
4. Where did your last order come from?
5. What was the dollar amount?
6. What business do you expect to close your first month?

If that sales person can't answer these questions, then I would eliminate that individual.

My point; in order for your sales people to be successful, you need to be prepared. There is an old saying in sales that goes something like; "No rapport, no sales". **The same thing applies to sales programs; no plan, no sale.**

Two of the most important aspects of selling are asking questions and listening. The proper questions will make the prospect tell you everything you need to sell him/her. The same goes with an effective sales and marketing program. **Two of the most important aspects of a successful program are setting up specific goals and objectives and specific time frames.**

If your sales force is not succeeding, then you're not doing an effective job of establishing the proper goals and objectives and holding your sales staff accountable for results. If your sales people are not successful, then the likelihood of your sales program being successful is remote. **How can sales people satisfy the needs of your prospects if they don't have a clear and concise understanding of what their needs are?**

In closing, over the next several weeks, we will discuss how to; facilitate a buying environment, how to stay objective, how to use buying patterns to your benefit; how to create change, and ultimately, how to get the sale.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK: **“A frightened captain makes a frightened crew.”**