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# You Decide: Sales Coaching

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Sales Coaching

There is no doubt that in today’s world that coaching is hot subject. No doubt that people are starting to realize that coaching is not for sports only but for business practices as well. But what is mysterious to me is that people can become coaches if you just tell them to coach as if there are no skills or competencies. I remember once reading a story in USAToday about 400 top athletes in the world and they asked them if they could articulate about what made them to be the best at what they do. Yet only two of the 400 athletes could actually articulate what it is they did that brought them to that height.

Now if you look in the world of sales, most managers have become managers because they were really good at selling. So senior executives believe that if we take the star athlete or in this case the star sales person and put them in the position of management. However, as with athletes wanting to become coaches and failing, most start sales people cannot be good managers. This is because, most don't understand that there is a process to coaching, there are competencies to coaching, there are temperaments that need to evaluated. A good example would be Phil Jackson of the Chicago bulls, taking on the "un-coachable" player Dennis Rodman who helped the Bulls win multiple championships.

What I'm trying to say is that there a different styles of coaching and people learn differently given the right coach. In our scenario, there are two mistakes that were done. The sales manager believes that just because he's a good sales person, he is also a good coach. Secondly, he needs to know how to adapt his coaching style to the style of the coachee. Once he gets over that hump, he can use the right tools and process to get the right results.

In sports, if the coach runs out in the field, the referee will blow a whistle and give a penalty. However, in business there are no referees or whistle. In this case, the sales manager ran out in the field and took over the game by getting frustrated with the sales person and started scribbling on paper for things that the sales person should of said. This caused a penalty, which led to a deal lost. There is a fundamental way of thinking that should be instilled in the sales manager's behavior. He should be in the game, but stay off the field. He doesn't need to take over the play. He needs to advance the business at the same time of advancing the talent. The sales manger tried to advance the business without advance the talent. In this case, he'll never be able to achieve scalability and self-sufficiency on the part of the people that report to him.

These principles are all part of developing a coaching culture. The culture is the result of a series of principles starting with a set of disciplines that become habits that become a lifestyle. All of these are based on a system of tools and principles. Until the sales manager can install these in an environment then we won't be able to achieve a good coaching culture.

Conclusion

Most of the coaches (managers) today who are trying to be coach, did not have coaches themselves. Thus, they are trying to create a culture without a culture, unless they are provided with a set of tools and processes. The sales manager should develop his coaching skills, which can allow him to guide and mentor instead of dictating his sales person to a final profitable close.