

FEBRUARY
2013

SOLD

№ 3

SALES EXECUTIVES

INVISIBLE MANAGEMENT

Managing Virtual Sales Teams



MITCHELL GOOZE
on teaming
inside
& outside
sales
p.20



SEAN GLAZE
presents
effective virtual
management
practices
p.30



FRANK BELZER
on wisely
tracking
inbound
leads
p.34



ALEN MAYER
on improving
communication
with your
virtual team
p.52



Coach's Corner

by Steven Rosen

7 Effective Sales Coaching Practices

Sales leaders would agree that effective sales coaching has a positive impact on a sales rep performance and sales. The problem is that most sales leaders can't agree on what effective sales coaching looks like.

The **Corporate Executive Board** (CEB) defines coaching as follows:

Sales' coaching is an ongoing and dynamic series of **job-embedded** interactions between a **sales manager** and sales rep, designed to **diagnose** and correct/reinforce **behaviors, specific to that individual**.

CEB further states that "effective coaching will tend to be formal, highly structured, deliberate, and regularly scheduled. The unique advantages of coaching stem from how it is tailored to the individual and delivered at the point of need."

I would add that coaching is not only based on the belief that the individual holds the answers but also by asking effective questions, the coach can guide the sales rep to develop their own solutions and to participate in their own development.

The goal of coaching is to help the individual improve their performance and reach their true potential. The outcome of effective coaching is **improved productivity, performance and engagement of the sales force**.

Here are my 7 Effective Coaching Practices:

Practice 1: Building Trust

In order for sales coaching to work, the sales manager needs to earn trust. Sales managers have to learn to remove their management helmets and put on their coaching hats. The coaching hat is about being non-judgemental and allowing the individual to be open in the discussion of behaviors and/or performance challenges. Trust is the foundation for coaching.

Practice 2: Ask Effective Questions

Most people don't like to be told what to do. Sales reps are no different. Successful sales coaches achieve agreement on the "what" and use effective questions on the "how." Successful sales organizations allow their sales people to own the solution.

This leads to better execution and better people development.

Effective sales coaching has the coach use effective questions that stimulate thinking and illuminate solutions.

Practice 3: Self Evaluation

When doing post call debrief or skill assessments, it is critical to have the sales person guide the process and self-evaluate. As a sales manager you may only be in the field with the rep one or two days a month. The goal is to encourage the sales rep to evaluate how they did on each call even when you are not in the field with them.

Many managers are quick to offer feedback. Relax, let the sales rep self-evaluate. Being able to assess what they did well and what they can improve upon leads to greater self-awareness. Self-awareness is the gateway to self-confidence. Give your sales people the gift of self-confidence by withholding your feedback and allowing them to self-assess.

Practice 4: Focus

Effective coaching is all about focusing on one area at a time. Change is difficult for many of us. The sales manager who has a rep work on multiple areas usually sees no change. My focused coaching methodology is based on the premise that as a coach, if you can help each of your reps improve in one area in the course of a year, you have been effective.

Practice 5: The Rep Guides the Discussion

How does the effective coach determine the area of focus? I say, as long as there is benefit to the area that the rep decides to focus on, than it is important to go with their suggestion. This creates a stronger desire to improve as the rep is making the commitment. Less effective managers will pick the area and then wonder why they don't get buy-in from their rep to change.

Practice 6: Plan of Action

To create momentum for change, effective coaches use the power of questioning. Open questioning creates an environment where the sales rep thinks through areas of focus and

change, offering proactive methods to achieve targets. This takes time, but if the coach tells the sales rep what they should do, then the buy-in is lost. Best practice is having the sales rep physically write out a plan of action and send it to the manager.

The power of putting pen to paper is twofold. Firstly the sales rep needs to think through what they are committed to doing and secondly by putting their commitment to paper it crystallizes their thinking.

Practice 7: Holding Your Rep Accountable

“People respect what you inspect.” The effective coach understands that once the plan of action is in place, their role as coach is to hold the sales rep accountable for following through on their commitment. To accelerate the development process and/or completion of the sales rep plan of action, the coach asks the sales rep open-ended follow up questions such as:

What success have you had with your plan? What challenges did you face? How did you overcome those challenges?

By taking a few minutes on every interaction (via phone calls or on the next field visit) effective coaches are stressing the importance of their coaching. Sales reps begin to understand that they are going to be routinely asked how the focused plan of action is proceeding and they know that the manager is holding them accountable for progress and improvement.

Conclusion

Successful sales coaching is a process that has many nuances, and by following best practices such as effective questioning, focus and holding your sales people accountable you stand the best chance as a coach to improve your sales reps performance. The power of effective coaching is based on the belief that the sales rep has the answers and the coach’s role is one of facilitation and holding the rep accountable.

Remember that the focus of effective coaching is centered on the dedicated application of knowledge and skills. As Nike says “Just do it!”

Steven Rosen

Steven Rosen, MBA is the CEO of STAR Results, and is a widely sought after executive sales coach, advisor and speaker. Steven is the author of recently released ebook 52 Sales Management Tips - The Sales Managers Success Guide. Steven is passionate about assisting sales executives and managers to FOCUS on increasing sales and achieving STAR results in their personal and professional lives. If you’re ready to achieve STAR Results, contact Steven about his one-on-one Focused Executive Coaching Program at 905-737-4548, email: steven@starresults.com or visit his STAR Results at www.starresults.com.

Having a management meeting?

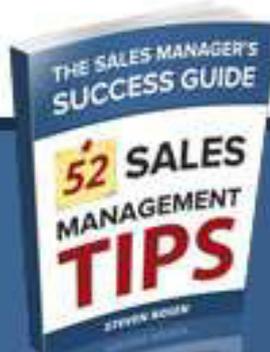
Engage Steven to speak at your next sales management meeting. He will inspire and enlighten your team to achieve STAR Results!

Steven Rosen, MBA

Author | Coach | Speaker

+1 (905) 737 4548

www.starresults.com



Get a **COPY** of his New Book