

Special Edition

How to create a successful sales team?

In April of 2009, I began a series of articles on “how to develop successful sales people?”

- It was a nine-part series;
- I received numerous requests to write more articles on sales.

Since, that time, a month does not go by, where I do not hear from various trucking or logistic companies, stating, “Can you resend us copies of the 9 newsletter articles or can you provide some additional insight into how we can create a successful sales program, in a deteriorating market?”

First, of all, I would like to thank each and every one of my readers for their kind response. As many of you know; I have conducted sales seminars throughout the Country, for many years.

- I've trained salespeople;
- I've re-trained salespeople, and;
- I've designed sales compensation packages, to provide compensation based upon performance.

One of the things that management needs to focus on in order to have a successful sales program, is themselves. As an owner or a manager of a trucking/logistics company, you need to recognize that **it is your responsibility to motivate your sales staff** and keep them motivated.

Everybody is motivated, but they're motivated differently. Some successful sales people are;

- Fast paced.
- Bold.
- Assertive.
- Take charge, and;
- Can't stand people that don't carry their own weight.

Other sales people are motivated by their ability to manage their own time and by the relationships that they develop. Some sales people are motivated by recognition. They're motivated by opportunity. **My point; in order to have a successful sales team, you must be a successful manager and you must recognize that:**

- All sales people are not created equal.
- Many sales people have the ability to perform, but;
- If a sales person doesn't perform, it's normally because management did not provide the right motivation for the sales person to succeed.

Different things motivate different people. Zig Zigler, which is one of the most recognized motivational speakers in the world, indicated that love is the greatest motivator of all. He said that “when you see a single parent struggling for survival with a limited education, raising one or more children with an intense desire to do the right thing, **you can rest assured that love is the driving motivation behind his/her efforts**”.

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Some sales people are motivated and moved into action by hearing an inspiring sermon or a highly effective directional program that shares with them how to live and accomplish more with their lives. Others are motivated to plan their work more carefully so they will get more done. **Then, there's people like Zig Zigler that are motivated by the people he has motivated.** The letters and calls he receives, the personal testimonials of people who have been successful because they follow his principles, **gives him the satisfaction to continue to do what he does best; inspire other people.**

It's often been said that motivation can't last; yet, that's a myth. Motivation is temporary, but so is going to the bathroom and eating dinner, but if you do this on a regular basis (as Zig Zigler says) you'll live longer and smell better. My point; motivation, enthusiasm and leading by example is the beginning of the process of developing a successful sales program. **You can't treat all sales people the same way. You need to identify what their special traits are, what their motivations are** and then you need to work with those sales people based upon their desires.

As you're trying to motivate your sales people, it's also important that you continue to motivate yourself. It's important to understand that motivation is a tool; when used improperly, motivation can turn into manipulation. **With motivation, your interest is in doing something for others.** With manipulation, you try to maneuver people into doing things for your benefit. One is highly desirable and the other is truly undesirable.

As a leader, the first thing you need to do is understand what motivates you. As I stated previously; different things motivate different people. One of the first ways to begin the process is to make a list of your top motivators and put them in an easy, accessible place. When you feel discouraged, pull out your list and remind yourself why you do what you do. **A successful sales organization is driven by a successful and highly motivated leader.**

Billy Graham, who spent decades reaching out to people across the world, and inspiring numerous leaders, stated that there are four main character traits which are personal qualities of leadership;

1. **First quality – integrity;** a moral value which means that a person is the same on the inside as he/she claims to be on the outside. A person of integrity can be trusted, has confidence in the face of uncertainty.
2. **Second quality – personal security;** in other words, are you emotionally secure, which means – do you know and accept who you are? Do you also understand why you're here and where you are going? **The point Billy was making; he did not believe that kind of security comes from a career alone.**
3. **Third quality – sense of priority;** the ability to separate the important from unimportant. **The critical from the trivial, the vital from the insignificant, the eternal from the temporary.** Until a person gets his/her priorities in life straight, everything else is going to be out of order, both on a business and personal level.
4. **Last quality – vision;** do you have in mind something greater than just a vision for your job, your business or your family? Each individual needs to come to the realization of their own inadequacies and their weaknesses.

Over the next several weeks, I will provide tips on how to improve sales performance. As a leader, you have to be able to demonstrate;

- That a sales person should never see failure as failure, but only as a learning experience.
- **Stress failure indicates the need to make a change in the course of direction.**
- Failure provides an opportunity to develop a sense of humor.
- **Failure indicates that you have the opportunity to practice your techniques and perfect your performance.** That's what sales people do; they're constantly performing, and;
- **A successful sales person never sees failure as failure, but only as the game they must play to win.**

Tom Hopkins, who is one of the country's leading experts on improving sales performance and maximizing sales achievements, stated; "I am not judged by the number of times I fail, but by the number of times I succeed. The number of times I succeed is in direct proportion to the number of times I fail and keep trying."

QUOTE OF THE WEEK: "The ultimate secret to success is your ability to handle failure and rejection".
(Tom Hopkins)