

Special Management Series

Sales Coaching Strategies That Empower Your People to Make the Sale

**This is a series of Training for your
Management TEAM**

Presented by J.W. Owens



**A Management
Perspective 303 Series**

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- Being a sales leader is tough, especially in today's ever-changing marketplace. **You and your team have to keep up with the way companies are evolving**, because what you were selling yesterday might not even be relevant to your prospect today.
- And the game has changed; in 2007, it took an average of 3.68 cold call attempts to reach a prospect; **now it takes 8—and less than 2% of those calls result in an appointment.**
- **So how can you be a great sales coach in this environment?** How do you equip your reps with the power to beat out the competition? Here are three ways you can empower your people to make the sale.

Sales Coaching Strategies That Empower Your People to Make the Sale



1. Coach Your Sales Team to Be Prospect Experts

- A successful sales team needs to know everything about selling and their prospective clients. Think of it this way: A football team doesn't prepare for the week's upcoming game just by running drills and scrimmaging. They're also reviewing video (and all digital assets) of their opponents to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Your team should be doing the same.

Help Your Team Learn Their Prospect's Business

- When you're a prospective client talking to a sales rep that knows something crucial about your business, you're much more likely to be open to talking to that sales rep again. Your reps need to start by learning everything they can about their prospect's business. Encourage them to go deep. Publicly available information is no longer enough. LinkedIn Sales Navigator will provide in-depth insights on their prospects.

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- And, teach reps to identify a business fit well before a solution fit. They need to first determine whether your company and theirs can work well together. Then they can start thinking about what they want to sell them.

Show Them How to Develop Their Network

- Train your sales team to use their LinkedIn network to pinpoint anyone who works at the company they're targeting. They should also broaden their audience for a further understanding of the company and connect with the prospect's suppliers, ex-employees and customers. These people could become their allies and even clients one day.
- Teach reps to be charismatic. This is a simple lesson, but crucial. The most important thing your team members can do—whether on the phone, through email or in person—is listen. Listen to what their prospect is saying rather than waiting for an opening to sell something. They should be thoughtful with every response, and provide a vision that delivers on what they've heard their prospect saying they need.

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Don't Be Afraid of the Courting Phase

- Your team needs to understand that pressure sales don't work. If you have to pressure a prospect, you probably aren't adding value to their business. Nudging does work.
- A common sentiment you'll hear from me when I'm speaking with a prospect: ***"We may work together in three months or three years—and that's okay."*** The expertise and value I provide will prescribe the speed for the relationship.
- And, **be where your prospect is looking.** You know the feeling when you want to buy a car, and suddenly you see that car everywhere on the road? In your first meeting, imagine you are putting your client into a metaphorical vehicle. Your future touchpoints are billboards, radio messages and dashboard lights to alert and remind them of the correct turns to make. **You're guiding them with subtle nudges—not being a backseat driver.**

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2. Coach Them on Available Tools

- Train your people to use their arsenal of tools to be where their prospect is looking. The phrase **“It takes a village”** applies to sales tools as well as people.
- Many prospects are no longer answering their phone or responding to emails unless they know who the sender is, but InMail through LinkedIn can often get their attention.

In 2016, the average salesperson spent 6 hours a week using LinkedIn, and that number will only grow.

Leverage Marketing Automation

- Marketing automation is the new cold call, so have your reps leverage CRMs and other marketing tools. Help them understand the prospect’s objectives and the strategies they are currently using in order to know what information from these tools would be relevant to share with them. Their ultimate goal is to get their prospect to think, **“Oh wow, they’re actually telling me something I don’t already know about my business.”**
- These tools will also help with the timing of your reps’ communications, which is crucial with prospective clients. Help them set up their messages to send automatically in a cadence that makes sense. Most marketing automation tools also allow you to easily personalize your message. That’s key for prospects. Messages have to feel like they’re coming from an authentic source, and that they are meant specifically for the recipient’s eyes.

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3. Motivate Them to Do Their Best

- The best coaches—in sports, in sales, in life—are experts at motivation. It takes lots of encouragement, just the right amount of tough love, and plenty of rewards for a job well done.
- **Segment Your Audience**
- Who you're going to coach is just as important as how you're going to coach them. And you've got to make sure you're optimizing your efforts. **Research shows that the middle 60%—the core performers—of your team is where your sales coaching can pay off the most.** Coaching among this group can improve performance by as much as 19%.
- **This doesn't mean you should ignore your “tails”—the high and low performers. It just means you need to coach them differently and decide where you need to spend the most time.**

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For new sales reps, **diversify their prospect portfolio** by employing a tiered strategy. For example, 20x10x5 would give a rep:

- 5 \$20M prospects,
- 10 \$10M prospects, and
- 20 \$5M prospects.
- Over time, you and the new rep together can start gradually paring this **portfolio down to a more manageable number of real prospects** who will fit well with your company and have a strong potential of buying at some point.
- **No two salespeople are created equally**, and as you identify strengths and areas of improvement within your people, make sure you're capitalizing on those strengths. If someone is connecting more successfully with the \$20M prospects, give them a larger portfolio of \$20M companies. Segmenting and coaching your team as individuals rather than a group creates a more diverse and powerful team.

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Offer Constructive Feedback

- When offering feedback to team members—whether positive or negative—a good sales coach follows these three “**be’s**”:
- **Be** generous.
- **Be** gentle.
- **Be** genuine.
- Remember, you’re talking to salespeople here. They know insincerity when they hear it. If you’re not genuine in your sales coaching, it’s going to backfire.
- **Psychologists and coaches alike believe the best way to give feedback is through the “Magic 5:1 Ratio,” where coaches give reps five areas of praise for every one area of improvement. Studies show that starting with positive feedback boosts the recipient’s mood and makes them more open to critique.**

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- Studies also show that coddled puppies make poor guide dogs, so don't micro manage! It doesn't help your team members learn to be the strong, independent salespeople they're aiming to be. A little challenge begets great leadership, so give team members the freedom to try and fail. Or, try and succeed! Always use recognition and support to put wind in their sales.
- By making sales coaching more of a conversation rather than a lecture, you're making your team members active participants in their action plans to achieve their sales goals. Try asking instead of telling—ask them how they think things are going and what areas they see as strengths and weaknesses.

Give Recognition and Provide Incentive

- A huge part of motivation is giving your reps the incentive to keep them moving toward their goals. Well-thought-out sales incentive programs have shown to increase sales performance by up to 44%. So give your team something to work toward. A good sales coach always gives accolades where warranted.
- Extrinsic incentives can include travel rewards, special events and tangible awards, but don't forget about the importance of culture and other intrinsic motivators like autonomy and purpose. This is a great way to retain people who believe in the company and the importance of their role in its success.

It's All About Empowerment

- And because your people **respond differently, empowering and motivating them uniquely is the key to results.**

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Good Selling !



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