



Sales Coaching Achieves Superior Sales Results

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Why Sales Coaching?

As a sales leader your days go by quickly. You are constantly multi-tasking, addressing a variety of issues, looking at reports and often reach the end of the day without being involved in a single sales conversation. If you didn't, you might have missed the opportunity to ask your key sales personnel what they're thinking about what's going on and how things are going. Honestly, how often do you make the opportunity to sit down with each of your sales people and ask them what's working and what's not. With a full plate of day to day tactical decisions, it's very easy to miss the opportunity to allot 15-30 minutes a day to sit down and ask the most important question, "How can I help"? You may wonder, whether sales coaching really makes a difference? Or, can you just tell them what to do and then get out of their way. Statistics reveal an interesting story.

Sales coaching is critical to your team's success. Statistics show that effective sales coaching will help to achieve 107% of quota on average for each of your sales people. In fact, the Harvard Business Review says good sales coaching will increase sales productivity by 19%! As the leader, you will have a stronger relationship with your reps and the rep will feel valued as a contributing member of the team.

One of the biggest issues in sales is turnover. Sales coaching has proven effective for improving your sales team's retention rate and loyalty, therefore reducing turnover. Research varies, but on average, it costs about 6 months of the person's income to turn that position over - that's a huge direct cost, not to mention the loss of momentum. With this impact to your bottom line, sales retention is critical to your long - term success. So, your effectiveness as a successful coach will result in lower turnover and higher profitability.

What is Sales Coaching?

Sales coaching is a way to help your sales team stretch and grow to maximize their potential. It focuses on the possibilities and the opportunities for individual growth. It's more about development of strengths than evaluating what's not working. Your team is, in part, a reflection of who you are as a sales coach and how you develop trusting relationships that achieves growth for the individual. Sales coaching is about helping your people discover their strengths to maximize their potential for a successful career. It's about motivating them to stretch and grow.

Characteristics of a Successful Coach

Successful sales coaches are effective communicators. They pull for information instead of pushing their beliefs and opinions. They are great at asking questions and steering a conversation to create a learning experience for the sales person. They motivate their people to achieve by getting them to stretch. They are collaborative in their approach and empower sales people to be accountable by taking ownership, not by forcing or threatening. The sales coach always adds value in each and every meeting as the role model for the sales person. The goal of a sales coach is to build momentum by helping to reveal the strength and wisdom within the individual while inspiring change and growth. A successful sales coach spends 75% of their time in coaching mode. They will work with “all of their sales people” and focus most of their time on the mid-level performers.

A successful sales coach also builds trust with each team member. Trust is the key to helping the sales person stretch and maximize their performance. A strong relationship is always built around mutual trust. As Stephen M.R. Covey states in his book “The Speed of Trust”, $\text{Trust} = \text{Speed}/\text{Cost}$. More trust equates to higher productivity leading to lower cost per sale. Trust is built around strong communications which lead to a mutual respect and understanding of both parties involved.

People become more receptive to advice when a coach establishes both a business relationship and a personal one. People need to connect not just on the task and structural aspects of the job, but on the personal, relational and emotional side as well. So how do you touch your people emotionally? I believe this idea represents the most crucial opportunity and is where you will spend the most time. You can have all the talent in the world, but without desire or the right attitude, your chances for a successful career are slim.

Motivating your Sales Team

What is motivation? It's someone's drive or desire to achieve. It's created internally by the individual and externally by those that influence their behavior. It's having enthusiasm and a belief in who you are and what you are capable of doing. It's what every successful person has at the core of who they are. Motivation is directly proportional to attitude and as we mentioned in our first book, “Don't Just Stand There, Sell Something” the formula for a great attitude is “OPERA”. *Attitude is composed of Optimism, Persistence, Enthusiasm, Resilience and Affability.* These are the characteristics of a successful sales professional that attracts customers. The goal of the sales coach is to fuel their desire to be a top performer. This is done by encouraging and challenging the sales person to live up to the full potential that you as the coach knows they have. You must believe in them even when they have doubts.

Another part of motivating your people is understanding the individual strengths that they bring to the team. Whether its administration, sales strategy, relationship building or communication and people skills, every sales individual has a unique set of strengths that need to be leveraged. Read any of the best-selling Marcus Buckingham books, such as “Now Discover Your Strengths” where you’ll learn that it’s much easier to develop a strength than to improve a weakness. As the coach you’ll want to identify the strengths so that you can maximize them – now that’s motivating. No one wants to focus on their weaknesses – that’s de-motivating.

To better understand someone’s strengths, taking a personality assessment to learn what drives them is critical. You can access our personality tool at www.connecting4people.com – it is by far one of the easiest to understand and use. It’s color coded and has four personality styles. The colors are Turquoise Blue, Amber Gold, Evergreen and Mandarin Orange, making it easy to remember a face with a name and a color. It’s easy to remember the characteristics of a color. Below is a brief description of the strengths of each of these colors and what motivates them to perform their best.

If you are a high Blue, you are known for your strength in building relationships. You are people focused and very good at selling yourself. You prioritize building trust and credibility, enjoy small talk and are very good at communicating and reading the customer’s gestures. Blues enjoy helping their customer’s both professionally and personally and they will sell to both of those needs. Blues are the most empathic and want to please the customer in every way. Blues are authentic and devoted to their customers.

To motivate your Blue team members, praise their contribution and significance to the team. Encourage them to use their creative strengths. The more personal attention you give a Blue the more responsive and motivated they will be. Showing them you appreciate what they do is motivation in itself for a Blue.

If you are a high Gold, you are known for your organization skills and for developing and following a process. You are methodical in your approach to customers, presentations and proposals. Golds are responsible, dedicated to the company and are very prompt and decisive. A Gold is excellent at follow through and timeliness, won’t drop the ball with a customer and are very good at setting and meeting customer expectations.

To motivate your Gold team members, praise their judgment in making decisions and their dependability. Let them do the planning since this is something they enjoy doing and let them put in place process and organization. They enjoy consistent feedback and public recognition.

If you are a high Green, you are known for your ability to be detail oriented, objective and logical. You are innovative in your approach with customers and the best at problem solving to meet their customer’s needs. Greens are excellent at research and

comprehending the latest updates with your products and services and enjoy their independence to go and do. They are known for their ingenuity.

To motivate a Green, praise their insight and expertise. Support their ideas to the team and encourage them to develop new ideas and approaches to the business. Appreciate their uniqueness and reward them with independence.

If you are a high Orange, you are known for your competitive nature. You are performance oriented and winning is very important. You are persuasive with customers and good at selling the key benefits of your products and services and are the best at thinking on their feet and spontaneity. Oranges are very good at building relationships and come across friendly.

To motivate an Orange, praise their achievements and recognize them for their performance. They are motivated by tangible rewards like bonuses or trips. They need the opportunity to perform and they will rise to a challenge. They like immediate feedback and reward them with physical freedom.

Motivation is key to coaching, and communication is key to motivation. Understanding the strengths of each of these personality styles will help you adjust your approach to coaching the four styles. To convey a positive coaching message, it's important to understand how each color prefers to communicate. It's also important to understand what they value to help them maximize their performance.

Blues prefer communication to be genuine and sincere and they are sensitive to your body language. They are uncomfortable with conflict and pressure. They want to express their feelings, so you need to help them open up, which comes with trust and showing empathy. Blues value security, relationships, meaning and acceptance. Satisfying customers is very important to Blues. They value their position in the company and how they can contribute to the cause.

Golds prefer communication to be courteous and polite as well as direct and professional. Talk about expectations and turn solutions into actions. Always appreciate a Gold's time because they prefer to follow an agenda. Golds value process and organization, order and structure and they like rules and authority. They measure their worth by completion and are dedicated to the company for the long term. They value responsibility, discipline and follow through to get things done with the goal of high achievement in mind.

Greens prefer their communication to be direct and succinct. They don't care for small talk and like to remain factual and logical in their discussion. They will be the most inquisitive because their objective is to understand and learn. They will also be the biggest skeptics and always enjoy a good debate. Remain unemotional with Greens in your discussions. Greens value solutions, information and the latest in technology and innovation. They value efficiency, data and analysis. Competence is very important to them.

Oranges enjoy communication that is lively and bold. Talk in concrete terms and focus on actions and results. Oranges want you to be honest and direct and want the conversation to keep moving. High energy and interesting conversations keep the Orange engaged. Oranges value incentives and success. They love to win and enjoy being in the limelight. They value freedom, activities and experiences. Oranges rise to a challenge and enjoy action.

Coaching to their Personality Style

Even though structure, process, evaluating and measuring results are quite important to the sales person's success, we believe that success is a result of giving the sales person what they need in relation to what they value. As the sales coach, you'll also use the strengths of their personality style to understand how they prefer to communicate and what motivates them to high performance.

Knowing their personality style will also help you to connect emotionally with your team. Remember, people are wired emotionally, and emotions usually override logic. If you can satisfy their emotions, they will be motivated to achieve.

When it comes to attitude, *remember it's composed of Optimism, Persistence, Enthusiasm, Resilience and Affability.* And, attitude is always a factor when coaching your team. Attitude is directly related to how they are wired emotionally. A good coach is focused on them and their perspective not yours – this shift in focus will result in greatly improved success.

Stu Schlackman is a sales expert with over 25 years of success which he shares with his clients and audiences through the Sales Intelligence System. To learn more about how to achieve Superior Sales Results, access valuable articles on proven sales strategies, sign up for his newsletter and purchase Stu's books Four People You Should Know and Don't Just Stand There, Sell Something, visit www.stuschlackman.com or email Stu at stu@stuschlackman.com.