

## Special Edition

### How to create a successful sales team-- Part 2

Last week, I discussed the importance of management's role in developing successful sales people.

- All sales people are not created equal.
- Many sales people have the ability to perform, but;
- If a sales person doesn't perform, it's because management did not provide the right motivation for the sales person to succeed.

When you're developing a sales team, as a leader, you need to understand what motivates you. Different things motivate different people. However, if you're going to be the leader, you need to understand;

- What motivates you, and;
- You need to think of the relationship between an owner or sales manager a kin to the relationship between parents and children.

I don't mean that leaders need to take a paternalistic interest in their sales people, but I believe that good parents recognize, without even thinking about it, that they are responsible for nurturing their offspring. If the children are misbehaving, then the fault lies in the parent where they're failing to properly communicate their values and expectations. That is the problem when a salesperson is not performing---it is obvious that the Sales Manager is not doing his/her job right!

Having raised 4 children, I can tell you that every time my kids got out of line, the first question I asked myself; "what am I doing wrong?" "Why don't my kids do what I tell them to do?" "Have I explained the reasons why I want them to do this?" "Have I given them mixed signals?" "Have I acted in an exemplary fashion?" There is something to be said by leading by example. We have all had our successes, and I'm sure most of us have had failures as well. I've been fortunate to train many successful sales people;

- I re-motivate sales people, and;
- Each day, I look at my own business and I look at our failures, not our successes.
- If management fails, then I have to "step up" to the plate when our sales people are not performing.

As individuals, we always reflect on what we're doing right;

- My Sales Manager has been with Ahern 15 years.
- My office manager has been with Ahern 7 years.
- One of my senior analysts, Bob Schwartz, just retired after 7 years.
- My administrative assistant has been with me 3+ years. Those are good statistics.

There are also statistics where;

- I've hired somebody.
- That individual lasted 2, 3, or 4 months, and;
- Then, for whatever reason, he/she left.

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in this issue

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**Each time that happened, I reviewed myself and my General Manager and ask; “what did we do wrong?”**

- Why didn't the individual succeed?
- Could we have done more than we did?
- Is our training proper?
- Is our compensation package adequate?

**In some instances, it was just simply a poor choice in individuals.** In other instances, I believe that (for whatever reason) that individual's interest was not sparked enough to have the enthusiasm necessary to make a career at Ahern.

**As a manager, you need to look at your goals and objectives;**

- Are your goals and objectives properly designed?
- Is the work beyond the skill and scope of the people doing it?
- Are the people properly trained?
- Is the environment, in which the sales people are working, conducive to enthusiasm and results?
- If there was a change in the sales environment, would that have changed the success or failure of a particular individual?

**If you answered no to any of the above questions that indicates that you need to adjust your plan.** Leadership is about the willingness to embrace responsibility, but then the leader has to act responsibly. **You're never going to motivate people by believing that;**

- You're better than anyone else.
- **If you're full of yourself, you have a problem: A good leader does not put much emphasis on his/her title, role, or the trappings of leadership,** but rather they concentrate on their responsibilities and keeping up good relationships with their employees.

**One of the questions that I ask every client; Picture what your company would be like if everyone embodied your values.** People call this a vision statement. **When you're developing a sales program, you need a great vision statement;**

- A great vision statement is short, visual and service oriented.
- Shorter is stronger.
- Remember, there is a reason it's called a vision statement.

**A statement that fails to create a powerful visual image of the future is not a vision.** It does not give your sales people anything to keep in their minds while they work. You need a land mark on the horizon or you're driving blind. **Make sure that your vision statement reflects an intense, focused drive to serve the needs of your customers, not just to satisfy.**

**Once you've established your vision and you want to communicate it, you need to put yourself in the place of those you're communicating with.** How would you want to hear this “music” if you were them? **An email is not going to do it;**

- If you want to improve your sales department;
- If you want to motivate your sales people;
- Tell them in person, not by email, what you expect of them.

**In some cases, if you're a national organization and it's difficult to visit each terminal, a telephone call is acceptable, but it's still not as good as face to face communication.** It's important that, as an effective leader;

- You tell your sales people how you feel about their performance.
- If they're not performing, you need to review their non performance as an opportunity to find a silver lining from the bad news.

**If you're redeveloping your sales program, it's very important to recognize that the importance of any business is "to make an offer":**

- Prospects make their decisions by emotions and then justify them with logic.
- The purpose of marketing is to make selling easy, or in some cases, obsolete.
- **When I re-train sales people, I don't teach them to be a good sales person, I teach them to be a qualifier and a closer.**
- If you match the right person with the right offer, you're going to get an order.
- **Branding and marketing are not mutually exclusive.**
- You can't be afraid to sell.
- You have to assume the close.
- **Never lie, and:**
- Each individual needs to find or create a system that works for them.

**There's an old saying; if you don't ask, you won't get. It's important that all sales people recognize that, when they are trying to close a customer, they are asking that customer to part with their hard earned money for something of value.** A sales person needs to make sure that what you're giving the customer in exchange is of equal or greater value. **Don't believe the old adage; sell the sizzle and not the steak.** This type of attitude has led to too many businesses selling all sizzle and no steak.

**In closing, if your sales people and the sales managers put themselves in the shoes of their customers and imagine what the customer is experiencing and how it will affect them, then it's the beginning of the process of improving sales.** Remember; buying decisions are an emotional process. It's perfectly okay to sell with emotion as long as, at it's core, there's an offer that strongly benefits the customer.

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK: "The two hardest things to handle in life are failure and success"**