



Tales of a New Sales Manager

Preparing your sales team for success

Bill started his new position as District Sales Manager with all the energy and excitement he could muster. The first thing he did, after meeting with all his people and learning the strengths and weaknesses of his sales organization, was to ask his sales people to bring him into important deals they were working on. His goal was to meet with higher-level executives so his reps could sell at higher levels of decision makers. Bill knew that many sales people don't sell high enough within an organization. However, if during the sales process they bring in their manager, there's a better chance of meeting their counterparts, hence reaching and selling higher into an organization. The positive results were immediate.

The next thing Bill did was to pull in his top sales performers to find out their best practices. He documented these practices and shared them with the rest of his sales reps. He knew that his top sales people spent countless hours figuring out, through trial and error, the techniques needed to successfully sell their products to their target customers. It was these techniques that the rest of his sales team needed to learn as well. He also asked his more successful sales people to act as mentors for his more junior and struggling sales people. These reps would benefit from the experience and success of the top performers, while the top performers would be getting valuable coaching experience.

After this, Bill decided it was time to explain to his sales team his three P's of Selling – Preparation, Persistence and Professionalism. They represented his Bible of sales techniques that should be followed by each and every one of his sales people.

- **Preparation** – Don't wing it. The customer can tell immediately. Study your product, the industry and your customer. Being prepared builds confidence in you and trust from your customers.
- **Persistence** – It takes an average of six to seven times to get your phone call through to your desired audience. However, most sales people give up after only two or three attempts. Stick with it and don't give up. Learn to deal with rejection. Eventually, the prospect will need you.
- **Professionalism** – Always act like a sales professional. Dress appropriately, speak professionally, exhibit good manners, have impeccable integrity and ethics, listen, listen and listen some more. And, always focus on what's best for your customer, not you.

Bill also wanted to make sure his sales team understood that there are different customer types, each requiring a slightly different approach when being sold. Not only are there different personality types, but there are various moods they can each be in. By

understanding these differences, his sales people could alter their approach and style to adapt to their customer's particular mood or mannerism. There were four customer types Bill wanted to explain to his team (of course, there are more, but everything in moderation).

1. **Rude.** Maybe he's having a bad day or something happened in his life lately. Maybe he's just a rude person by nature. Don't act the same way. Take the high road and remain courteous and professional. And don't take it personal.
2. **Irritable.** Maybe he got out on the wrong side of the bed or is suffering from undue stress. Reflect and sympathize with him. We've all had those days.
3. **Hard to Read.** Keep pursuing, but without appearing to be pushy. He may need you as much as you need him, so don't confuse allusiveness with disinterest.
4. **Cheap.** Make sure you show the value of what you're selling. If you need to lower the price, be sure to take something away so he is paying for value. Higher price, higher value. Lower price, lower value. You get what you pay for – don't devalue yourself or your product.

Finally, Bill used the information he gathered and learned by speaking with his sales organization and observing their actions to motivate his team. He worked on plans to get more qualified leads in the hands of his sales people. He got them working together toward a common goal with a well-defined and thought out plan and cohesive sales process. And, he reduced administrative and redundant tasks by shortening the ordering process, simplifying contracts, automating the proposal and quotation generation process, and, by using CRM technology, eliminating the manual tasks of producing activity and status reports as well as automating the forecasting process.

Bill would like to have said, "It's all in a day's work." However, it took him 30 days to initiate and/or begin to implement these activities for his team. Bill and his team began to see results very quickly, and they were all positive. And, if you're thinking this is a fairy tale, don't! Every one of these activities, tasks and ideas are true and effective. If you're a sales manager, try some out. If you're a sales person, try getting your manager to implement some of these ideas. Whether you are new to sales or sales management, or you're a seasoned pro, we can all try new ideas to help improve our sales. I hope these help yours.

Good luck and good selling!

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