

Special Management Series

The Fastest Way to Onboard New Independent Sales Reps

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

Presented by J.W. Owens



**A Management
Perspective 303 Series**

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- Congrats! Welcome to the team, independent sales rep. You're gonna love it here.
- **The first order of business:** training. Here's a stack of brochures to study. Now, sit in this room and watch hours of online training videos about what we sell. We'll come back to check that you're still awake in a few hours.
- **Sound familiar?** If yes, it's time to consider a change.
- Like any new employee, **when a new sales rep starts, getting them up to speed quickly is key to cost-effectiveness.** Need to turn your new sales reps from rookies to rock stars quickly?

Here's the fastest way to do it.

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Step 1: Create a Training Guide

- If your sales reps are out there selling the same kinds of products to the same kinds of audiences, chances are they're getting a lot of the same kinds of questions.
- By giving your independent reps a training guide with the most common questions asked by prospects, along with home-run responses, you're separating the must-know information from the nice-to-know stuff. After all, there's no point in memorizing details no one asks. Rookie sales reps don't have the experience to make that distinction.
- **To make this training guide, first ask the people most familiar with your company (current reps, executives, customer service agents and/or trusted customers) what they feel are the most common questions about your product or service. Then, write clear, effective answers to these questions.**
- Finally, double-check the validity of those answers with a trusted customer. If they pass the test, put them in the guide for your new reps to study and master.

How to Supercharge This Step:

- Make sure your people really understand the answers to these common questions by gamifying the training.
- Adding a level of fun and interactivity into an otherwise not-so-fun activity is precisely the spoon full of sugar needed to make that medicine go down. (Remember how popular walking around local parks became when Pokémon Go was all the rage?)

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Step 2: Stay Honest and Respond Quickly

- Even with their training guide set to memory, your independent reps will still receive questions they don't quite know the answer to. It's inevitable.
- So what's the best thing for your independent reps to do in this situation? Admit they don't know the answer, but promise to find it out for the prospect ASAP.
- **No prospect will fault someone's inability to answer a difficult, niche question. But they will take offense to a false answer made up on the spot.**

How to Supercharge This Step:

- The old sales adage of “**always be closing**” doesn't always work anymore. Today, especially with millennials and Generation Z, it's “always be helping,” where reps put honesty and the buyer's needs first.
- By staying sharp with the latest in sales training, your independent reps can learn how to assist buyers with their concerns and close the sale.

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Step 3: Dig Into Customer Concerns

- When your independent sales reps receive questions outside of your training guide, they're also presented with an opportunity for growth.
- **Not only do questions from prospects create opportunity for your sales reps to learn more about customer concerns, they open the door for you to help.**
- So, when your sales people get a question they don't know, coach them to respond quickly, but also ask why the prospect asked the question.
- Here's how this might sound:
- Prospect: "Can these network switches help with network security?"
- Sales Rep: "I'm not sure, but I'll find out for you as soon as I get off the phone with you. In the meantime, can I ask why that's a concern for you?"
- Prospect: "Well, we hope they can, because network security is a top priority for us next year."
- Had the sales rep not probed the customer for their reasoning behind the question, he or she wouldn't have discovered an opportunity to assist further. That's actionable info for your sales rep, straight from a customer.

How to Supercharge This Step:

- If you're using call recording to coach sales reps—a tactic that's growing in popularity—offer on-the-spot recognition when your new independent reps dig in further to learn why customers are asking certain questions.
- Reward specific behaviors time after time, and your reps will be flying solo in no time.

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Step 4: Record Everything You've Learned

- After a few weeks of sales calls, a new rep will probably end up in a dozen or so situations where they've had to research the answer and get back to the prospect.
- **Chances are, if one prospect has a concern, another one will have it too. That's why it's important for your independent reps to methodically record these objections in your company's CRM.**
- When the right answer to a tough question is only a few clicks away in your company's CRM, you're reducing the time it takes your independent sales rep to find the right response. Plus, you're contributing to the training guide for independent reps that haven't started yet.

How to Supercharge This Step:

- Ensure your CRM is effective by inspiring CRM adoption through incentives. **Give your people a boost in motivation** through extrinsic motivators, along with intrinsic factors such as purpose, belonging and status to inspire your people to participate.



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Good Selling !



J.W. Owens - 561-372-5922
results.jwowens@gmail.com

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