

How To Develop A First Class Sales Team

Contributed by Jonathan Farrington
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Pick up a typical report and what words do you find? Verbs like analyze, forecast, plan, assess and schedule, are used in pursuit of organizations that are efficient, productive and predictable. What set of people are required? Obviously, people who are efficient, effective, proficient, competent, productive and co-operative. But I believe we need to go beyond – we need to be inspired, motivated, creators, who are enthusiastic and able to consistently deliver against our key objectives. We should be developing individuals who are not afraid to challenge paradigms, who are prepared to go that extra yard in search of excellence and who understand that success is 80% attitude and only 20% aptitude.

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For a group of people to remain consciously competent at optimum performance levels, they require frequent injections of stimulation, motivational guidance, prompting and directing, otherwise they can easily lapse into becoming unconsciously competent or worse, unconsciously incompetent.

The primary objective of a professional Sales Manager has to be:

“To achieve consistently superior results, through the performance of every key individual.”

The Acid Test: When thinking about your own sales force,

- Do you understand their motivators – what is driving them?
- Do you have visibility of their numbers – year to date, forecast vs. required performance?
- Activity levels – are they working hard and smart enough?
- Engagement – are they talking to the right level in their prospects/accounts?

- Messaging – are they capable of delivering an appropriate message at the right level?

- Qualification – are they only spending time on deals where they can compete and ultimately that they can win?

- Closing – are they constructing successful campaigns and closing business?

Controlled Management:

The basis of Controlled Management is to provide a means of effective management by adopting different approaches in different situations with different people. Studying the approach and methods of great leaders in history, shows a variety of styles and proves the point. Compare for example, the styles of leadership displayed by say, Montgomery at El Alamein, Pope Jean-Paul II and the Roman Catholic Church or Bob Geldof and Live Aid. All three proved themselves effective leaders but in totally disparate situations and with very different groups of people. Controlled Management is a model, which provides guidance on the most effective management style to adopt in certain situations, with different types of people.

CM is a model, not a theory. The difference is that a theory attempts to explain why things happen, whereas a model is a pattern of events, which can be learnt and repeated.

There are four management styles: Directing, Coaching, Supporting and Delegating.

Each style is appropriate in certain circumstances and they can be illustrated as follows:

Directing - Low Supportive, High Directive.

Delegating - Low Supportive, Low Directive.

Coaching - High Supportive, Low Directive.

Supporting - High Supportive, High Directive.

CM is a way of describing and analyzing leadership styles. It is a combination of directive and supportive behaviours.

Directive behaviour involves telling people what to do, how to do it, where to do it, when to do it and then closely supervising this performance.

Supportive behaviour involves listening to people, providing support and encouragement for their efforts and then facilitating their involvement in problem solving and decision-making.

Top performing Sales Directors and Managers understand instinctively when a situation requires them to Direct, Coach, Support or Delegate but learning these skills takes time and practice and underpinning this advanced approach to management must be a range of core competencies..

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Jonathan Farrington -

<http://www.jonathanfarrington.com> - is a business coach, mentor, author, and consultant who has helped hundreds of companies and thousands of individuals around the world achieve their full potential and consequently, optimum performance levels in his capacity as Managing Partner of The jfa Group – <http://www.jf-assocs.com>