

Sales Management

From sales to sales manager calls for new set of skills

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If you use a business model that requires using outside sales reps you must find sales managers who have the skill to source, hire, train, motivate and retain productive outside sales reps.

This skill is critical to the success of the salespeople and success of the business. Over the years I have received feedback from presidents and CEOs which include their sales managers:

- wait too long to hire salespeople.
- don't know where to source good candidates.
- don't know how to interview salespeople so they hire salespeople on "gut feel."
- don't know how to compensate, motivate and incentivize salespeople.

The results for the sales manager include missed sales targets, high turnover, and poor customer service. The result for the business includes missed revenue, disenchanted customers, profit and cash flow misses.

Most sales managers never expressed an interest in sales management or demonstrated the skill to be one. They happened to be a good salesperson.

The biggest challenge for the new sales manager is to learn skills to focus on the team's success. That includes the ability to: manage your boss, peers, coworkers and subordinates; quickly assess the talent of the team and make necessary changes; recruit, hire, motivate and retain a high-performing team; establish and inspect a consistent sales and sales management process; coach salespeople versus sell for their salespeople.

One of the hardest lessons to learn is not to sell for the salespeople but to teach them how to sell. The novice sales manager knows what he did to be successful but may have difficulty teaching others to do it. How does the sales manager get the skills to accomplish this transition?

Identify critical tasks for outside sales reps and assess their readiness to execute them. Critical tasks should include the ability to sell and deliver consistent results, prospect and network, follow up with prospects and clients, complete administrative tasks on time and accurately and managing time.

The sales manager should establish a success formula. The road map should include:

- Establishing a monthly sales quota,
- Tracking average order size,
- Tracking close rate,
- Tracking sales cycle,
- Helping them understand how many qualified prospects reps need at all times.

The bottom line to becoming a successful sales manager is to "inspect" what you "expect" and coach your salespeople to achieve their full potential.

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