

Motivation

What is Sales Motivation?

On an average, only a few prospects out of hundred actually become clients. But because there are sales targets for your sales staff, they have to keep approaching new customers so that they can achieve sales targets. Because of this unsure and hectic life of sales, where performance is completely measurable against results, your sales staff requires **sales motivation** from time to time.

There are various ways to provide sales motivation to your staff. One core method used for motivation of any kind is “**Recognition, Rewards and remuneration**”. This can loosely stand for

- Recognition – Growing people in your organization
- Rewards – Rewarding them for their work and
- Remuneration – Offering incentives or salary hikes to appreciate them.

This article deals mainly with the **objectives of sales motivation**. There are numerous reasons that you will want your staff motivated for sales. Sales motivation is not required only when the salesman is going through a slump. **Sales motivation is required at all times**, and it becomes the culture of an organization to keep sales force motivated.

Key Influences on Sales Motivation

When looking at motivation within your sales organization, you need to consider these 5 key areas and their influence on motivation:

1. Culture and Company:

Sometimes selling is respected and viewed as vital. Other times not so much. Sometimes leaders support sellers. Other times not so much.

If you want to maximize sales motivation, your culture and company needs to support sellers as much as possible.

2. Management:

If a seller doesn't have a fire in the belly, it's very hard to light one. But if a seller does have a fire—even a flicker—the right manager can help the flame burn bright. Elite Performers are more than 2x as likely to have managers who motivate sellers.

3. Intrinsic Motivators:

The conventional wisdom is that sellers are motivated by money. While this is often the case, there's a lot more to the story. Sellers can be motivated by many factors: recognition, advancement, winning (not necessarily related to money), personal development, and a host of other factors.

When you know what motivates any one individual person, you can focus on drawing that motivation out on a regular basis.

4. Execution:

Execution is affected by many factors from talent to skills to operations to enablement, but nothing gets done unless a seller drives themselves to do it. And, as you might imagine, sellers at Top-Performing Sales Organizations get a lot more done.

5. Value:

In our recent research report, The Value-Driving Difference, we looked at the differences between companies that are value-focused and those that are not. One of the most surprising correlations was the relationship between value and sales motivation. Companies that have a true focus on value for buyers are much more likely to have highly motivated sales forces.

Objectives of Sales Motivation

1) To keep the spirits up

Due to the reasons mentioned above (cold calls, target pressure) a sales person might become demotivated and disinterested much easier than any other employee in the organization. As a result, sales motivation is required maximum in the sales department so that the sales staff has a positive spirit towards sales.

For example – If your sales employee is informed that he will be getting 3 months' salary at once on over-achieving a sales target, he will always have his spirits up because he has received hope from the company in the form of remuneration or money he will be paid. This hope keeps his spirits up. Similarly, winning an award or any other type of action can result in sales motivation of your employees, keeping the spirits high.

2) For the growth of the company and to achieve targets

This is a no brainer. If your sales force is positive towards the target they are asked to achieve, your organization will get better revenues from sales. More the revenues from sales, more is the bottom line of the company and more can be the future investments in better products or services.

There are many firms which have produced good products but have lost market share due to poor sales. Thus, motivating your sales force is important for the growth of the company and there is actual profit when you are investing in incentives for the sales force.

3) To show importance of sales in the organization

A reason for sales guys to be demotivated is that they don't know whether they are in the right position in their life. However, if you communicate to your sales employees, of their importance in the organization and how they are helping this whole big machinery to move forward, the result will be a higher motivation of sales staff. This ultimately helps the company move forward.

4) To make them brave

As I said above, it is not easy to keep meeting new customers and to keep pitching in front of people you have never met before. In fact, over a period of time, the fear of rejection can paralyse sales people and they might start resisting the sales process altogether. A little sales

motivation in the form of the three R's, can go a long way in making the salesperson face their fears again and to be brave in front of stiff sales targets.

5) To improve co ordination within the team

A sales person might be frustrated or ignored when he is demotivated or when he is not achieving his sales targets. In a high performance situation like sales, poor performance can affect an individual for the worse and make him inferior to his high performing team.

Providing sales motivation and backing to the sales person (that such things do happen) can increase his confidence. When the whole team is motivated, the bonding and co ordination between the team rises and they help each other out, thereby helping your organization in the long run.

6) To develop their skills

Sales motivation can help sales person to improve their skills so that they perform better for the organization. These skills may be various such as their soft skills, their computer skills, their product knowledge, their grooming or whatnot. In essence, if the sales person wants to perform better, and he is motivated to do that, he will automatically improve his own skills.

7) To reach more customers and cover more territory

We always demand MORE from the sales person. We want more sales, we want more territory to be covered, we want more dealers, we want more distributors etc. This naturally puts the sales person under too much pressure.

Although pressure is negative in nature, sales motivation can be positive. Providing a bit of monetary incentives will motivate the sales person to reach more customers and possibly convert them. At the same time, such an approach will also help the company to cover more territory and perform better in new and old regions.

8) To introduce a new product in the market

Sales motivation in the form of incentives is most needed when the going is tough. Whenever a company enters a new territory or brings a new product in the market, then the sales staff has to work very hard in convincing their customers or their channel into buying the product.

At such times, sales motivation is important and should be in the form of remuneration as well as recognition. This motivates the sales staff to perform better and capture more market share for the new product or market.

9) To perform in non season

Lastly, sales motivation in the form of remuneration or recognition is needed when the sales people have to perform in non season. There are many brands which are seasonal. For example – Ice cream and Cola sales drop drastically during the rainy season or during winters. At such time, the sales people have to be motivated to keep performing.

In fact, during non seasons the motivation needs to be in form of rewards and recognition. Monetary motivation does not help much at such times because even the sales people know that the targets are unlikely to be achieved or are going to be very hard to achieve because it is non season. However, many companies have tried monetary motivation as well and it has worked out for them during non season.

Ways to motivate the Sales Force

1. Recognition and praise:

Salesmen, like any other human-beings, seek recognition for their achievements and praise for the work done which they think is more than monetary gain for them. The most common complaint of sales-force is that sales managers rarely praise their work par excellence. Failure to compliment and praise is ignoring a vital need in salesman's nature having deeper impact on sales performance.

2. Fair pay-packet:

Though financial incentive is secondary to recognition and praise, it is dominant motive because, every salesman is to earn a decent living for himself and his dependents. It is but natural that he

expects an assurance of the salary that is comparable with his colleagues in his own organisation and the competitive organizations with equal performance and responsibilities. Therefore, it should be attractive and assumed one.

3. Good working conditions:

It is the working conditions both physical and psychological that influence his attitude towards his work and performance. Thus, a salesman looks for a territory that gives him adequate sales potential; he wants a protection against infiltration by other salesman or salesmen in his territory; he expects a fair division of compensation on all joint sales efforts.

He is likely to expect an adequate and regular expense allowance, conveyance facilities or the reimbursement that effect. The other such conditions may be freedom from excessive paper work, cozy office facilities' length of time away from home and so on.

4. Opportunity for advancement:

Good many sales-people give top priority to promotion to higher ups than to the attractive salary or even the job security. By nature, an employee does not want to be tangent. It is the case with more ambitious, efficient and industrious salesmen.

Any company that fails to promote or provide such an opportunity for advancement will be responsible for high sales-force turnover by depriving the basic need and creating dissatisfaction and injecting frustration.

5. Good supervision and leadership:

The productivity of sales-force is dependent on the very nature of leadership provided in company from sales manager down to sales-supervisors. Every manager is a leader and not a boss.

Salesman looks their superiors as outstanding in terms of industry and knowledge. Salesmen respect those who are fair and impartial, determined, keep words, and accommodate the personal dignity of salesmen; they expect that their leader should understand them, their problems and solve them.

6. Opportunity for self expression:

Salesmen have their own views, attitudes, suggestions and ideas which they want to express, assert their personalities and exploit their latent talents and abilities. A salesman is sure to increase his sales efforts if he has the opportunity to assert himself, express his personality.

Absence and suppression of salesman's expression and assertion will kill his initiative, drive and enthusiasm. Management stands benefitted by such rich reserve of untapped source of new ideas of increasing sales, cutting costs and improving profitability.

7. Social acceptance:

Every human-being, a social and rational animal has the strong feeling of 'belonging' to a group of salesmen. Naturally, salesmen desire the acceptance and goodwill of their association in business.

It is the sales manager's task to develop a sense of 'belongingness' in case of every salesman. He wants to have the satisfaction of being accepted as a member of sales team, sales organisation, having his active participation, voice in its affairs, cooperating in matters of mutual interest.

8. Job security:

Every salesman expects that he has job security; that is, he will be able to retain his job so long as his work is quite satisfactory and the prevailing economic and social conditions permit. Job security does not mean absolute permanence of job tenure.

It means protection from arbitrary discharge or dismissal or transfer. Salary is not the only factor that determines such security. He looks to future social security. When he gets old, he should have the opportunity of reasonable earnings to pull on longer with respect and dignity.

9. Desire to excel:

One finds the strong urge of excelling others in performance and the achievements. It speaks of aggressiveness of many successful salesmen. Desire to excel others implies increasing sales,

cutting costs, improving profitability. It is a motive that helps both the parties in that the management can prosper and that the prosperity is made to share by the sales-force.

10. Pride in selling:

In addition to job security, job satisfaction is one of the strongest motives of every salesman. This job satisfaction is dependent upon pride in selling as a vocation. When one has accepted a sales career, it should not be looked down upon. The salesman should have a feeling that he is doing some worthwhile job to hang on or as a matter of last resort or as a means of livelihood.

Therefore, the significance of selling must be emphasized in preparing and training the salesmen. They should be given an understanding that they are doing creative, gainful, socially acceptable and respected job.