

Sales Management - The Buck Stops Here - By Dr. Rick Johnson

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Sales revenue is declining, profit margins are not meeting expectations and we have seen an increase in turnover in our sales force. How do I get our sales manager to fix things and get back on track?

The answer to that question begins by asking yourself another question, do you have the right person in the job of sales manager. Are they a leader or were they simply your best sales person. Do they have real leadership skills? Sometimes rejuvenating your sales force requires a change in leadership. It may even require a change in the sales force, the development of a documented sales strategy or even just a simple territorial restructuring.

However, before you get radical, ask yourself the following questions,

Have you supplied leadership training for your sales manager

Have you provided any coaching or mentoring to support the sales managers efforts

Do you get involved in supporting the sales strategy

Does your human resource department support a formalized program for new sales recruits

Do you show participative support in quarterly or semiannual sales meetings

Is the sales force held accountable - do they have scorecards

Is the sales manager held accountable beyond what I call the statistical disappointment review via e-mail

Is your sales force trained in value selling

Do they really understand what it means to be a total solution provider

Have you done exit interviews to determine why sales people have left your company

Nowadays, salespeople must be problem solvers able to generate solutions for customers in their time of need. Therefore, they must possess a great deal of knowledge about your customers' business. They must actually define what those needs are because the customer may not know, nor take the time to explain if they do know. Customers want you to have the knowledge and intelligence to comprehend and analyze their problems before showing up at the door. Customers will listen and buy from the salesperson that finds the 'pain' and takes it away.'

Sometimes going back to the basics is part of the answer to rekindling the passion. That means revisiting best practice in all areas including targeting, goal setting, customer profiling and action planning. Some of your sales people may have forgotten and some of them may have never known the principles

Selling is a profession that requires Professional Leadership.

Managing a group of professionals with the type of personalities required to succeed in sales is no easy task. So if you have done everything possible to support, educate and train your sales manager and you just can't generate the kind of results you expect, check your expectations. Are they realistic? Are they achievable? Have you benchmarked against friendly competition? If you answered yes to all these questions, then you may have to change sales managers.

Sales management holds the key to meeting company objectives. Effective sales management must build the platform for success. Sales people are not the easiest group in the company to manage. If they were they would not be sales people. Selling is not easy. It takes a special talent, self motivation, self discipline, a passion to succeed and the ability to accept rejection. The reality of the situation is simple. The majority of sales people are not managed well. Today our sales environment leans toward a more multifaceted atmosphere, salespeople must become strategists with a plan. This plan requires more knowledge about the business, better relationships and better solutions. Being a sales manager is not an easy profession. Make sure you are committed to giving your sales manager the support they need.

Check out Rick's new CD series and workbook 'Unlocking the Secrets to Amazing Sales' @ <http://www.ceostrategist.com/resources-store/unlocking-the-secrets-to-amazing-sales-incredible-profits.html> It is a must addition for your sales training initiatives. Order today and get a bonus copy of Rick's book 'Turning Lone Wolves into Lead Wolves ----56 ideas to maximize sales.

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