

Productive Selling News

A Quarterly Publication from Boyens Group, Inc.

Edition #24

January 1, 2008

Sales Tip of the Quarter: "Creating a Productive Selling Zone[®]"

by: John Boyens

"The Productive Selling Zone[®]" is not some sort of rigid sales training program, formula or methodology that reinvents the selling wheel or reprograms salespeople. Nor is it a destination that puts salespeople on a journey where they eventually step back into the light as a new person, reshaped and recast to do things in strange ways as preordained by a sales guru touting a new system that sounds like so much psychobabble. The Productive Selling Zone[®] is not a place found on a map, but rather a state of effectiveness! "

Elite athletes in many sports such as golf, football and gymnastics often talk about being in the zone while in the middle of competition were they are totally "tuned in" to do the right things to be successful. They are not distracted by crowd noise, self-doubt or other concerns. They are relaxed and confident, even getting to the point where they will make every putt (in golf) or complete every pass (in football).

Successful salespeople know what it takes to work their way into the zone and as importantly what it takes to stay there. The success achieved in this zone, just like in sports, is measurable, in terms of wins and loses as well as before and after sale metrics such as increased order size, shorter sales cycles, more competitive takeaways, sales made at higher margins, etc.

We believe that we can help any seller's game by tweaking and adjusting their selling style without resorting to some hit-and-miss extreme makeover mode of sales training. Our tools, processes and concepts enable salespeople to maximize their performance on a consistent basis and enable them to "Create a Productive Selling Zone[®]".

Let me highlight three skills that are critically important to Productive Selling. They are:

1. **Target Your Prospects:** Improperly targeting prospects is a huge drag on productivity. Salespeople waste too much time trying to sell to people who will never buy. Productive selling requires that salespeople have an understanding of how to profile their ideal customer, segment their markets based upon opportunity and a thorough understanding of their unique value proposition for their products or services.
2. **Know What You're up Against:** Industry change, market place adjustments and competition are outside influences that impact each person's sales success. The most productive selling organizations stay abreast of these influences and know how to leverage them to successfully navigate the three stages of buying (the Need Stage, the Proof Stage and the Risk Stage).
3. **Find the Real Business Issues:** Every business has business issues or "needs." They are frequently unidentified within the organization. These critical needs yield buying decisions when they can be discovered and linked to your products or service. Experienced members of a productive selling team are able to address these critical needs with a bias towards their product or service. Experts at this sophisticated skill and have a strong advantage over competitors who are strictly focusing on products features and functions.

These skills are covered in depth in my new book "*Creating a Productive Selling Zone[®]*". It's available for purchase for \$19.95/copy plus shipping and handling. To order please give us a call or visit our web site (www.boyens.com) and order your copy today!

Recently the Boyens Group[®] received an email from Kelly McCreight, Vice President with The Hamilton-Ryker Group. In his email, Kelly shared the results of their "National Sales Day." This was a day set aside in advance where approximately 50 people from all of their offices all got on the phone at the same time to "dial for dollars" and the results were nothing short of spectacular! They made 3,343 outbound calls and 1,445 (43%) of those calls got right to the decision maker. Of those 1,445 calls with decision makers 237 appointments were set (16%) and 24 job orders were placed while they were on the phone!

Kelly credited a lot of the success to using our telephone script templates, the Credibility WINDOW[®] as well as the process of identifying and getting to decision makers early in the buy cycle.

In addition to recognizing The Hamilton-Ryker Group as an organization I'd like to recognize some individual performers as well. The top three people in number of calls made were Becky Dye, Janet Abeja and Tim Stanfield. The top two appointment setters were Dedra Walker and Becky Dye. Congratulations to all and keep up the great work!

Spotlighting a Top Performer



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Sales Management Tip of the Quarter: "Five Hiring Mistakes of Managers"

Written by Guest Columnist: Stephen Blakesley; Managing Partner, GMS Talent LP

If you talk to anyone responsible for hiring people (especially salespeople) and ask them, "What task do you perform on a regular basis that you dislike the most?" They will tell you it is interviewing. The number one reason that they dislike interviewing is because of the risk/reward equation. As a matter of fact many of the managers that we interviewed told us "the risks are great but the rewards almost non-existent". What they mean by saying that is, when a hiring manager makes the right decisions and hires good people he/she is just doing his/her job but when they make the wrong decision it affects performance, morale and in the worst case scenario could cost them their job!

Managers are expected to facilitate high quality interviews even if they have little training or direction for this task. Let's start with a little direction here. Avoid the following five hiring mistakes the next time you have to interview someone and see if you don't hire a better, more qualified candidate!

Hiring Mistake #1- Faulty, incomplete or non-specific job descriptions...A job description details what a person needs to do on a daily basis to be successful in their job.

*Remedy-*Take time to develop a one page, performance-based job description for the position being filled. Use it in the initial interview as a tool to clearly delineate expectations for the job description. At the conclusion of the interview have the candidate initial and date the document.

Hiring Mistake #2 - Failure to understand the "soft skills" necessary for superior job performance...Soft skills could include; what a person values, how a person behaves and what talents they have naturally.

Remedy- Identify, the soft skills that are essential for success in their job and assess your candidates against that list.

Hiring Mistake #3 - Failure to communicate expected performance metrics...Selected metrics could include number of calls to be made, number of appointments set, number of sales made, etc.

Remedy - Identify what "Meets Minimum" and "Superior" performance looks like for each specific task and provide a copy to the candidate in writing

Hiring Mistake #4 - Only asking questions based on the candidate's resume.

*Remedy -*Ask behavioral interview questions. Avoid asking questions that generate "yes" or "no" answers. Ask questions that probe their experience, skills and education by detailing challenging situations that they've worked through in the past. This will give you insight as to how they think and operate and will help you determine their potential fit in your organization.

Hiring Mistake #5 - Failure to plan and organize the interview...Interviews should have structure and should be facilitated in 30-minutes or less.

Remedy - The first ten minutes of the interview should start by having you ask four or five behavioral interview questions, the second ten minutes should be spent talking about the job and the last ten minutes is when you allow the candidate to ask questions. This process will give you insight as to how the candidate thinks and how they would behave in specific situations.

Educating yourself on interviewing techniques may be the most valuable investment you will make to ensure your success in 2008. Remember, poor hires can be, in many cases, "six-figure mistakes!"

To contact Stephen Blakesley, Managing Partner of GMS Talent LP, e-mail him at sjb@gmstalent.com

Sales Productivity Workshop in Nashville

John Boyens will be facilitating another two-day, Sales Productivity workshop at the exclusive Richland Country Club in Nashville, Tennessee on March 5/6, 2008. This highly interactive workshop will include sales and sales management "best practices" from over 15,000 salespeople from a variety of industries across the globe, over 12 years of buyer-based research data as well as small group breakout sessions and role plays to ensure that each attendee will walk away with tips/techniques that will positively impact their business the very next day. Key topics will include:



- The four reasons why people don't buy
- Selling value versus price
- Differentiating your company from your competition
- Engaging decision makers earlier in the sales process
- Selling solutions versus selling products

Seating will be limited to 25 workshop attendees to ensure an optimal learning ratio. The investment is \$750/person, which includes registration for the two-day workshop, all workshop materials, continental breakfast and a catered lunch both days. We will continue to offer quantity discounts if four or more people attend from the same company. Don't miss this opportunity to invest in your professional development to jumpstart your selling in 2008!

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