

Off the Cuff --- Lost Passion

By Rick Johnson

The answer to that question begins by asking yourself another question; do you have the right person in the job of sales manager? Are they a leader or were they simply your best salesperson? Do they have real leadership skills? Sometimes rejuvenating your sales force requires a change in leadership. It may even require a change in the sales force; the development of a documented sales strategy or even just a simple territorial restructuring.

However, before you get radical, ask yourself the following questions:

- Have you supplied leadership training for your sales manager?
- Have you provided any coaching or mentoring to support the sales managers' efforts?
- Do you get involved in supporting the sales strategy?
- Does your human resource department support a formalized program for new sales recruits?
- Do you show participative support in quarterly or semiannual sales meetings?
- Is the sales force held accountable – do they have scorecards?
- Is the sales manager held accountable beyond what I call the statistical disappointment review via e-mail?
- Is your sales force trained in value selling?
- Do they really understand what it means to be a total solution provider?
- Are they **targeting key accounts** based on potential for growth?

Nowadays, salespeople must be problem solvers able to generate solutions for customers in their time of need. Therefore, they must possess a great deal of knowledge about your customers' business. They must actually define what those needs are because the customer may not know, nor take the time to explain if they do know. Customers want you to have the knowledge and intelligence to comprehend and analyze their problems before showing up at the door. Customers will listen and buy from the salesperson that finds the "pain" and takes it away. Sometimes going back to the basics is part of the answer to rekindling the passion. That means revisiting best practice in all areas including targeting, goal setting, customer profiling and action planning. Some of your salespeople may have forgotten and some of them may have never known the principles.

Sales management holds the key to meeting company objectives. Effective sales management must build the platform for success. Salespeople are not the easiest group in the company to manage. If they were they would not be salespeople. Selling is not easy. It takes a special talent, self motivation, self discipline, a passion to succeed and the ability to accept rejection. The reality of the situation is simple. The majority of salespeople are not managed well. So, if your sales people have become discouraged and unmotivated check the passion

level of your team. Get involved with your sales force. Analyze what you have done as a company to support sales leadership.

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