

Progressions Inc.

Sales Training & Consulting



## **Can Great Sales People Become Great Sales Managers**

How many times have we heard of a situation where a company takes their top sales producer and promotes them to a management position only to see them struggle and/or fail. Just because someone has the gift of selling doesn't necessarily mean they have the skills required to lead and motivate an effective sales team. Breaking the "production pattern" is very difficult. A sales person thrives on "doing the deal!" When they are faced with the personality challenges and human aspects of managing a team versus receiving the individual satisfaction of closing the deal they often struggle.

Here are some strategies to help a sales manager direct their team to success.

- 1) Move from transactional thinking to transformational thinking. Transactional thinking is often the mindset of a successful sales person and of building your business one sale at a time. Transformational thinking is that of building an entire team, developing the skills of each team player and transforming the entire group towards success. This is not an easy process as there are varying degrees of attitudes, aptitudes and therefore altitudes in any sales person.
- 2) Focus on building the relationships. When you build the relationship you move beyond transactional to transformational looking towards a long term relationship with any client rather than a one time transaction. Sales managers need to help all of their team see the value in building the long term relationship. This of course equates to levels of service, follow-up, measurement standards and developing an entire plan. Part of relationship building is the mindset of asking "How do I help this business become better?" When the intent is to help the business or an individual through your products or services, it is the first step towards building trust instead of making an individual sale.

A good sales person also needs to define who their customer is. Who is their target audience? Who provides them the greatest return? And what are they looking for? Without this direction they can often end up adopting a shotgun approach and failing to build a business base. Transactional versus transformational. Another valid question is "What does the customer deem as most important?" Having a plan is critical. Time and territory management is essential for the best results.



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- 3) Understand that clients are far more sophisticated than ever before. Clients are busier so we must capture their attention much quicker and show our value over the competition. Clients have the feeling that they have heard it all. A good sales person knows how to distinguish themselves and demonstrate differentiation amongst competition. Clients are definitely more demanding. With less time and more sophistication their expectations are much higher. They can be seen as demanding when in fact it is a sales person's job to exceed the customer's expectations whenever possible. Clients are more conscious and more aware. With all the competition in the marketplace, the internet with its vast array of resources and information and the marketplace being more competitive than ever, clients are on the ball!

In summary, sales managers need to follow up the following points.

- 1) Understand, support and direct a sales strategy which leads their sales people towards success.
- 2) Develop infrastructure and support through technology, administration and information for their sales people to draw upon.
- 3) Have a process. Have a plan that anticipates the unexpected, utilizes effective time and territory management, and communicate constantly with all team members.
- 4) Incorporate coaching and training as an ongoing part of the team. Coaching means spending individual time at least two times a week with each sales person either in person or by telephone. This essentially "catches them doing it right" and acknowledges positive behavior while stretching them to further develop their full potential.
- 5) A training curriculum should be in place to facilitate communication, skill building, new product information and provide a forum to celebrate success.

The journey from Sales Representative to Sales Manager may have many bumps in the road, however there's wonderful satisfaction gained from inspiring your team to success.

To your success,

Lynn Giuliani



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