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SALES EXECUTIVES

ARE YOU A RELEVANT SALES EXECUTIVE?



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Coach's Corner

by Steven Rosen

The Foundation for Building a High Performance Sales Organization

*Welcome to the inaugural edition of SOLD Sales Executives. This is the first installment of the **Coach's Corner**; a regular feature showcasing the how to's of sales leadership.*

For most B2B companies the largest promotional investment is the sales force, yet most companies fail to utilize this resource to its full potential. As corporations continue to struggle in these difficult economic times, sales executives will need to focus on reinforcing the foundation of their sales organizations in order to survive.

What do we know? We know that high performance sales organization have two common characteristics: 1. Great processes and 2. Top notch people. Because sales executives are bombarded with suppliers promoting CRM, sales enablement and sales training solutions, we think all the elements are present to move forward successfully within these organizations. As each one of these solutions claims to have a positive impact on top and bottom line performance you must ask yourself what is the optimal impact? I don't fundamentally disagree with any of these performance enhancement solutions, but I also don't believe that they treat the true cause of poor sales performance.

What should be the foundation of a high performance organization?

I **strongly** believe that the key to success is having the right people in place to start building a high performance sales organization. With that being said smart sales executives might conclude that they need to focus on hiring and developing top sales reps.

But who hires and develops your top talent? The front line sales managers are the ones' that are responsible for hiring, developing and retaining the top talent in your organization and strangely enough these are the people that get the least development and focus in terms of investment dollars.

Front Line Sales Managers

The Front Line Sales managers are the unsung heroes of the sales team and the foundation of any high performing sales organization. These people are the drivers of sales performance and the key to unlocking the potential of your sales organization.

What are you doing to develop your front line sales management team? What do you have planned next year to help elevate their

performance? Perhaps you have thought about it or maybe are planning something or think it is a great idea to do something, but are unsure how to move forward. The fact is you are likely doing very little to help these great drivers' performances grow to the next level.

Why spend another penny on more sales training without great sales managers to reinforce the training? Are you wasting your precious budget dollars on new CRM or sales enablement solutions? Can your front line sales managers effectively implement the solutions?

Are you on board yet?

Assuming I got you thinking or maybe you are really excited about developing your front line sales management team, where do you start? The no. 1 sales management activity that drives sales performance is coaching. Most sales managers do not know how to effectively coach. They have not been trained or coached on how to coach. They tend to tell their sales reps what do as opposed to asking and facilitating reps to come up with their own solutions to challenges they face. Coaching is a difficult skill set to perfect. It takes practise and patience, but most of all it takes effort and training.



What you really get by transforming your sales managers into great sales coaches is a 19% increase in sales

Coaching requires a shift into “Coaching Mindset”. The coaching mindset is different from a management mindset which tends to be more directive in orientation. In order to be a great coach the sales managers needs to be able to take off their management hat and don a **Coaching Mindset**.

This is what the shift looks like:

From		To
Judgemental	—————>	Non judgemental
Telling	—————>	Asking
You have the solution	—————>	The sales rep has the solution
Direct probing	—————>	Being curious

The ability to shift into a coaching mindset allows sales managers to be more effective at a slew of other skills. Being better at asking questions allows managers to be better at interviewing and selecting top candidates. Effective questioning enables managers to conduct better business reviews with sales representatives. The same holds true when coaching reps on developing their own business plans.

What’s in it for you?

You have many different opportunities or challenges to address with your financial resources. Given the case I have laid out why wouldn’t you invest in developing your sales managers coaching skills? Outside all the wonderful benefits of having a team of front line sales managers who can coach sales reps to be better, you will have less turnover and better sales rep engagement. In addition, you will see a better return on sales training and leading change as well.

BIG DEAL!

What you really get by transforming your sales managers into great sales coaches is a 19% increase in sales. This is no joke or empty sales pitch. By developing great coaches you will have a dramatic impact. I can’t think of another initiative that will give you a bigger bang for your buck.

So if you want to thrive in difficult economic times, start by focusing your resources on building a strong foundation for your sales organization. The first step is developing your sales managers; they are the key to driving sales performance. Next, by transforming your sales managers into great sales coaches you will have the building blocks for developing a high performance sales organization.

Feel free to comment and ask questions on Coaches Corner. I love helping sales executives and sales managers drive sales performance!

Don’t be shy, Ask the Coach.

My Question: What is the one key initiative you are planning for 2013 that you feel will have the biggest impact on your sales performance?

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 soon to be 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.starevents.com.