

## **Who Is Responsible for Boosting Revenue?** **Is it the CEO or V.P. of Sales?**

Who hired the V.P. of Sales?

That would be the person who ultimately is responsible for success – the CEO. And who would be responsible for investing in education for the V.P. of Sales (investing brings a great ROI)? And lastly, who is responsible for developing and enhancing a culture of greatness in the sales department? The CEO.

So, I suggest that CEOs consider themselves as the Executive V.P. of Sales and become more involved with both the sales team and strategic clients. I've found that most CEOs generally get more involved with sales when revenue is stagnant or declining. That's reactive versus being proactive. And not very astute. You should have constant communication about the status of and the future actions regarding both struggling sales members and strategic clients. This helps you to avoid a huge revenue killer – drift which is very commonplace.

If you buy in to what you've read thus far, here are some suggestions for having a world-class sales team:

- The CEO must obtain his own mentor to invest into his own leadership and sales talent especially if s/he did not rise through the sales ranks which is accurate in most instances.
- You should attend all or almost all of your formal sales meetings especially if sales skills are being presented. You can skip, for time utilization purposes, portions that will not benefit you such as products training where you are already competent. When addressing the group, I suggest you insert your wants and needs with clear absolutes.
- You should devote time in the field and travel with e.g. 3 to 4 salespeople in a two to four day stretch at least once monthly. Depending on geography, you may be able to travel with two salespeople the same day. Clients have a very favorable view of a firm when a CEO visits

them. And he gets to know the salespeople better and learn more about their concerns and clients' needs and wants. Note: If you're not very good or great in sales, you should obtain mentoring prior to mentoring your salespeople.

- These visits will enable you to speak at sales meetings about what you learned and advise the group what you have or will do differently, what you've witnessed that you want them to improve upon and you may elect to lead a discussion to gain their ideas about your presentation. Take good notes about all agreements made and confirm it via email the next day.
- Obtain a coach both for your V. P. and for the group that is great not just with know-how, but is loaded with creativity. You want a new ideas person that builds excitement both internally and externally. Industry experience would be nice, but expertise is far more important.

### **The Sales Team**

- Do you have the best V.P. of Sales in the industry? If not, you have two distinct choices which are 1) invest in a mentor to teach what true sales leadership is (most don't know what they don't know yet) or 2) hire slower and fire faster. Your mentor/coach can help you with the decision and then mentor the existing or new V.P. Mentoring the existing V.P. is my choice, but there are some that should not be in the position. Most CEO's know it, but often tolerate mediocre results. More drift.

The coach then mentors the Sales Managers followed by providing the same service for the salespeople. About 50% of increased revenue will come from talent being increased by 50%. It's a very simple equation. Usually the key is not just developing their sales skills, but teaching them to think both logically and creatively. Instead of thinking creatively many will develop logical reasons for not doing things in a new way. You cannot allow this type of thinking in a learning culture.

Many V.P. of Sales do not have the ability to coach. They were promoted or hired into a leadership role because they excelled with their sales performance. These two professions are entirely different. Once promoted, the CEO is expecting the individual to go hit it but what they receive is an abundance of “ride alongs”. That’s all they know because that’s the way they were “trained”. Let me suggest that you eliminate “ride alongs” and replace them with a concentration on strategic clients. These are the clients that:

- You want to land;
- You wish to increase revenue;
- You never want to lose.

These are the clients that need special attention from the CEO and V.P. Clients also have me do several things for strategic clients to add value.

- Provide a leadership and/or a sales seminar. I prefer a combination with both the leadership and sales team in attendance. My clients must attend as the strategic clients’ CEO and/or the V.P and other decision makers will be there.
- I provide 1 to 2 hour informal consulting sessions with their CEO and all decision makers.
- I conduct joint sales calls with the CEO, V.P. or Salesperson and sign copies of my books. In addition to solidifying the relationship with my other clients’ client, I provide an end of the day mentoring session with the individual I’m traveling with. This session includes what we learned, what our next steps will be plus advising my team member what s/he did \* didn’t do and what they must be better at.
- I’m sure you will agree that any of these approaches represent value.

The CEO, V.P, Salesperson teamed up with a Speaker, Consultant and Author is an awesome team and we visit clients with a specific mission – again not just a ride-along. Smart clients promote continual

prospecting which I love to do, but not at the expense of losing focus on strategic clients and delivering extra value.

And again, insure that from the CEO down, everyone receives the education to be superior with these clients.

I would be remiss if I didn't add one "but". If you provide the education and an individual decides not to improve – the only thing worse than turnover is when there is none when there should be. Over 75% of corporations have at least one person that should have already departed. More drift.

- Your coach should join the CEO and or the V.P. of Sales with all interviews as s/he knows the right questions to ask and to dig deeper. An assessment tool is utilized to not only customize questions, but to also assist in determining if there will be a culture fit.
- Don't be casual about education. Corporations bring speakers to their sales meetings to either educate or motivate. Only one of these is the correct choice as motivation primarily comes from within an individual. And the downside of bringing in an educator is when the CEO hasn't made it abundantly clear that certain skills presented are to be implemented. A follow-up system must be in place to insure that everyone utilizes the new skills immediately. Lack of follow-up on the group's newly learned skills is imperative if you want a great ROI from your training and education monies.

Training and education must be an on-going process – not an event. You need a culture that requires continual development and education of the V.P. of Sales, Sales Managers and Salespeople. Hogan Assessment Systems conducted a survey that indicated, "two-thirds of the managers in corporate America are ineffective or incompetent and would ultimately fail". I believe the true number exceeds 75%. If you have been thinking that education is expensive, try ignorance. And if you are genuinely serious about greatness, don't be cheap. The right coach will be an investment. As Yogi Berra famously said, "A nickel ain't worth a dime anymore", meaning don't be cheap with education. CEO's view

investment into equipment to improve productivity. The challenge is that CEOs will buy equipment over human development almost every time.

I'm writing this during the World Series which parallels a great sales team. The two teams excelled because of scouting, recruiting, development and continuous fine-tuning. Their General Managers are our CEOs, the Managers are our V.P. of Sales and the players are our salespeople. And the crowds are our clients. And it all starts with the G.M.'s direction. His title is not CEO, but he actually serves that role by recruiting, selecting and setting expectations for the Manager. And the Manager obtains the right Coaches for player development. Not just at spring training, but for the entire season – and for some the entire year.

One person with a steadfast belief is equal to a group of 100 who have only a casual interest. You must be firm with the V.P. about thinking creatively about new ways of doing things. John Kenneth Galbraith, the famous Economist said, "The conventional view serves to protect us from the painful job of thinking." That's why a knowledge leader is paramount.

And that person is the CEO (Executive V.P. of Sales).

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