



Michael Schofield

# **50 Ways to lead your sales team**

MICHAEL SCHOFIELD

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# **50 WAYS TO LEAD YOUR SALES TEAM**

50 Ways To Lead Your Sales Team

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Michael Schofield is an associate lecturer and tutor on Leadership and Personal coaching courses and undertakes coaching projects for individuals and teams across the UK. He works with senior management teams in the Public and Private sectors and specialises in communication skills and developing emotional intelligence.

Michael has over 25 years' experience in sales and has held Senior Sales Roles in a Blue Chip environment, leading high performing teams to National recognition. As a result of his experience he understands what it takes to achieve success in a competitive environment. This provides him with a wealth of experience and a platform from which to understand and relate to the challenges of today's business environment.

His passion for leadership and coaching combined with superior communication skills are the corner stones of his own success and have led him to a career developing others at all levels from Executive and Senior Managers to teams and their leaders. His commercial and financial experience leaves him well placed to translate coaching input into results on the bottom line for a business.

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# INTRODUCTION

We have all worked for different managers in the past, some good, some bad, but now it's your turn. YOU are the Leader.

What will you do differently?

This is the question I asked myself with when I first became Manager of a Sales team. I knew what I **didn't** want to do.

I didn't want to focus purely on the task,  
I didn't want to mislead people,  
I didn't want to treat people as an extension of the task,  
I didn't want to view others as the obstacles to achieving my goals,  
I didn't want to be controlling,  
I didn't want to hold people back  
and most of all I didn't want to miss targets!

There were too many managers I had worked for in my sales career that had taken these approaches. Motivation and respect were in short supply, with their management careers tending to be short lived. There had to be a better way to manage people to achieve results and maintain an enthusiastic and motivated sales force.

In a career spanning 20 years as a Sales Manager I have been awarded numerous National and Regional accolades and equally, if not more rewarding, my people have gone on to achieve great success for themselves in both Sales and Management. In this book I will share with you the beliefs, values and techniques that have been the foundation for a career that has not only been successful but hugely enjoyable.

The objective of "50 ways to lead your Sales Team" is not to discuss sales techniques or how to manage a sales campaign. Instead the objective is to challenge you to test your beliefs on what a great sales leader looks like, how they behave and what they stand for. Your values will shape the type of leader you are, and the key to providing inspiration for others lies in understanding the values and drivers of those you will lead. As a result of examining the qualities of what you believe great Leadership is, you will be able to create the action plan to help you become the Leader you have always wanted to be.



My Leadership style has also been shaped by the leaders I have worked for, with me taking the best elements of each of them and adapting them to my style and personality, and I invite you to do the same with the learning from this book. Hopefully you will find that you already use some of the techniques and strategies described.

What is important is that you use this book to start making conscious decisions regarding the approach you adopt when faced with the various challenging situations that confront you as a Sales Manager.

*"If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves."*

*– Thomas Edison*

# **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

# 1 ARE YOU THE LEADER YOUR TEAM DESERVES?

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more,  
do more and become more, you are a leader."*

*– John Quincy Adams*

If you want to know how to lead your team better, why not ask them?

Asking for feedback is an important developmental tool for all Sales Leaders as you may not always be aware of the impact you have with your actions. We might feel that we should be the one with all the answers, but we can learn a lot from listening to others and getting their reaction to how we are as a leader.

You are not just looking for what you don't do as well as you could, but also what you do well, what works and what can be improved.

The simplest way to do this is to ask your team 3 questions:

- 1) What should I start doing?
- 2) What should I continue doing?
- 3) What should I stop doing?

Your team has a vested interest in you doing as good a job as possible in your role, so why not give them an opportunity to contribute to your progress?

This type of feedback can be gathered from your team your peer group and your line manager, and is a simple effective way to check in with how you are doing.

*"Feedback is the breakfast of champions."*

*– Ken Blanchard*

## 2 WHICH ZONE ARE YOU IN?

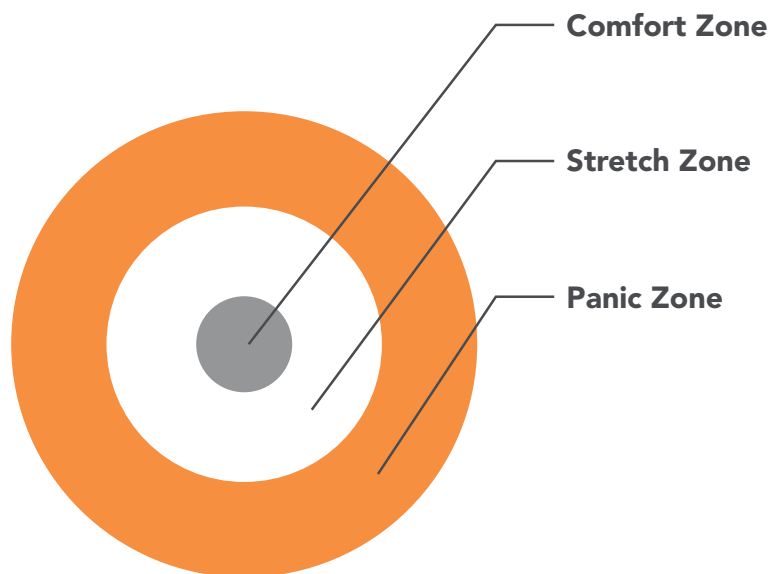
*"A ship in harbour is safe, but that is not what ships are built for."*

*– William Shedd*

In your role as Sales Manager you will find yourself operating in one of three zones, comfort, stretch or panic. Which zone you are in can have a big impact on the level of success you enjoy.

### **Comfort Zone:**

In this zone you tend to feel confident, secure, in control, safe, knowledgeable, calm and of course comfortable. However, spend too long here and you can also experience complacency and boredom, which will lead to standards slipping and the danger of a dip in performance. Sound familiar?



### **Stretch Zone:**

When you are in your stretch zone you can experience pressure, some stress, adrenaline, excitement, tension, anxiety, you are not quite in control, there is a sense of the unknown and you are not sure of the outcome of your actions. Initially your confidence can drop and the amount of time spent in work can go up as you get to grips with the new situation you find yourself in. However you will feel more engaged and you will feel challenged. If you are not put in your stretch zone there will be a lack of development or progress. How does the prospect of spending time here feel?

**Panic Zone:**

When you enter the panic zone your IQ drops, you can freeze, you feel out of control, you don't think straight, you are anxious, stressed and you want to retreat to the safety of your comfort zone. Some people can become aggressive whereas others completely withdraw into themselves. Not a good or constructive place to be.

In terms of personal development, the best zone for you to operate from is your stretch zone, as it is here that you are most open to learning. In your panic zone you are incapable of learning anything new and if you stay in your comfort zone you will not try anything new. It is only in your stretch zone that you will take risks and experiment. When you start a new job you tend to be in your stretch zone and as you become familiar with your role and responsibilities what was once your stretch zone becomes part of your comfort zone. To prevent boredom and complacency you therefore need to step back into your stretch zone and try something new. To make the most of your talent and ability you need to keep moving forward.

We hope you will use this book to move around in your stretch zone and acquire new skills to develop your leadership ability.

**Questions for you to consider:**

Which zone have you been operating from in the last 3 months?

What will put you in your stretch zone?

Which zone are your people operating in?

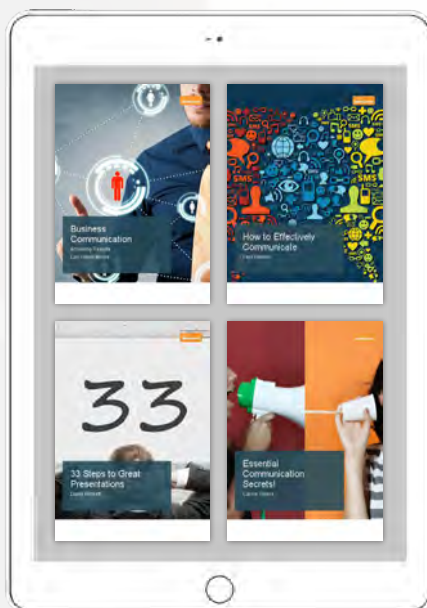
How is this impacting onto their performance?

### 3 IMPORTANCE OF SELF AWARENESS

*"know thyself, for once we know ourselves, we may learn how to care for ourselves"*

– Socrates

Having a good understanding of what is important to others is a critical factor in your ability to successfully lead them to achieve goals and objectives. People are motivated by a variety of factors and will not react to situations in a uniform manner; for example some people will be energised by an impending deadline whereas others will feel intimidated by the increased pressure.



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The starting point in the process of understanding others motivations lies in increasing your awareness of your own motivations, drivers, values and beliefs. This will help you understand how you are likely to react to the different situations you face in your management career and thus, in turn, give you an insight into how to help others face the demands of their sales roles.

**Exercise:**

*Think about somebody you have worked with now or in the past or someone in the public eye, that you admire and respect. On a piece of paper write out the qualities they have displayed that generated the admiration and respect you have for them. Don't spend too much time thinking about it; instead write down the words or phrases that instinctively spring to mind.*

When you have completed your list you will find that you have written down a number of values that are important to you. For example when I think of the people I admire the words and phrases that tend to spring to mind are that they are honest, they are passionate about what they do, they “tell it like it is”, they are loyal, they demonstrate empathy and tolerance, they have faith in others and they provide help and support when needed. These are some of the values that are important to me, and working with people who share these values tends to bring out the best in me.

If you look at your list how many of these values do you tend to display? These qualities give a sense to others of who you are and what you stand for and are an important factor in encouraging others to follow you. By asking others about their role models you will also gain an understanding of what is important to them. I am sure we are all familiar with the saying;

“Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.”

The potential problem with this is if you treat everyone the way you would like to be treated you will only attract people who are just like you. Unfortunately managing a team of sales people isn't that easy, as they will all have different beliefs and values. What you find important may not be of the same level of importance to others that you are managing. Therefore it is important to gain an insight into how your beliefs and values differ from theirs, so you can adjust your Leadership style accordingly.

## 4 PRESENCE AND CREDIBILITY

*"People are persuaded by reason, but moved by emotion; the leader must both persuade them and move them."*

*– Richard M. Nixon*

One of the qualities associated with many successful Sales Leaders is that of Presence. People notice them when they walk in a room, they have an aura about them that demands that you listen to them. Leaders with Presence are influential, persuasive and generate great loyalty amongst their followers.

So how do they do it? Just what is Presence? Do you have this intangible quality?

Martin Luther King is one Leader who certainly had this magic ingredient.

Watch the video clip below of Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech and try and identify what it is that gives him this charismatic aura.

[Click on photo or on this link](#)

What did you come up with?

It's hard to pinpoint exactly what it is that gives certain people this aura, as when you look at a cross section of Leaders who can be described as having Presence, they are all different. It isn't the case that they are all extroverts or the most creative person on the team. Bill Clinton is regarded as a modern day Leader who has great Presence and many people who have met him describe the sensation of Clinton making them feel like the most important person in the room. He has this ability to make people feel special as though what they have to say is the most important thing in the world at that moment in time.



When you look beneath the surface of these types of Leaders you find an inner calm, they are comfortable in their own skin and they are self-assured. They have a passion for what they do and they captivate others with their passion and enthusiasm for their subject. This passion is displayed in an authentic manner and above all they have a real sense of purpose and a belief in what they are trying to achieve. This is evidenced not just in what they say but in their behaviour, their actions and their body language. They really engage with their audience.

Can you learn to develop your presence?

Yes, we believe you can.

The starting point is taking time to reflect on what is your purpose, what is it you believe in and why is it important to you?

For example when leading a sales team I firmly believed that each member of the team was capable of doing their job, had the ability to find solutions to the challenges they faced and that they wanted to have control of their own destiny. This is why they had chosen sales as their career path. I saw my role as helping them achieve their goals and reminding them of tools and techniques that they may have forgotten from their initial training. I believed that if the sales person relaxed and shared their true self with their customers they would make sales as we were selling a great product. I had a clear vision of what I wanted from my sales team, and I needed to create the environment to allow them to flourish.

It isn't just about you though, you need to find out what is important to the people you want to influence. How do they feel, what matters to them, what are their values? As the feedback about Bill Clinton shows it is not just about you it needs you to actively listen to others and their views.

People will rise to the passion you display, but first you need to decide exactly what is it you are passionate about and how it will affect them!

Questions to consider:

What is important to you in your life and in your work?

What is important to your people?

How can you share your passion?

How can you encourage them to share theirs?

## 5 THE JOHARI WINDOW

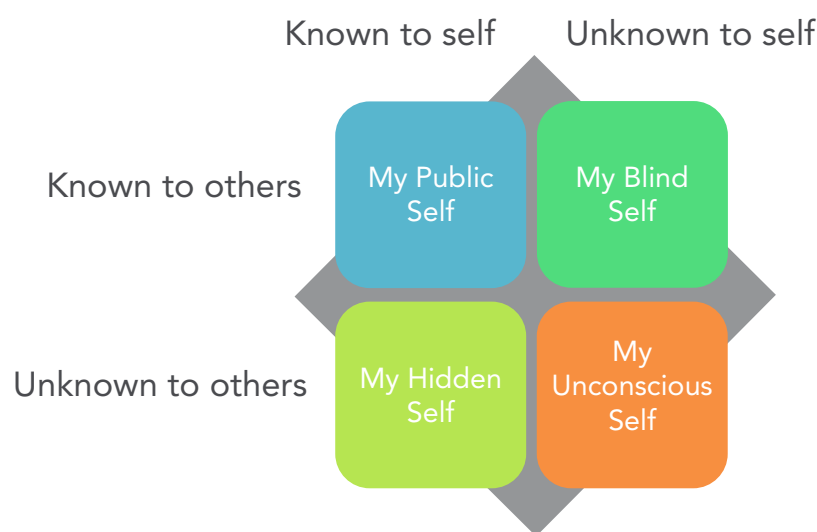
*"When it comes to ourselves, we often have a blind spot. That is, we fail to see ourselves as others see us. We fail to recognize our most obvious traits: our strengths, weaknesses, mannerisms."*

– Mark Link

Research from a variety of sources such as Gallup, The Carnegie Foundation and Harvard Business School has consistently shown that organisations with an engaged workforce consistently outperform those organisations whose workers do not feel an emotional connection in the workplace.

The style and quality of Leadership has been identified as the major contributing factor in the level of employee engagement. As a result in recent years there has been an increasing focus in developing people leadership skills. When you think about the Leaders you have worked with in your career, which ones have you admired? What were the qualities they displayed that inspired you?

While knowledge, expertise and skill are identified as important qualities these are far outweighed by the importance placed on the personal qualities of the most admired leaders. The general feeling is that these Leaders are able to relate to others and make them feel valued. How are these Leaders able to build an emotional connection with people so quickly? Perhaps the answer lies in the work carried out by Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham:



Their research identified people have 4 different “windows”:

**Public Self:** What you know about yourself that other people also see/know about you.

**Blind Self:** What others see, but you don’t know about yourself, for example people may see a particular type of behaviour from you that you are not aware of.

**Unconscious Self:** What you don’t know about yourself and others don’t know. This can quite often be your hidden potential, how you will react to situations you haven’t yet been placed in.

**Hidden Self:** What you know about yourself that others don’t know.

The most successful leaders have a larger “public self” window than the average person. They actively seek feedback on their performance and how they can improve and develop their skills. By asking for feedback you are able to reduce the size of your “blind self” window.

By stepping into your stretch zone and testing yourself in new situations you will be able to reduce the size of your “Unknown self” window, as you will be able to develop the potential you have.

The biggest impact a leader can have is by revealing more of their “hidden self”. What people tend to hide away from others are their hopes, fears, doubts, insecurities, dreams, beliefs, values and passion for what they do. By sharing these things people get to see the “real person” behind the Leader façade and the opportunity to create emotional connections is created. When you reveal more of the authentic you, people are encouraged to share more of themselves thus strengthening the relationship. This doesn’t mean baring your soul, but it does mean talking about what is important to you, what your ambitions are for the team, what are the qualities you value (e.g. honesty, integrity). Think again of the Leaders you have admired, be they people you have known personally or Leaders in the public eye. Can you identify their values, their beliefs, what’s important to them? Did they, do they, display their passion for what they do?

**Questions for you to consider:**

If you were to ask your people would they be able to list your values and beliefs about situations?

How do you show your passion?

Do you know what your values are, and how they affect your behaviour in the workplace?

## 6 THE IMPACT OF VALUES ON LEADERSHIP

*"It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are."*

*– Roy Disney*

In previous chapters we have written about the importance of understanding who you are and what you stand for, and how sharing these values as a Leader can influence people to follow you. People are drawn to those who share the same values and who can demonstrate an understanding of the issues and challenges that they face. A powerful connection is created when an individual can align their own values with the values of those who would lead them.



In the US Democratic convention in 2012, Michelle Obama launched the convention with a speech which focussed almost entirely on her values and those of her husband, and how these values and beliefs dictate Barack's philosophy as a leader.

One of the main messages in her speech was to emphasise the factors which drove him to become a Leader and why he was campaigning for four more years;

*"For Barack, success isn't about how much money you make, it's about the differences you make in people's lives."*

During her speech Michelle identified the importance of understanding your values and how this has impacted onto Barack's role;

*"And as president, you are going to get all kinds of advice from all kinds of people. But at the end of the day, when it comes time to make that decision, as president, all you have to guide you are your values, and your vision, and the life experiences that make you who you are."*

Below is the video of Michelle's speech. The full video is 26 minutes long, but it is well worth creating the time to watch the speech to see how skilfully Michelle links what's important to Barack and herself to the values of the people listening to her. The research shows that people are far more likely to vote for someone whose values they can relate to and is perhaps something we in the world of sales management can learn from.

<http://youtu.be/jUpN6klYP9o>

Communicating personal and company values is a critical skill for Leaders if they want to engage sales people. For example, discussing company values in interviews helps employer and employee alike to identify if they are a suitable fit. Numerous studies show that when values are shared across the workforce performance is improved as the individuals in the company have an emotional investment in outcomes.

*"Find people who share your values and you'll conquer the world together."*

*– John Ratzenburger*

In order to achieve this though, you first of all need to have a clear understanding of the values that are important to you.

*"Values aren't buses.... They're not supposed to get you anywhere. They're supposed to define who you are."*

*– Jennifer Crusie*

Questions for you to consider;

What are the values that are important to you?

How do you communicate or demonstrate them to others?

What are the values of the people that you work with?

## 7 SAYING NO!

*"The art of leadership is saying no, not saying yes. It is very easy to say yes."*

*– Tony Blair*

One of the main reasons we feel under time pressure as sales managers is that we often find it difficult to say no when we are asked to help with tasks, supply information, attend meetings and generally get involved in areas which aren't actually within our remit or responsibility.

Learning how and when to say no is the first step in regaining control of our lives and giving us the space to really make a difference in our roles. Being a "busy fool" reduces us to fire fighting and stops us being the proactive Leader we have always wanted to be. We want to be seen as a Leader who is in control, who has time to spend with their people and is calm, professional and efficient.

So how can we say no without falling out with people and being viewed as uncooperative?

The first step when asked to provide a report, for example, is to ask when it is required instead of promising to deliver it by the end of the day. It might be that they don't need the report for another week, which allows you to create the time to prepare it should it be you that needs to supply it. It might be that you can delegate the report preparation to someone in your team or you could explain how busy you are and that you might not be able to meet their deadline. This will then give them the option to look at alternative options to complete the report.

There will be requests you receive where you have no choice in the matter, but asking for their deadline will allow you to adjust your schedule to fit it in. Equally there will be some requests which fall outside your area of responsibility where you are within your rights to explain that you can't help due to the current workload you have. Taking an assertive and honest approach to such requests will gain you respect from those you are dealing with. If you don't say no, or at least challenge them, you run the risk of being taken for granted in addition to being swamped with work that you arguably don't need to do yourself!

Questions for you to consider:

When was the last time you pushed back against a request?

How could you use your negotiation skills in such situations?

What are the benefits for you in saying no more often?

## 8 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*"Excellent firms don't believe in excellence – only in constant improvement and constant change."*

*– Tom Peters*

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) can perhaps best be defined as the systematic maintenance and broadening of the knowledge, skills and personal qualities needed in working life. As well as setting professional goals and recording your progress towards them, a large part of CPD is reflection. This involves analysing your performance and recognising learnings and subsequent actions from both good and bad experiences.



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There are many benefits to doing continuous professional development. It can help you:

- Present your achievements in the best possible light, and move up the career ladder
- Stay competitive when it comes to looking for a new position
- Cope with a fast-changing work environment
- Boost your confidence and credibility
- Impress future employers with a tangible commitment to life-long learning
- Finally, CPD provides a new and exciting intellectual challenge, as you learn more about your career, your capabilities, and yourself.

When asked about the qualities of inspirational Leaders, one of the most common qualities cited in the workshops we deliver is that of “Leading by example”. If you want your people to develop their skills to enable them to perform better, it is vital that you show them the way by undertaking CPD for yourself. However, when working with Leaders it appears that setting aside time for their own CPD is well down their list of priorities and is often the first thing jettisoned when under time pressures.

Allowing time for reflection and broadening your knowledge and skills is a critical element of becoming the Leader your team deserves. If you don’t grow and develop how can you expect to continue to stretch your team and help the individuals to achieve their own goals and aspirations?

Questions for you to consider:

Apart from reading this book, what else have you done in the last 3 months to develop your skills and knowledge base?

What are the skills you currently possess and which ones would you like to develop?

What are you going to do about it?

## 9 WHO MOTIVATES YOU?

*"People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing – that's why we recommend it daily."*

*– Zig Ziglar*

One of the disadvantages of moving up the Leadership ladder is that the higher you go the lonelier it can become. You are responsible for motivating the people in your team and maintaining morale, but who does it for you?

The simple answer is that you must do it yourself!

Here are some tips on the steps you can take to maintain your levels of motivation:

- ✓ Take time out to reflect on your successes. When coaching Leaders it is surprising how many of them struggle to remember the last time they gave themselves a slap on the back for a job well done. If you are not going to recognise when you have done something well, why should anyone else?
- ✓ At the end of each week write down 3 things that have gone well for you that week, something you are proud of, something you have achieved. Research has shown that by spending time focusing on the positives you will feel energised and more enthusiastic. Too often we end the week reflecting on what has not happened and what needs to be done the following week. Try building in time to reflect on the victories!
- ✓ Find a mentor who you can check in with and bounce ideas off. A mentor will have usually trodden the path before you and can give you the benefit of their experience.
- ✓ Join a group of like-minded individuals where you can share ideas and techniques.
- ✓ Read books/articles relevant to your role that can provide you with that spark of inspiration.
- ✓ Avoid negative people – we all know people who seem to enjoy finding the negatives in every situation. Spending time with them will not help your levels of motivation to do anything!

Questions for you to consider:

What do you currently do to motivate yourself?

How many of the above tips do you currently use?

What else could you do?

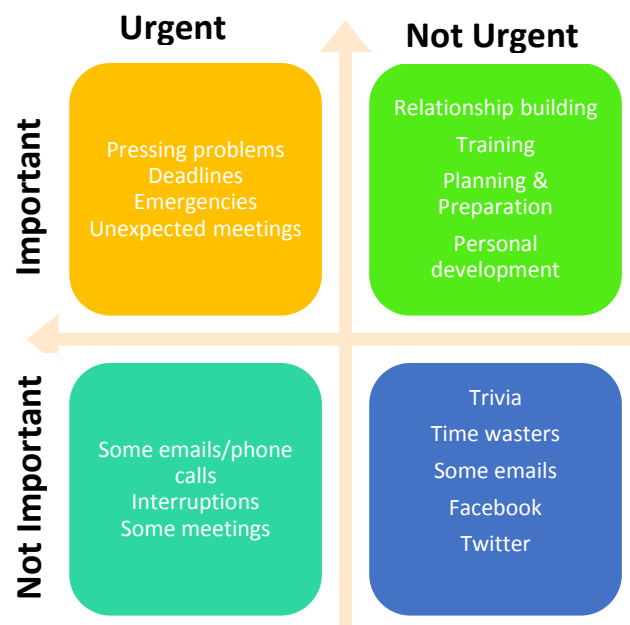
What do other sales leaders do to maintain their motivation?

# 10 TIME MANAGEMENT

*"The key is in not spending time, but in investing it."*

*– Stephen R. Covey*

Managing your time effectively is always a huge challenge, where should you spend your time to get the best return. We are all faced with pressing problems and urgent deadlines at various times in our working week and how we manage these times is an important key to the success we enjoy.



If you analyse your typical working week, which of the four boxes do you find yourself spending most of your time in?

If you find yourself spending most of your time in the Urgent and Important quadrant you probably tend to be reactive in your approach with fire-fighting high on your agenda. The perception of you will be that of a manager who is always under pressure, not in control and achieving results by the seat of their pants.

When you find yourself dealing with matters that are not important to you but are urgent, this usually indicates that you are at someone else's beck and call. It is important that you question why you are involved in these tasks, and whether you should be doing them. Tasks in this area are often items where you need to learn to say no. If you can't complete them due to other pressures then the task will usually end up on someone else's desk!

We all need some down time and activities which fall into the "Not important and not urgent" category can be a useful form of escape for a short period of time. However, people who are under stress, due to spending too much time in the urgent and important quadrant, can often find they spend too much time here as a means of avoiding unpleasant and difficult issues.

The managers who are on top of their game, who are in control and who seem to glide through the day do so because they spend the majority of their time in the "Important but not urgent" quadrant. The first task they put into their diary is planning and preparation time. For example they may block off the last 2 hours on a Friday to review what has gone well that week and to plan the following week. They identify the priorities they have and allocate sufficient time for them. They will place training and personal development high on their priorities, but the starting point is their planning and preparation time – this is one area they will not compromise on. They will also build in time for personal activities – for example they might want to go to the gym at 5.30 pm on Wednesdays. This will be the first item they put in the diary for Wednesdays and then they will work other activities/tasks around this.

Every manager will spend time in all four quadrants, as we will all face emergencies and unexpected deadlines. The successful managers tend to be those who build in contingency time into their diaries to deal with such issues, and because they plan their time effectively they don't seem to face as many crises as other managers.

Questions for you to consider:

How do you plan your diary?

When do you plan your time?

How do you prioritise your time?

How can you improve your time management?

# COMMUNICATION

# 11 EMAIL – FRIEND OR FOE?

*“Communication – the human connection – is the key to personal and career success.”*

*– Paul J. Meyer*

Email is quick, it's easy to use, it saves time, you can send out a message to a wide group of people all in one fell swoop. What's not to like?

A lot actually.

It stops us really communicating with our people, it's impersonal and it can be a time bandit. It is extremely difficult to assess how someone feels about a subject if they are simply sending an email as we lose the impact of the tone of voice and body language – is this why IT people invented smilies? 🤔

What makes it really frustrating is watching people in an open plan office emailing each other when they are sitting opposite each other. Why not just look up and talk to each other?

One of the lessons I learnt from my first sales Director was “management by walking about”. He shared with me that he learnt more from just walking around talking to people about what was happening in the business than he ever did from sitting in meetings. He used to plug time into his diary for walking around talking to people, as by doing that he could find out how people were feeling, what were the issues that were of concern and to simply be visible. It also gave people an opportunity to find out about him, to ask him questions he was visible and it increased his “approachability” factor.

Contrast that to the Finance Director I coached who used to walk through the open plan office every morning into his office closing the door behind him without speaking to anyone and then spent the next two hours dealing with his email. He thought he was being super-efficient and managing to cross huge swathes of activity of his to do list. What he didn't realise was the perception he built of himself was that of being cold, aloof, a task master and not a people person.

When discussing these approaches with people the cry often goes up “but I have loads of emails I need to deal with every day...” The problem is if you communicate with others by email, that is how they will tend to communicate with you. One senior manager I used to work with used to put an autoreply on his messages when he went on holiday to say;

“I am now on holiday for two weeks. On my return I have a really busy week full of meetings, so unfortunately I won’t be able to deal with your email for some time. If this is an urgent matter that really requires my attention, please could you call me to discuss on my return.”

Strangely when he returned from holiday he never seemed to have that many issues to deal with....

Questions for you to consider:

Do you really need to send that next email?

What are the other communication options you have?

How often do you practise management by walking about?

How do you think your people perceive your communication style?

## 12 ARE YOU LISTENING?

*"When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen."*

*– Ernest Hemingway*

When people outside sales talk about the skills required for sales, having the "gift of the gab" usually comes out at the top of the list. In reality the greatest skill a sales person can possess is the ability to listen, to really listen to what their clients are saying. In doing so they learn so much about their clients, what motivates them, what is important to them and what they need.

As Sales Managers we need to use this skill to get the best out of our people, as by listening to them we let them know that they are valued, their views are important and in turn they will listen to us. However, when you are listening to someone do you find yourself thinking or doing any of the following?

- 1) Thinking, I know exactly how you feel, the same thing has happened to me and so on.
- 2) Finishing other people's sentences
- 3) Talking over someone
- 4) Interrupting to give your view or to ask a question
- 5) Thinking about what you are going to say while you wait for them to stop talking or draw breath.

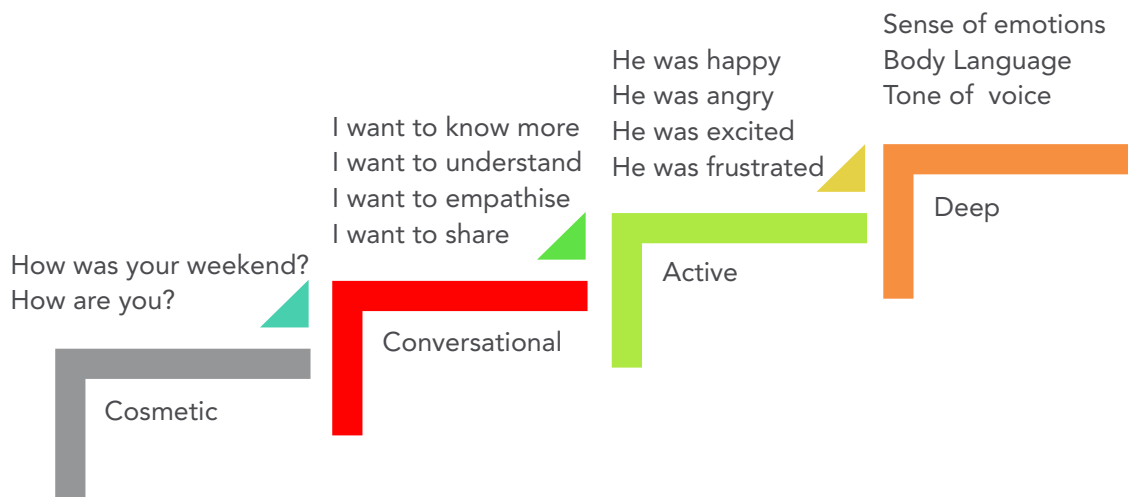
Has any of the above happened to you when you are talking to someone? How does that make you feel?

*"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand;  
they listen with the intent to reply."*

*– Stephen Covey*

There are four different levels that we can listen at and if we are to really connect with people we need to start listening at different levels to those we normally use.





What type of listener are you?

- At the cosmetic listening level, we are being polite and basically making small talk.
- At the conversational level of listening we are interested in “what’s in it for us”, and is usually about the need for information and building initial connections. At this stage we tend to indulge in selective listening – hearing only what we want to hear.
- At the active listening level, we are hearing the language the other person is using to describe how they feel about situations and we will pick up phrases that describe the emotions of the other person; happiness, anger, excitement, frustration and so on.
- When we get to really deep levels of listening though we are picking up on body language, tone of voice and what is not being said. To get to this level though we need to quieten our minds and really focus on the other person and what is happening for them as they talk. Being able to relay back the sense of how they are feeling about a situation allows us to make real emotional connections and encourages trust and further sharing of what is important.

Using the power of silence when listening is a skill and produces effective listening, making the other person feel valued as they are really listened to. For yourselves, why not try using deep listening with your partner, your children or your colleagues? You will not only surprise yourself, they will also see you in a different light!

*"This is the problem with dealing with someone who is actually a good listener. They don't jump in on your sentences, saving you from actually finishing them, or talk over you, allowing what you do manage to get out to be lost or altered in transit. Instead, they wait, so you have to keep going."*

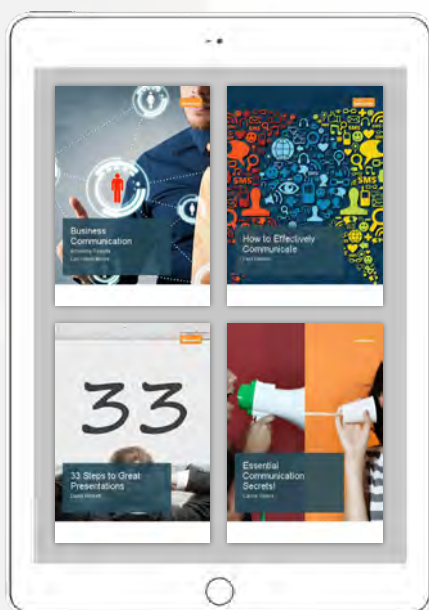
– Sarah Dessen

Questions for you to consider:

Why am I talking? (W.A.I.T.)

How does this person I am listening to really feel?

What assumptions am I making as I listen?



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# 13 BODY LANGUAGE

*"What you do speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say."*

*– Ralph Waldo Emerson*

As Leaders we give out messages all the time and the people in our team will pick up on a variety of different signals to assess our credibility and authenticity.

Albert Mehrabian's research into verbal and non-verbal messages suggests that people gauge the feelings of the person they are talking to based on the 7–38–55 rule. (7% of the assessment is derived from the words used, 38% from the tone of voice and 55% from body language). So while the words we use are important we use the tone of voice and body language to cross check if what we are hearing is genuine and heart felt.

If you want to successfully influence those around you it is important to have presence and credibility and the impact of our body language has a large part to play in demonstrating this. As mentioned previously Bill Clinton is widely regarded as a Leader with tremendous presence and interviews with people who have met him reveal he is someone who "makes you feel as though you are the most important person in the room."

How does he achieve this? His body language is very positive, he smiles, maintains eye contact, actively listens to the person he is talking to (e.g. he nods his head, his head is often on one side as he listens, he leans forward), he has a firm handshake and he stands close to the person he is with (without invading their personal space) which discourages others from interrupting him. It all sounds very easy and like common sense.

So why don't we do it as well? Very often we will be sitting at our desks talking to someone, and we will have one eye on our laptops in case an email comes in, we will stop to answer the phone or to reply to a text message. Our eyes will wander as people walk past, we will interrupt people as they talk, we will take notes as people tell us things so they are sitting there looking at the top of your head. The message we will unintentionally send from the way we behave is that this conversation is reasonably important to me, but if a better offer comes along I will be off to deal with that. Obviously we don't mean to send that message, but think about how you feel when someone acts in this way when you are talking to them. Do you feel valued and like the most important person in the room?

*"A blur of blinks, taps, jiggles, pivots and shifts...the body language of a man wishing urgently to be elsewhere."*

– Edward R. Murrow

Questions for you to consider:

What messages are you sending out with your body language?

How do you demonstrate your credibility and authenticity?

What does the body language of your people tell you about them?

# 14 THE RETICULAR ACTIVATING SYSTEM

*"Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change."*

*– Wayne W. Dyer*

Every minute of the day we are bombarded with thousands of pieces of information most of which aren't relevant to us at that particular moment in time. The reticular activating system (RAS) is the part of the brain which acts as a filter and weeds out all the information which it thinks we don't need.



For example a few years ago I bought a Red Audi. I decided to buy a red one as I hadn't seen many of them on the road and thought it would make a change from the black ones I had seen on my travels. The day came to collect it from the garage which was approximately three miles away from where I lived. On the drive home I counted 18 red Audis! My RAS had blocked out the red Audis previously as they weren't important to me. When I had one myself though my RAS kicked in and started to pick up every one I drove past.

It operates in the same way with the people you have around you. If you have someone in your team who you find difficult to manage, your RAS will look for the evidence to back up this belief. When dealing with this individual you will notice all the behaviours and actions which demonstrate that they are indeed difficult to manage and ignore anything they do well. On the other hand when speaking to your top performer your RAS will look for evidence to confirm just how good they are and will ignore anything that suggests otherwise.

Our RAS works to let us see what we want to see, so we need to make a conscious effort to look for the good in people we find difficult to manage.

This can also work to our advantage once we are aware of the way the RAS works. The questions that we ask can redirect someone's RAS to help change their perceptions of a situation. For example if someone is talking to you about a problem they face with a client, asking them "how can you overcome their objections to your recommendation?" will automatically programme their mind to look for the answer to the question. Instead of focusing on the problem they are now thinking about potential solutions to the situation.

Questions for you to consider:

How can you ensure you look for the best in people?

How do you currently encourage people to look for solutions instead of problems?

What other methods could you use?

# 15 QUESTIONING SKILLS

*"Through my questions, you will learn to teach yourselves."*

*– The Paper Chase*

In sales the use of open and closed questions is an important element of a successful sales call, with open questions allowing the sales person and client to establish how the client's needs may best be met.

## **The Triangle of Intensity**



The use of open questions are also a great tool for Sales managers to encourage their people to think in terms of solutions rather than focussing on problems. As managers we often believe it is our duty to provide solutions and to try and fix things. However, the role of a manager should be to encourage our people to learn to think for themselves. If they can start coming up with the potential solutions it will make our lives as a sales manager easier and allow us to focus on the areas where we can really make a difference.

The best two questions we can ask are "how" and "what" questions as these are the two questions that will best encourage people to look to the future and the potential solution. When they come to you with "I have a problem..." You can turn this around by asking "How can you overcome this?" or "What options do you have?" Either question, or a variance on, will automatically make them start searching for an answer to the question you have posed.

You should avoid asking the question “why” whenever possible, as it is a challenging question, which can put people on the defensive and lead to them trying to justify their behaviour/ actions. Think about how you feel when you are asked “why did you do that?” What are the first thoughts that pop into your head? There aren’t many questions where you can’t substitute what or how for the why.

Who, where and when questions are used when you are seeking clarification or information about a situation and won’t necessarily lead to the individual starting to think for themselves.

Questions for you to consider;

How often do you use “what” and “how” questions?

What would happen if you asked more questions instead of supplying the answers?

How could you use open questions, especially what and how, in your next update/team meeting?



# 16 THE POWER OF SILENCE

*"The quieter you become, the more you can hear."*

*– Baba Ram Das*

We already know the value of silence in a sales call. When we ask for the order at the end of our presentation we are trained to keep quiet until the other person speaks, so we can give them time to think about the offer we have just made. The sales person is committing a cardinal sin if they break the silence.

How often do we use this skill when talking to our people?

We want our people to grow and develop, but this can't happen if we are busy telling them what to do all the time. It seems to be in the DNA of some sales managers to continually provide solutions and to try and fix things. One of the key learnings for a manager is to realise that they are not expected to have all the answers. More often than not it is the case that the mind that owns the problem also has the best solution. When talking to an individual about a challenge they are facing all that is often required is for us to ask an open question and then sit back let the other person think about the answer.

The skill to use silence is closely allied to that of listening, we have to be patient and allow people to talk through an issue before joining in the conversation. If we are too quick to interrupt them we break the flow of their thoughts and can take the conversation off on a tangent. Instead we should keep quiet and give the other person space to collect their thoughts and think through the challenge they are facing. They will have potential solutions and we need to use silence to encourage them to develop their own problem solving processes.

This technique can also be used in team meetings to ensure that everyone speaks and is listened to. For example you can discuss a challenge the team is facing and then give everyone 2 minutes to air their views and potential solutions to the problem. While one person is speaking no one is allowed to interrupt. This is particularly valuable for the quieter members of the team who can often get shouted down by the more exuberant members of the team.

You can also try this at home with your partner or the children, try asking “what’s been the best part of your day?” and sit back and see what they have to say – you might be surprised, your partner certainly will be!

Questions for you to consider:

How often do you wait for others to come up with their own solution?

How do you feel when people don’t give you time to think?

How else could you use silence to best effect?

# 17 NARRATIVE INTELLIGENCE

*"People are persuaded by reason, but moved by emotion; [the leader] must both persuade them and move them."*

*– Richard M. Nixon*

Billy Connolly has been one of Britain's most popular comedians since turning to comedy in the 1970s. His success was largely down to his engaging style of telling stories about his life growing up in Glasgow. People were able to relate to these stories and shared the humour he found in relatively normal situations. Billy is a great example of someone using the power of story telling to forge an emotional bond with the people that follow him and this has allowed him to enjoy great success in his field.

In the 1980s Bob Geldof used a similar technique with Live Aid to change the face of raising money for charity. The Live Aid concert was arranged with appearances from many of the leading singers and groups of the day with the aim of raising as much money as possible to help the starving in Africa. To help emphasise the need to raise money, video footage was used to tell the story of how hard life was for people in the affected regions. Every time a video was shown the phone lines were red hot with people calling in to make a donation. People were watching the videos, an emotional connection was formed and people could see how their contribution could have a direct impact on the lives of people that were suffering.

The reason that these methods have proved successful is that we think in stories, we dream in stories, we plan in stories and many of our emotions are invested in these stories. As children we are told stories at home and at school to help explain the things we need to learn.

Historically knowledge has been passed down through the generations in the form of myths and legends and this art of "narrative intelligence" is being adopted by many of today's successful leaders to help inspire change, explain what they stand for as people, the values that they live by and the vision they have for the organisation. Sharing stories about their experiences, their hopes and fears allows people to identify with the story teller and the message they have.

As Leaders and managers it is important for us to build relationships with others and the effective use of stories to illustrate our points and messages is a critical factor in this process. Studies have shown that stories are far more effective at persuading than analytical reasons, with further studies in social psychology showing that information is more accurately remembered when it is presented in story form.

**Questions for you to consider:**

If you think about the Leaders and Managers who have had the most positive impact on you, how did they use stories to further your understanding of situations?

What kind of stories did they tell which gave you an insight into what was important to them?

How can you use stories to help people understand you and your message better?



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# **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

## 18 WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES YOU LOOK FOR IN A NEW RECRUIT?

You have a vacancy in your team, so you need to recruit someone to fill the gap. Do you look for someone who can fulfil the role requirements or do you look for a particular type of individual on the basis that you can train them how to do the job?

When recruiting it isn't simply a question of bringing in someone to do a job, they also need to fit in with the rest of the team or they could create more problems than they solve. Zappos are famous for their recruitment process. They will go through the recruitment process and hire the person they think is most suitable for their company culture, and then during their first week Zappos will offer them \$2000 to quit! This is a really interesting test of character for the new recruit and gives each of them a way out if the wrong recruiting decision has been made.

There are a number of competencies you might want to consider, experience, skills, knowledge, qualifications and interests. However there are also personal characteristics that you may want to consider such as their values, their ambitions, and their ability to build relationships and so on. You will want to gauge how they will respond to various Leadership styles, how they will interact with clients and how effective they will be in their relationships with other team members and other departments.

Not only is it important for you to consider the qualities that you want from potential employees, it is critical that you are honest about your expectations and standards, painting an accurate picture of the role you are recruiting for. I coached somebody recently who was delighted to land a senior sales management role at a high tech company only to hand in his notice two weeks later, when it became clear that the role and expectations were completely different to how they were portrayed during the interviewing process. After handing in his notice he received a call from the head of HR at the company who was keen to find out what had gone wrong. They were particularly concerned as they had filled the role 3 times in the previous nine months, with all candidates leaving in a short space of time. There was clearly a mismatch in the process which was resulting in frustration for all concerned and an expensive recruitment drive.

This example illustrates the importance of matching the individual to the company, the team and the role instead of just considering what you need to get the role filled.

Questions for you to consider:

What are the qualities you believe are important to be a successful member of your team?

What are the values that are most important to you?

What are the questions you ask in interviews to establish if an individual is a good fit for your team?

# 19 ONBOARDING PROCESS

*"Everyone talks about building a relationship with your customer.  
I think you build one with your employees first."*

*– Angela Ahrendts*

We are all familiar with the expression “you only get one chance to make a first impression”, and this applies to the onboarding process you use to introduce new members to your team. What does your onboarding or induction process say about you?

For some organisations their onboarding process consists of sitting their new person next to an existing member of staff and telling them to watch what they do. Others provide product training and a tour of the offices and some others send the new sales person out with an existing member of staff to meet customers and learn the ropes.

In the recruitment chapter I gave the example of the chap who left his new company within 2 weeks of starting with them. One of the problems that contributed to his decision was the onboarding process, which wasn't particularly well planned or geared to meeting the gaps in his knowledge and skills for the particular role for which he had been recruited. The first day consisted of waiting for an hour and a half for his line manager to find time to have a meeting with him and then he was given data sheets to study. He had been told at interview that 30–40% of his role was interpretation of data, but it quickly became apparent that it would be nearer 70%. Unfortunately there was no formalised training on how to interpret the data and he was more or less left to his own devices with the message that he would “soon pick it up”. The unease he felt on the first day was not alleviated in subsequent days, as he had started at a time when the company was in the throes of meeting targets for the end of final quarter. Naturally this meant everyone was extremely busy and under pressure to meet deadlines, but the consequence was that he was left on the side lines watching with no plan in place on how to integrate him into the company during this time.

When people start a new role they tend to be out of their comfort zone, they can feel anxious and uncertain of what is expected of them. If the first impression they are given is that they are not a huge priority then they are not going to be valued or confident that they have made the right decision to join your company.



Recruitment can be a lengthy and costly process and we want to be in a position to have people fulfilling their potential as soon as possible. This is only going to happen if they understand exactly what is expected of them and how they are going to fit in to the team structure.

The onboarding process is your opportunity to make a lasting impression, to communicate your standards and expectations and to create the best possible start for your new people.

Rather than trying to cram it all into one day, as some companies do, this needs to be spread out over a period of time. For example prior to their first day you could send them out with one of your experienced sales people to give them a feel for the role, you can send them some relevant literature and so on. This kind of activity will reduce pre-job nerves and reinforce the belief that they are making the right choice to join you.

The structure of the subsequent onboarding should focus on desired behaviours, building relationships, making them feel valued and an understanding of the individual's strengths rather than just looking at the mechanics of the role.

Questions for you to consider:

How do you currently onboard people?

What feedback can they give you on the process?

If you were starting work in your team tomorrow,  
what information would you find most useful?

## 20 EMPATHY

*"No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care."*

*– Theodore Roosevelt*

The essence of empathy in a Leadership context is the ability to understand someone else's point of view, thoughts, preferences and feelings. The simple principle is the better we know our sales people the better we can manage them, as the individuals concerned will always respond better to a manager who "gets them".

If we want to build stronger relationships with our people it is important to try and see the world from their point of view. We will all have different perceptions of a situation, and until we can see from their angle we are not going to be able to really appreciate their concerns.

The classic example of a lack of empathy affecting a manager's ability to lead a team to success, happens in companies where they promote the top sales person to manager. They go home on a Friday as the top sales person and come back in on Monday as the sales manager. One of the biggest problems they have to deal with is understanding how the sales people they are now managing are incapable of producing the same kind of results that they achieved. They were top sales people because they were very good at what they did, the sales process often came naturally to them and many of them struggle to understand why others can find it so difficult. It really does help a sales manager if they have experienced some level of failure in their career, as this leaves them better placed to have some sort of perspective on how people who are struggling in the role are feeling. If you can demonstrate this perception and understanding then the sales person will feel reassured and far more likely to take on board your suggestions and guidance.

Sharing vulnerabilities you have, as discussed in the chapter on the Johari Window, can help build a stronger bond between you and will encourage the other person to open up and share their concerns with you.

A strong sense of empathy will also give you an insight into how people are different from you. For example this is relevant when training people. You may be the type that learns best by doing, having a go and making mistakes along the way. Others may prefer to have a lot of information and reading around the subject before trying a new technique. If you are aware of this you will have the choice to adapt the learning to suit individual styles.

Questions for you to consider:

How are your people feeling about the challenges that lie ahead for your team?

How do they cope with situations that you find easy to deal with?

When you have found it difficult to have ownership of a challenge accepted by the team, what has been the reason?

## 21 BUILDING TRUST

*"The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them."*

*– Ernest Hemingway*

Ask Sir Terry Leahy how Tesco was transformed from a struggling operation into the third biggest retailer in the world and he answers;

"It's quite simple; we focused relentlessly on delivering for our customers. We set ourselves some simple aims, and some basic values to live by, and then we created a process to achieve them making sure that everyone knew what they were responsible for."

His great belief is that it is important to trust people and to treat everyone as an adult and give them the ability to exercise their own judgement. Doing so leads to a growth in confidence, self esteem, courage, commitment and determination in the individual.

Other successful leaders also believe in the value of trusting their people. One of the important steps in demonstrating this is making sure their people understand exactly what is expected of them and how, by spelling this out, it will lead to them striving to give of their best. Alex Ferguson attributes much of the success enjoyed by Manchester United to the fact that his players are always fully aware of their responsibilities. His training sessions are designed to set expectations and to encourage players to take responsibility for progress. Treating them as adults encourages players to contribute to setting the team's goals as they understand the part they have to play in achieving them.

Brendan Rodgers appears to be another manager who believes in being honest with his players and giving them the information they need to make informed decisions. In a recent interview he talked about what he tells players who are contemplating joining Liverpool;

"When I talk to players, I promise them three things," Rodgers says. "The first is communication. I won't bluff players; I'll be totally honest and open with them. The second is that they'll become better; that I'll make sure the quality of work will improve them as players. And third I promise ambition. I want to be the best I possibly can. I grew from nothing into something through sheer ambition, work and determination."

This level of honesty and straight talking is an important element of building mutual trust and respect between leaders and their followers. Stephen Covey argued that the first task of any leader is to inspire trust. For Covey, trust is confidence born of two dimensions: character and competence. Character includes your integrity, motive, and intent with people. Competence includes your capabilities, skills, results, and track record.

When researching this subject Covey identified 13 common behaviours of high trust leaders:

1. Talk Straight
2. Demonstrate Respect
3. Create Transparency
4. Right Wrongs
5. Show Loyalty
6. Deliver Results
7. Get Better
8. Confront Reality
9. Clarify Expectation
10. Practice Accountability
11. Listen First
12. Keep Commitments
13. Extend Trust

The best leaders recognise that trust underpins every relationship, communication and every business venture. They start with the premise of trusting others. As Leahy, Ferguson and Rodgers demonstrate this isn't on the basis of blind trust, but rather by setting out expectations and accountability for people and then giving them the freedom to make appropriate decisions.

Why not take some time out to reflect on your management style and how you build and demonstrate trust with your team?

Questions for you to consider:

How well do your people understand what is expected of them?

How much freedom do you give them in their roles?

How many of the 13 behaviours above do you routinely demonstrate?

What could you do better?

## 22 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

*"Few things can help an individual more than to place responsibility on him, and to let him know that you trust him."*

– Booker T. Washington

Alex Ferguson was interviewed recently about his time as Manager of Manchester United and was asked about the secrets of his success. He explained that one of the key factors was that when his players crossed the white line on to the football pitch every one of them knew and understood exactly what their role in the team was, the responsibility they had to their team mates and a common desire to achieve the team goals. It was this level of understanding and commitment that drove behaviours that typified those of a high performing team.



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This approach to team effectiveness is similar to the views of Katzenbach and Smith who define a team as;

*“a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they are mutually accountable.”*

When working with sales teams it is too often the case that the team members do not have a clear grasp of the roles and responsibilities within the team, resulting in people working for themselves with little consideration for team goals. This becomes tangible when the manager wants to adjust the workloads within the team to ensure the best team result is achieved, and a feeling of resentment is apparent between team members or team members and the manager.

A greater level of commitment to a team goal, rather than individual achievement, would help alleviate this feeling of resentment. Obviously if work is constantly being loaded onto specific people in the team, this suggests training issues need to be resolved, but a team all working to a common goal will accept short term changes in workload in order to achieve team success. An example of this was Rafa Benitez moving Steven Gerrard to right back for Liverpool FC in extra time in the 2005 Champions League Final. Gerrard prefers to play in midfield, but was happy to accept the change in responsibility to help the team win the final. If this had been a long term change this would have created problems but as a temporary measure it was perfectly acceptable.

In High Performing Teams, the manager allows the team to have a large say in the creation of the team goal or in how they will achieve it, as this drives ownership and commitment. When the goal and its method of delivery is foisted upon them, the team members are far more likely to take a “look after number 1” attitude. Resentment can also be increased when continual poor performance by some team members appears to be tolerated by the manager; which make it critical that the Leader takes appropriate action to rectify unacceptable performance.

**Questions to consider:**

What is the common goal for your team, and how have you communicated this?

How much influence do your team have in how the goal is agreed/achieved?

What exactly are the roles and responsibilities of each member of your team, including yourself?

How have you communicated this to the team?

## 23 STANDARDS

*"If we don't fight for what we 'stand for' with our passionate words and honest actions, do we really 'stand' for anything?"*

*– Tiffany Madison*



When Gerard Houllier took sole charge as manager of Liverpool FC his first action was to introduce standards of behaviour at the club. The use of mobile phones was banned at training, players had to wear club suits when attending games and the drinking culture at the club was eliminated. Previously standards at Liverpool had fallen and the players had attracted the nickname “The Spice Boys” culminating in their appearance at the 1996 Cup Final in their infamous white suits.

Houllier believed that in order to achieve success on the playing field, players had to conform to certain standards of behaviour, those that couldn't accept this would be sold. Houllier's actions worked with Liverpool winning 3 trophies in 2001 and in the process regaining respect from Europe's elite.



The same principle can be applied to all teams; if you want to enable a team to perform to the best of its ability it is necessary to create the correct environment for them. For example, when I was a sales person, meetings always seemed to be a major source of frustration for the sales staff so when I was managing teams I always ensured meetings started on time and that we followed the agenda so that they also finished on schedule. This resulted in far greater levels of contribution from the sales people during the meetings, so they left feeling that the meeting had been of benefit to them. This is just one small example of using standards to drive desired behaviour.

Problems tend to occur when you don't have suitable standards in place. If you are not concerned if people are late for work or meetings why should they make too much effort to be there on time? If there isn't a recognised agenda for reporting in place how can you hold people to account? We all have different standards that we hold ourselves to, and as the team Leader it is really important for you to communicate the standards that are acceptable for your team.

If you were taking over a new team tomorrow and you were asked to write out a list of the standards that you wanted to put in place, what would you put on that list? How much input should your team have in drawing up the list? How would feel if the list was presented to you without any opportunity for input? Would you feel more committed to meeting the standards if you had helped draw up the desired team standards?

*What are the non-negotiable standards you want to put in place?*

*How much input should your team have?*

*How will you communicate them?*

## 24 THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR ACTIONS

*"Actions always have consequences!"*

*– Joel Coen*

I've lost count of the number of managers I have coached who complain about people in their team who fail to provide information or complete tasks in the required timeframe. It drives the manager to distraction as they spend an inordinate amount of time chasing them to complete the task or to supply the information they need.

The question I always ask is, "what happens to them when they don't do what you ask?"

There is always a pause after asking this question, often it is a long pause before the answer comes back, "erm, not a lot, I just get angry and frustrated." If there are no consequences for their actions why should they change their behaviour?

Explaining what the consequences are for following a particular course of action is a really important part of successful management. This applies equally to positive and negative consequences. People like to know where they stand, they like to know if they are doing a good job or not and it is our duty to tell them in advance so they can make an informed decision on what they should do.

For example, one manager I worked with recently told me about a member of his team who was very popular with people in the organisation but was continually missing deadlines for reporting, and hadn't submitted his expenses for over 6 months. The manager had held a number of conversations with the individual to tell him to improve his time management and to get his expenses up to date, with no signs of any improvement. The problem was that other than a brief reprimand there were no consequences in place to encourage him to change his behaviour. The manager eventually sat the person down and spelt out exactly what would happen if his expenses weren't up to date by the end of the month and if his general reporting didn't improve. The consequences of failure to comply included the possibility of disciplinary action being taken. The result? His expenses were submitted within a week of the meeting being held, and a gradual improvement in the standard of his reporting.

Once he knew the manager was serious, and that there were clearly defined consequences the desired improvement in performance took place.

This doesn't just work with negative consequences, the same technique can also be used to help people understand what they need to do to reach a desired goal. One company I am working with at the moment have introduced a Leadership development programme, which is great for the people involved. However what they have also identified they need to do is to spell out the behaviours and performance required to reach the next stage on the progression ladder within the company. Now people have a clear vision of what will happen if they achieve certain parameters in their role.

If people are not clear on what is expected of them and the consequences of their actions, both good and bad, they are not in a position to perform at their best. The responsibility for showing them where the line is and what lies on each side of it rests with us their manager. If we don't tell them and they don't behave in the manner we want, then the fault lies with us.

*"In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments; there are consequences."*

*– Robert Green Ingersoll*

Questions for you to consider:

How well do your people understand the consequences of their actions?

How have you communicated this to them?

How much say have they had in deciding on the consequences?

What are the consequences for you if you don't share what good looks like with them?

## 25 THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPOWERMENT

If you want your people to flourish and grow you need to create the environment that allows this to happen. One of the clearest signs of having such a culture is the level of empowerment experienced by people of all levels within the organisation.

*"As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others."*

– Bill Gates

Here are 6 tips on how to take the first steps to empowerment:

- 1) **Clearly define their responsibilities.** Unless people are absolutely clear what is expected of them, there is the chance they will fail to meet expectations and also will not understand why. This will breed resentment and uncertainty, a recipe for disaster. Do they know what success looks like?
- 2) **Give them authority equal to their responsibilities.** Having defined their role and responsibilities allow them to make the necessary decisions within that remit. Constantly asking for permission on minor issues only serves to decrease morale and drive.
- 3) **Give them knowledge and information.** Information is power and open communication and sharing of appropriate levels of information is important to ensure people feel valued and able to contribute effectively.
- 4) **Trust them.** Giving them responsibility involves letting go of the apron strings. Discuss and agree outcomes and then let them get on with it, letting them know where you are should they need help and advice along the way.
- 5) **Give them permission to fail.** If they never take risks, they will never grow. There are many opportunities on projects etc for people to fail that aren't catastrophic to the overall goal. By allowing people to fail, they can learn and develop their decision making skills. Remember what happened when you made mistakes? What did you learn?

- 6) **Recognise them for their achievements.** This is a critical part of the process. If they don't receive praise and recognition for their performance, where is their incentive to strive and challenge themselves?

Questions for you to consider:

How many of these 6 steps are you already practising?

If you were to ask your staff how empowered they feel, what do you think they would say?

What more could you do?

## 26 TAKING CREDIT

*"It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit."*

— Harry S. Truman

Ego can be a dangerous companion for a Leader. If you want to take the credit for anything and everything that goes well your team will lose respect for you, and you will not get the best from them.

I was coaching a manager recently who was talking about the team meeting they had planned when they were planning to share their vision with the team. The outcome she wanted was to establish how the team could support her to achieve her vision. It was quite clear that it was going to be her vision and her achievement if they were successful.

In the dim and distant past I worked for a manager who, on my first day with them, sat me down and told me that anything that went wrong would be my fault and if I was successful he would be taking full credit for it! Needless to say I left the meeting feeling less than inspired and wondering why he felt so insecure.

Successful Leaders are happy for others to take the credit, as they can understand the benefits that will accrue when the team know that they will receive the appropriate credit and recognition for their ideas and effort.

For me the essence of effective Leadership is summed up by the words of Lao Tzu:

"A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves."

Questions for you to consider:

How do you ensure that the credit and recognition is given where it is due?

How do your people react when you give them the credit for achievements within the team?

How does your line manager react when you give the team the credit instead of taking it yourself?

If you don't give the team the credit, what is stopping you?

## 27 HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

*"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean."*

– Ryunosuke Satoro



Do you manage a high performing team? What sets it apart from other teams in your organisation? There are a variety of factors which contribute to a team that is at the top of its game. Here are some of the qualities that are common amongst high performing teams;

- 1) Everyone is working towards a shared common goal.
- 2) There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities within the team, which are understood by everyone.
- 3) There is regular open and honest communication at all levels within the team.
- 4) Trust and respect for each other are evident.
- 5) Conflict is surfaced and resolved on a regular basis.
- 6) People support each other and recognise each other's strengths
- 7) No one person in the team is more important than the others.
- 8) People take ownership and responsibility for their actions and goals.

The cornerstone of developing a high performing team is the level and frequency of communication. People aren't left in the dark, everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the discussions, and progress is reviewed on a regular basis with the whole team aware of the progress being made.

If you have a team of people with a shared vision and all committed to achieving a common goal, then the leader is in some ways no more important than the rest of the team, as the whole team will drive themselves forward and hold each other to account. The Leader needs to set the example but by empowering the others in the team it will lead to a positive group dynamic which will yield the desired results.

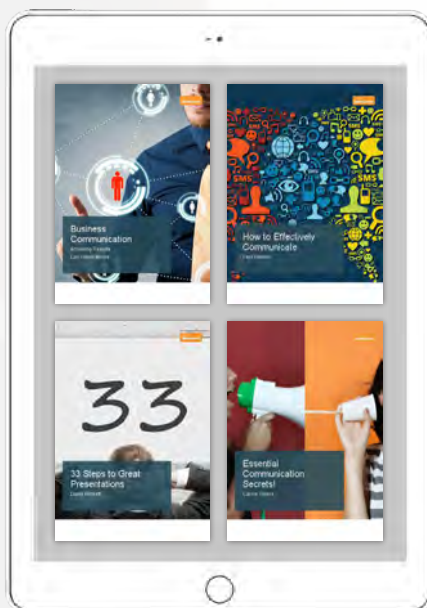
Questions for you to consider:

How many of the 8 qualities listed above are in place in your team?

What steps would you need to take to instil this group dynamic with your people?

What have you done to drive empowerment in your team?

Who could you ask for help and advice in this area?



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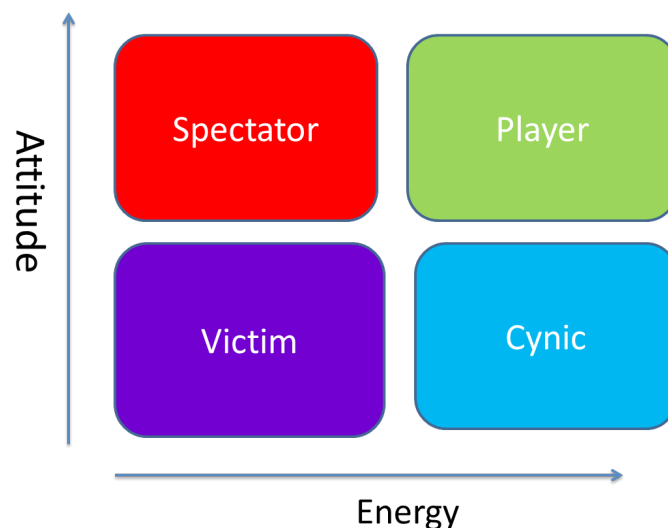


## 28 THE ENERGY INVESTMENT MODEL

*"You manage things; you lead people."*

*– Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hopper*

As managers I think we all dream of having a team of people with high energy and a terrific attitude to their work and their team mates. Unfortunately the reality can be somewhat different, and the Energy Investment model is a simple way of trying to understand where your people sit at different times, particularly in relation to change.



The Players are those people in team meetings, for example, who are full of ideas, eager to give their opinions and are willing to help drive the change you want to see. These tend to be the people who are performing well, keen to achieve success for themselves and the team and are full of confidence.

The Spectators watch on, don't tend to say much or contribute ideas themselves and it can be difficult to judge if they are actually engaged in the process. There can be a variety of reasons for this; for example they could be new to the team/company and therefore don't feel confident about expressing their views yet or they could be reflective learners and need time to digest new information before reaching a conclusion.

Cynics on the other hand like to give their opinions and are usually quick to point out all the reasons why change won't work. If there is a negative view to be found they can usually spot it. The cynics tend to be long serving individuals, who have been there, worn the t-shirt and were here the last time the company tried to initiate change. Their attitude might not be good, but they have a lot of energy to expend in sharing their thoughts and feelings.

Victims are the unlucky people that never seem to have any success. When other people around them are successful it is because they are lucky, good things never happen to Victims. It is never their fault of course, they just never get to see the customers who place big orders.

Recognise some of these people?

So how can we deal with them?

With Players it is all about encouragement and giving them the space to run with ideas, although on occasion you may need to rein them in to allow others to get a look in!

Confidence is the issue with Spectators and you need to use techniques to build their confidence, to demonstrate that their ideas are just as important and valid as those of the Players. New people to a team can bring a completely different perspective to a situation, with reflective people offering a considered and well thought out appraisal of a challenge. We just need to create the space to allow them to express these views.

I've always found cynics to be an interesting group, as despite their negative views they still bring a lot of energy to the table and don't show much sign of leaving the company! The issue is often that they don't feel valued and may once have been in the Players box, but have slipped down to the Cynics box when their views and opinions were ignored. Courting their opinion on a potential change, particularly before a team meeting, can be one way of getting them on board and harnessing their energy to help drive change. Giving them more responsibility can also help raise their engagement levels, turning them from poacher into gamekeeper.

Managing Victims can be the most challenging group to deal with, as you constantly need to challenge their world view and provide them with the evidence to show that they are capable of change. In meetings, updates and individual conversations ask them to provide evidence of the positive things they have achieved. This can be difficult initially as their minds are trained to connect with the negatives they see around them, but constantly focussing on positives will gradually change their behaviour; however with some it can be a long process!

Questions to consider:

Where do your people currently sit in the Energy Investment Model?

Where do you sit?

Do they behave differently in different situations? Why is that?

What would happen if you discussed this model in a team meeting?

## 29 MANAGING DIFFICULT PEOPLE

*"When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but creatures of emotion."*

*– Dale Carnegie*

It can be incredibly frustrating when a team member agrees with a plan of action, only to go off and do their own thing. This type of behaviour is all too common and can make it difficult to achieve your goals. However, it is important to bear in mind that someone you find difficult simply has a different view of a situation than you and they aren't always difficult with everyone around them. If they are being difficult it is often a sign of something else which is causing the issue. When you have someone who says one thing and does another, what can you do?

- Give feedback. Explain to them what you're seeing, feeling and experiencing. Describe the impact of their behaviour on you and ask them how the situation can be resolved, with you offering suggestions if necessary. This should be done privately on a one to one basis and as soon as possible after experiencing the unacceptable behaviour. If you leave it until their next update, you run the risk of giving the message "that it isn't that important". Be objective and firm in your comments, do not cloud the conversation with emotion.
- Focus on the behaviour and not the person. If you make it personal they will naturally become defensive and the conversation will not remain objective. Stick to facts and give them examples to illustrate how their behaviour and actions have led to the current state of affairs. Concentrate on how they need to alter their behaviour to meet the standards you have set. Ask them what help and support they might need from you to reach the required standards.
- Ask for commitment. At the end of the meeting ask them to reiterate what they are going to do and by when. Agree a time to get together to review their progress. If progress has been made and their behaviour has been modified be prepared to give praise and recognition of the changes they have made.

The more open and honest you are in such meetings the stronger the likelihood of seeing the desired change.

Questions for you to consider:

When was the last time you should have spoken up but instead held your tongue?

What stopped you from saying something?

Are there certain types of conflicts you tend to avoid?

Who could you ask for feedback on how you handle conflict?

# MOTIVATION

## 30 WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

*"Success is liking yourself, liking what you do, and liking how you do it."*

– Maya Angelou

A satellite navigation system has proved to be a great tool for field based sales consultants, allowing them to improve productivity through better journey planning. The system will create a step by step guide on the most effective way to reach their next client. However it is only useful if you have a destination entered into it.

Do your people have a clear picture of their destination and a map of how to get there? Too often as Sales Managers we fail to explain exactly what success looks like for our teams and our people.

Is it simply a question of hitting sales targets?

What are the others factors by which we judge our sales people?

Customer testimonials, cancellations, order values, productivity, standard of paperwork, error rates, sickness levels, relationships with team members and other departments, understanding of systems, product knowledge, attitude to training or are there other factors?

Uncertainty and doubt can have a negative effect on performance and we can prevent this by communicating our expectations and how we will be judging their efforts. Once people have an understanding of what is expected of them they are better able to focus on the areas they can control.

An example of this in action was when I was selling double glazing on a commission only basis. Our office was going through a poor patch and I hadn't sold anything myself for two weeks. Nothing was said to me about my performance and I was going into the office each day wondering if this was going to be the day that I would be dismissed for poor sales figures. Our Managing Director held a meeting with us and told us how disappointed he was with the sales figures and gave us a clear objective. Sell two orders in the next two weeks and all was well, fail to do so and we would be out of a job.

Now I had a very clear picture in my mind of what success looked like! The meeting and the message given served to galvanise me and in the following two days I sold three orders.

**Questions for you to consider:**

Do you know what success looks like for you?

Is your vision of success based purely on your performance at work?

Do you measure success on a short term, medium term or long term basis?

What does success look like for your people?



# 31 MOTIVATION

*"An employee's motivation is a direct result of the sum of interactions with his or her manager."*

*– Bob Nelson*

Motivation comes from within, as managers we can't affect someone's motivation to achieve a task. That's what one of my old managers used to tell me. However, he had a huge impact on motivation levels in our teams; unfortunately it was a negative impact. He micro managed us, didn't have any trust in our ability to do a good job, was quick to criticise and his communication style largely consisted of telling us what to do without any concern for how we felt about the task. We were just there to do his bidding.

Self-motivation is indeed an important quality in the make-up of a successful sales person, but as sales managers our behaviours and actions can have a big part to play in how motivated our people are in fulfilling their roles.

How you make people feel at work is an important factor in helping a team achieve its goals and targets. If people feel confident, happy and valued they will give of their best. How do we do that?

We can provide training to improve their knowledge and skill levels, we can give them suitable levels of praise and recognition, we can demonstrate our trust and belief in them by standing back and allowing them to do their jobs, we can stretch them by giving them challenging tasks and above all we can communicate with them.

The simplest way of motivating someone is to talk to them about what is important to you, what motivates you, what your values are, what is happening in the company, what is important to them, what their values are, how well they are doing, what they can do better and how they contribute to the overall health of the organisation.

Salaries, bonuses and commissions can provide a certain level of motivation to do well, but the biggest influence on motivation is making people feel valued, showing them that they matter. We can do that by listening to them when we talk.

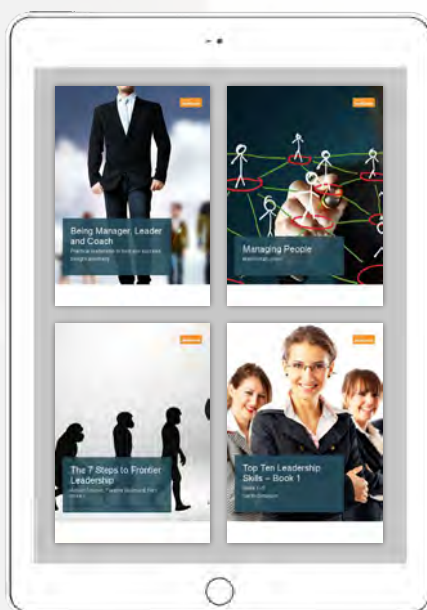
Questions for you to consider:

How do you make your people feel valued?

What is important to your people?

What motivates you?

How much time have you allocated to talking to your people next week?



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## 32 CATCHING PEOPLE DOING SOMETHING RIGHT

*"There are two things people want more than sex and money...recognition and praise."*

– Mary Kay Ash

Research has shown that children crave attention and will tend to repeat the behaviour that draws the attention they seek. Therefore the advice to parents and teachers is to ignore bad behaviour and to make a fuss of children when they display desired behaviour. By doing this children will go on to repeat the behaviour that gives them the attention payoff and will tend to stop behaving in ways that lead to them being ignored.

The problem is that it seems to be inbuilt into us to notice when people, children or adults, are doing something wrong and to try and correct that behaviour. We are very good at spotting mistakes and are keen to help prevent people screwing up again. When we have a new starter in our team how often do we point out mistakes they have made and what they need to do differently? When they start going to see customers they rarely follow the process perfectly and they will want to eliminate errors so of course we are doing this to help them improve their knowledge and skill so that they become better at their jobs. Helping people develop is one of our major roles as a Sales Manager isn't it?

What would happen if we made a conscious effort to catch people doing something right instead?

Instead of launching straight into what people are doing wrong actively look for what they do well and give them some acknowledgement. It doesn't have to be a formal process, it can be a casual conversation by the coffee machine; however don't underestimate the power of a letter/email/text message.

My son has recently started secondary school and 2 months into his first term a letter arrived in the post for him. It was a handwritten letter with a stamp on the envelope, rather than a franked stamp. It was his first ever letter and he opened it when he arrived home from school. It was from the Head of the English department complimenting him on the very positive reports he had received from my son's English teacher about the effort my son was putting into his lessons and encouraging him to keep up the hard work. As you can imagine my son was delighted and skipped around the house for some time reading and re-reading the letter. How long had it taken the Head of English to write the letter? Five minutes? Seeing the reaction it was quite possibly the most valuable 5 minutes of his day.

As long as the praise and recognition we give is based on specifics I think we can really underestimate the impact we can have on our people, whether that praise is given publically or privately.

Questions to consider:

Do you look for the positives or negatives in situations first?

When was the last time you praised the people in your team?

What was it for and what was the reaction?

How could you ensure you catch people doing something right more often?

## 33 PRAISE AND RECOGNITION

*"The way to develop the best that is in a man is by appreciation and encouragement."*

*– Charles M. Schwab*

I once asked a sales manager I worked alongside why I never heard him praising his team, or going out of his way to give them any recognition for the work they did.

"They are only doing what they are paid for, and they get a bonus if they go over target" he replied.

He clearly didn't believe that praise and recognition mattered as he thought money was the key motivator for the people in his team. However there is a large body of research, from organisations such as Gallup, which shows that is not the case. The Gallup research showed that the impact of praise and recognition in the workplace is a critical factor in inspiring people to give of their best resulting in;

- Increases in their individual productivity
- Increases in engagement among their colleagues
- Feedback that they are more likely to stay with their organisation
- Higher loyalty and satisfaction scores from customers

Money and bonuses obviously have a part to play in motivation and satisfaction levels, but as Daniel Pink suggests (in his book *Drive*, the surprising truth about what motivates us) once we have reached a certain level of monetary reward there are other more important factors which drive us to excel.

The problem with praise and recognition appears to be that we don't provide it often enough. People want to be noticed and appreciated and when they are not the question they ask themselves is "why am I doing this if nobody cares?"

For praise and recognition to register with people it should be given in the ratio of 5:1 as compared to criticism. i.e. for every piece of criticism you should be giving out 5 pieces of praise. A ratio of 9:1 is even better, and it is not until the ratio reaches 13:1 that it starts to lose its impact!

Giving public recognition has two consequences, it helps motivate the individual but also has the added benefit of telling everyone what good looks like. For this reason the praise and recognition should be for specific behaviour, actions that you want to replicate. Simply thanking people for turning up for work is not what we are talking about! Therefore we need to go looking for evidence of people doing things well and taking time out at the end of a project/task to congratulate people on what they have achieved.

It is also worth remembering that some people will bask when receiving public recognition, whereas others would prefer the praise in private. Putting the recognition in writing also demonstrates to the receiver that it is not merely a box ticking exercise as you have taken time out to put your thoughts down on paper/email. Praise and recognition does not always need to be delivered in a formal setting, praise delivered on an informal basis can often have a bigger impact than employee of the month awards.

Questions for you to consider:

When was the last time you gave someone in your team some specific praise/recognition?

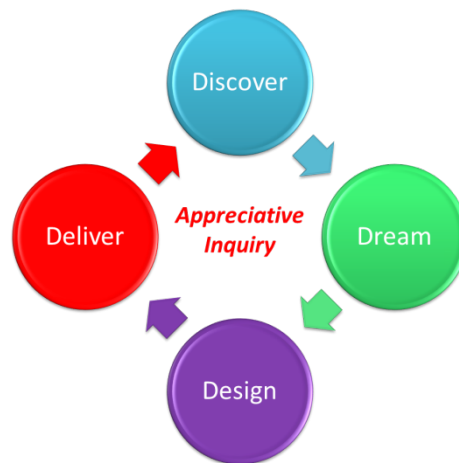
What behaviours do you want to give praise and recognition for?

How should you deliver that praise and recognition?

What is your ratio of praise to criticism at the moment?

## 34 APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

When people are trying to solve problems the common approach is to focus on what is wrong and to try and fix that. Appreciative Inquiry is a problem solving technique which involves focussing on what is going well and looking to build on strengths to resolve issues. As well as being used to drive change from a positive perspective it can also be used to help the personal development of an individual or a team.



This is particularly useful for people or teams who are in a bit of a rut, and all they can see is what is wrong with a situation. Time is in short supply, the demands of the job are increasing and there isn't much fun to be had in work at the moment. It's not like the good old days, when there was no pressure, sales targets were easy to achieve and we enjoyed the job. Trying to drive personal development in this environment can be difficult with resistance to change high and motivation and energy low.

In these situations Appreciative Inquiry can be used with an individual or team to help refocus them and change their mind-set.

**Discover Phase:** This is arguably the most important step as you are encouraging the individual/team to identify what is going well and what they value before encouraging them to look to the future. The kind of questions to ask at this stage include:

*What do you enjoy most about your role?*

*What do you love most about the company?*

*What are you like when you are at your best?*

*What have you been most proud of during your time at the company?*

*What do you most value about your work and role?*

**Dream Phase:** In this phase you are encouraging the team to imagine the ideal outcome. Typical questions would include:

*What would success look like to you?*

*Why is that important to you?*

*What difference would it make to you if you achieved x?*

*What would you like more of?*

*What would the environment look like which allowed you to be the best you could be?*

**Design Phase:** Having described the ideal future, in the design phase we are asking our people to describe the support and structures that would need to be in place to achieve the “dream”.

*What type of communication would we need to have in place to achieve this?*

*What type of support would you need?*

*What would we need to implement this?*

*What else would we need to have?*

**Deliver Phase:** In this section people will identify the actions they need to take to achieve the positive outcome.

*What is the first thing we need to do to make this happen?*

*How would you like to contribute to this?*

*Who will drive this?*

*What do you want me to do?*



The advantage of using Appreciative Inquiry lies in the fact that we are encouraging people to start from a positive place by identifying and recognising all that they enjoy about their current situation. We are then building on these positives to create a better future. Handled correctly this drives more ownership for development/change in the individual and team. It is also a technique that sales people can successfully use with their clients!

Questions for you to consider:

In which situations could you use this technique?

When will you use it?

What do you most enjoy about your role?

## 35 WHAT HAVE THE ROMANS EVER DONE FOR US?

*"The way we see things is the source of the way we think and the way we act."*

– Stephen Covey

Sales people who have been with an organisation for a while and have established themselves as an experienced and valued member of the sales team become engrossed in their role and don't tend to take time out to remind themselves of what they enjoy about their role. If anything they will think about the stuff that they don't like about their job; all the meetings they have to attend, the paperwork they always seem to need to complete, the demanding customers they have, the cancellations and so on.



In the Monty Python film, *The Life of Brian*, there is a scene with the People's Front of Judea (<http://youtu.be/ExWfh6sGyso>) where they are bemoaning the rule of the Romans, when Reg, the leader, demands "What have the Romans ever done for us?" There then follows a long list of the positive changes the Romans have instigated under their rule. Those of you who have seen it will know how funny the scene is, but it also serves to show how difficult it is to focus on the negatives of a situation when you are reflecting on the positives.

This is a really useful exercise to carry out with your team to allow them time to reflect on what encouraged them to join the company and what the benefits are of them still being there. Doing so, helps to not only maintain morale but also drives a positive outlook within the team.

*Questions to consider:*

*When was the last time you reflected on what you enjoyed about your role?*

*What are the three best things about your job?*

*What would you like to do more of?*

*What is stopping you?*

## 36 HOW DO YOU MANAGE FAILURE?

*"I believe in me more than anything in this world."*

– Wilma Rudolph



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There are many lessons that people in sales can learn from the world of sports. The Olympics are a rich breeding ground for stories of triumph over adversity and one of the most striking is the story of American athlete, Wilma Rudolph. Wilma was born prematurely in 1940, weighing in at only 4½ pounds. The bulk of her childhood was spent in bed. She suffered from double pneumonia, scarlet fever and later she contacted polio. After losing the use of her left leg at the age of 6 she was fitted with metal leg braces. Local Doctors were not optimistic about Wilma's prospects of being able to walk properly again. However her mother, Blanche, refused to give up hope and once a week made a 90 mile round trip to a Nashville hospital so that Wilma could receive physical therapy on her leg, with her family providing further therapy at home four times every day. Wilma's ambition in life at this time was to be able to walk unaided down the aisle at Church when the family attended Sunday service. Finally by the age of 11 she was able to walk normally, with the aid of crutches, braces and corrective shoes and was able to achieve her dream of walking into church just like any other 11 year old.



This determination and ability to overcome setbacks stood her in good stead when she entered the world of athletics. At the 1956 Olympics at the age of 16 she won a bronze medal in the 4×4 relay, but it was at the 1960 Olympics in Rome when she really shone as a star as she became the first American female to win 3 Olympic gold medals with victories in the 100m, 200m and 4×4 relay. In doing so she equalled the world record at 100m, broke the Olympic record at 200m with the 4×4 team breaking the world record in their event.

*"Never underestimate the power of dreams and the influence of the human spirit. We are all the same in this notion: The potential for greatness lives within each of us."*

**–Wilma Rudolph**

Perhaps this final quote gives us the biggest insight into what it takes to be a success;

*"Winning is great, sure, but if you are really going to do something in life, the secret is learning how to lose. Nobody goes undefeated all the time. If you can pick up after a crushing defeat, and go on to win again, you are going to be a champion someday."*

– Wilma Rudolph

All successful people encounter failure and set backs during their careers, what matters is how you react to them and this is what separates the winners from the losers. Successful people look for the opportunities in situations and seek to find what they can learn from the set backs they have.

Our sales people need to understand that it is ok to fail as long as we learn from the experience and adopt different behaviours to ensure a more successful outcome next time. This is where our reaction as a sales manager to a sales person's failure is so important. If we over react we will instil the fear of failure into people, whereas if we are calm and considered in our response they will be in a far better place to learn from the experience.

Questions for you to consider:

How do you currently react when you experience failure?

How do you react when your people experience failure?

How does your line manager react when you experience failure?

How would you like them to react to best help you?

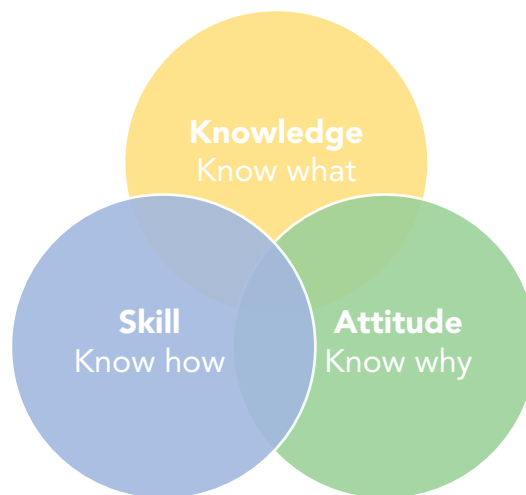
What is the equivalent of Olympic Gold for you, and what are you prepared to do to get there?

## 37 KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS OR ATTITUDE?

*"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it."*

*– Lou Holtz*

There are three factors which affect the success enjoyed by a sales person in their role, their level of knowledge, their skill set and their attitude. The type of training and development you provide for them will be dependent on which of the three areas they are falling short in.



With new people their attitude is usually very positive, they are keen and enthusiastic to do well, but they can be lacking in knowledge and skill.

Knowledge training is normally delivered in the classroom and covers areas such as product knowledge, processes, procedures, regulations, reporting and so on.

Skills training can be delivered in a variety of ways depending on the specific needs of the individual – as a group training session or as one to one training. Training on skills is an ongoing process as we should all be constantly striving to improve the way we do things. So with new people we can be undertaking skills training to improve confidence in a variety of areas such as how we communicate with clients, developing our sales techniques, handling objections and establishing and committing the client on specific business needs. With more experienced staff we can still provide skills training as they can become complacent or we can focus on helping them learn advanced skills either for their current role or for a future role.

Knowledge and skill can contribute to a person's success and they are certainly factors which we need to keep refining and improving, but the biggest factor in the level of success enjoyed by an individual is their attitude. It can also be the most challenging aspect to manage!

As mentioned when people first start a role they are enthusiastic, keen and eager to learn, but as they become more experienced this enthusiasm can start to wane. Why is that?

A lot can hinge on the environment which, as managers, we create. We need to develop a culture where continuous improvement is a common shared goal, people are open and honest with each other, there is a level of trust which encourages feedback and there is regular communication on what is happening, where we are in relation to our goal achievement, where people have a good grasp of roles and responsibilities and they understand how they contribute to the achievement of individual and team goals. This won't automatically lead to a positive attitude in the team, but it makes it easier to call people to account when their attitude is showing signs of slipping from the standards you and your team have set.

Questions for you to consider:

How would you describe the attitude you bring to work each day?

How would your people describe it?

How can you identify if one of your sales people has a knowledge, skill or attitude "issue"?

What have you done in the last 30 days to create or maintain a positive environment in your team?



# **INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM DEVELOPMENT**

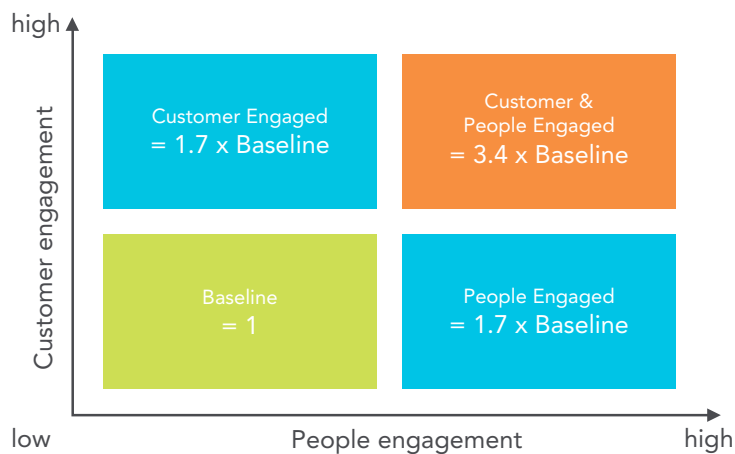
## 38 IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

*"People seldom improve when they have no other model but themselves to copy."*

– Oliver Goldsmith

The role of any Sales Manager has maximising performance of the team as one of its key goals and we live and die through making sales and achieving our targets.

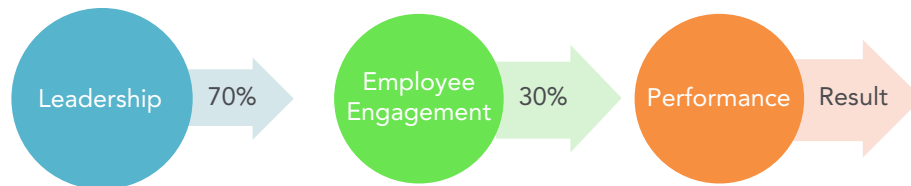
Research from Harvard Business School and others has shown that one of the biggest impacts on performance lies in the level of employee engagement which in turn drives customer engagement. Employee Engagement can affect performance by as much as 30%, so it is clearly critical to find ways to engage our people, to make them feel valued and for them to have the ability to make a difference.



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The two closest supermarkets to me provide a simple example of this link. The nearest of the two supermarkets is 2 miles away from me and I have to drive past it when I take my son to school. I will often need to pop into the supermarket following the school run to pick up milk and other items. Although the second supermarket is a further four miles up the road I find that I would rather drive the extra distance to shop there than go to the nearer one. The reason? In the 1<sup>st</sup> supermarket the staff are sullen and everything seems like too much effort for them. The aisles at 9am are usually full of trolleys as the staff stock the shelves and I feel as though I am getting in the way of them doing their job. On the other hand the staff in the store four miles up the road greet customers with a smile, the shelves are already stocked and they are ready for business. The stores are only four miles apart so the recruitment pool is the same, they sell the same items, so what is the difference?

When Daniel Goleman looked at the various factors which affected employee engagement, the major element identified was Leadership, with the style of Leadership affecting employee engagement levels by anything up to 70%. This is reinforced by other research carried out across the USA and UK, where exit interviews indicate that the major reason cited for leaving a job was the impact of the line manager. I firmly believe that the style of Leadership results in two very different cultures in the supermarkets close to me and the subsequent effect it has on my shopping habits.



As the research shows there is a very clear link from Leadership style to performance, so it is important for us as sales managers to reflect on the impact we have on our people and how we can improve this.

Questions for you to consider:

How would you describe your Leadership style?

How would your people describe it?

What do your people think you do well?

What do they think you could do better?

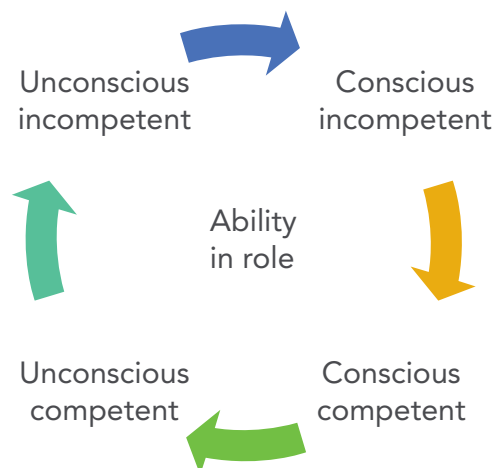
How could you find out?

## 39 ARE YOU CONSCIOUS OR UNCONSCIOUS?

*"Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate."*

– C.G. Jung

When people start a new role, it is useful to use the model below (adapted from Maslow's 4 stages of Learning model) to understand where they are in relation to their skill levels and their ability to fulfil their role. Being able to identify where they sit at any particular time will help you identify the element of training which will be of most benefit to them.



**Conscious incompetent:** Someone who is aware of the fact that they are not carrying out a role to an acceptable standard, due to a lack of skill or knowledge. Typical examples of this are those who are new to the role and whilst inexperienced they usually have the desire to learn and improve.

**What to do:** Provide skills and knowledge training to build their confidence.

**Unconscious competent:** Someone who is carrying out their duties to an acceptable standard or above, but does not fully understand the link between cause and effect, and as a result doesn't appreciate what it is they do that allows them to produce the desired result. This could be someone who follows their instinct or intuition rather than a process. In these instances their enthusiasm can often carry them through to completion of their task.

**What to do:** Use open questions to challenge their thinking and improve their analysis of the process and techniques they use in their sales calls. They need to learn to identify for themselves what works with clients and why it works. If you keep telling them the answers they won't learn and think for themselves.

**Conscious competent:** Someone who is doing a good job and understands how they can influence the outcome of an event through their actions and behaviours. These tend to be the people who are able to consistently produce excellent performance and results. Confidence amongst these individuals is high and they are capable of achieving great things.

**What to do:** Provide them with stretching challenges and discuss ways they can take on more responsibility to maintain their energy and further develop their skill set. The type of responsibility will depend on the nature of their ambitions.

**Unconscious incompetent:** Someone who thinks they are doing a great job and are unaware of the reality of the situation. A typical example here is a person who has been in a role for a long period of time and has slowly veered off the correct path. However they still believe they are repeating the same behaviours and actions that have previously bought them success. This can lead to frustration and disillusionment and they can become a disruptive force in a team situation.

**What to do:** Provide them with the evidence to show how their actions are not matching their perceptions. Provide plenty of support and encouragement with re-training as required. Open and honest feedback is critical for these people to move forward and enjoy success again.

*"I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think."*

– Socrates

Questions for you to consider:

Where do you sit on the model?

What help and support do you need?

Where do your people sit on the model – are they at different stages for different elements of their role?

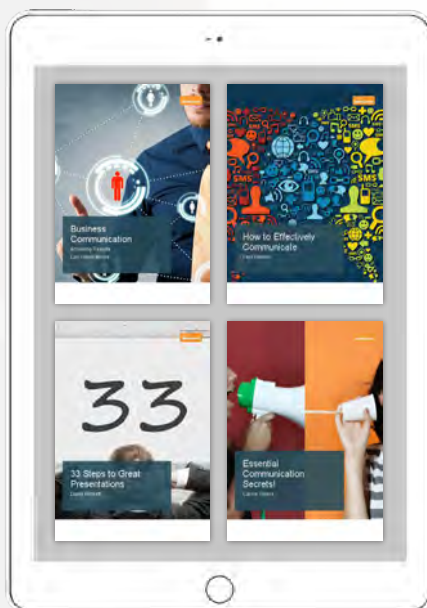
How can you use this model to best effect?

## 40 CAUSE AND EFFECT

*"The cause is hidden; the effect is visible to all."*

– Ovid

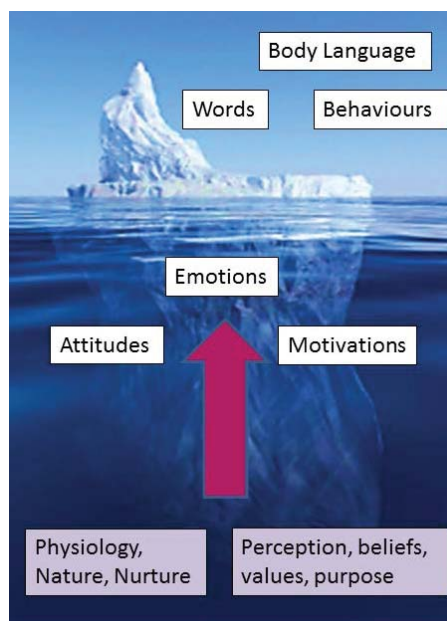
One of the big problems for sales managers is the temptation to manage the actions and behaviours of our people without taking into account what is actually causing the behaviour in the first place. For example when you go to see the Doctor about chest pains, before sending you for heart surgery, you would like to think they will check it is not simply indigestion first. Treat the cause not the symptoms.



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All too often in coaching and training situations people tend to focus on dealing with the effects of a situation rather than examining the cause and trying to resolve this instead. If you want to invoke long lasting change it is critical to gain an understanding of and then deal with the cause. The better someone can understand the triggers that lead to a particular type of behaviour or thinking, the better placed they are to modify that behaviour to meet the desired goals.

If a member of your team behaves in a negative fashion in team meetings, turning up late, disrupting the meeting, expresses negatives views and appearing to be disengaged in the process the temptation is to deal with the behaviour. However you need to try and understand the causes of the undesirable behaviour as the vast majority of people do not set out with the deliberate intent of upsetting all around them. There are any number of potential causes for the behaviour you see, including;

- They have personal issues at home which are having a big impact on how they feel.
- They have no self-awareness and are therefore unaware of the impact they have on those around them.
- Their learning style does not match the communication style used in the meeting.
- They believe their role is to challenge current views

It is a similar story with all of the KPI's we use to measure a sales person's performance. If a sales person is not hitting their sales targets, we can performance manage them but what really helps is for us to establish what is the real cause of the shortfall. The first step in this process is to conduct some gap analysis to establish where the gaps lie between the level of desired and actual performance. Looking at poor sales performance as the example is it due to;

- Poor sales numbers
- Low average value of order
- Cancellations
- Not selling the orders in the required time frame

Once we have established where the gap lies which will have the biggest impact on improving performance we can then start investigating the causes behind the specific shortfall in this area. If the shortfall is due to not enough sales, is this due to;

- Client seen but there is an inability to close the sale
- Client seen but not the decision maker, so further appointments required
- Appointments made, but high number of no shows
- Not enough appointments made

If we identify the biggest issue is an inability to close the sale, we can then look at which part of the sales process is causing the problem. Could it be due to;

- Not establishing specific business needs
- Lack of customer commitment to needs established
- Not matching the product/service to the clients specific needs
- Objection handling

We can then carry on the process to identify the specific element of the process where training is required, with the sales person being able to clearly understand the link between establishing specific business needs, through better questioning techniques, to the impact on sales numbers.



The cornerstone in managing the cause and not the effect lies in effective communication between you and the individual. They need to understand the causes leading to the effects themselves if they are going to be able to improve the situation. To do that requires open and honest feedback as well as effective analysis of the matter in hand.

Questions for you to consider;

When you think about the most challenging person in your team, what are the causes of their behaviour?

When you look at the sales performance of your team and individuals what are the causes of the specific results they produce – both good and bad?

What does your top performer do that has the biggest impact on their performance?

# 41 ONE TO ONE UPDATES

*"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."*

*– George Bernard Shaw*

One of the most important activities for a sales manager is the one to one updates they have with their sales people; however it is also the activity that most often gets jettisoned when time becomes tight.

These updates are the opportunity for you and the individual involved to spend time discussing the issues that can have the biggest impact on future performance. The time you allocate to them also sends a message to the sales person as to how much you value them and their contribution to the team goals. If you regularly cancel them in favour of other activities, the message sent is that the sales person is pretty low down on your list of priorities, when in reality these times should be one of the non-negotiables in your diary.

The frequency of updates will depend on the nature of the business and the size of the team, but they should be held on a regular and frequent basis, e.g. every Thursday afternoon 3pm–4pm, or every other Thursday. The structure of an update should be relatively simple;

- Review of performance to date
- Forecast of future performance
- Training/coaching issues
- Personal development time.
- Any other business – general communication points etc.

What tends to be happen in a lot of updates is that the majority of time is spent discussing the figures in points 1 and 2 and other task related issues. If the time in the update is going to be really maximised though the bulk of the time should be dedicated to training and personal development. These sections will generate the highest level of employee engagement and will also have the biggest impact on future performance.

The exact content and approach used in the update will also vary depending on the experience level of the sales person. If you are having an update with someone new to the role, there might well be a high proportion of the time spent with you “telling”, whereas with an experienced sales person they should be doing most of the talking, with you adopting a coaching role rather than a training one.

It is also important to remember who should “own” the update. It is the sales person’s update rather than yours, they are there to update you on their progress and issues that are of concern to them. Therefore they should be setting the agenda for the update and sending it to you a few days in advance. This way you can check it is covering the right areas, and will give you the opportunity to add your items to the agenda under the any other business section. If you give them ownership of the update you are demonstrating trust and belief in them. They should take notes and email you following the meeting with the outcomes of the meeting, the action points for each of you and this can then form the starting point of the next update. Yes, you may need to give them guidance initially but ultimately you are leading them down the road to empowerment and freeing up more of your time to spend on the areas that will most affect the bottom line.

Questions for you to consider:

Who sets the agenda for your updates with your line manager? If not you, why not?

What do you cover in your updates with your line manager?

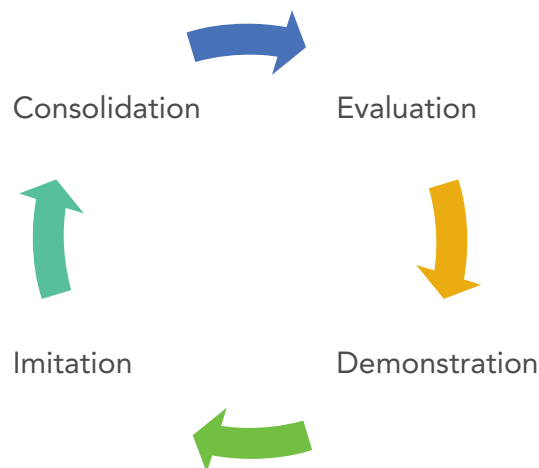
How often do you hold one to one updates with your people, and how often are they cancelled? What is the message you are sending out to them?

## 42 COACHING AND TRAINING

*"Confidence comes from discipline and training."*

*– Robert Kiyosaki*

Role playing plays a big part in training and it can be used really effectively when providing “on the road” training.



The first example is a 3 point role play and can be used in a tele-sales or field sales situation:

**Step One:** You observe the sales person on a sales call with a client

**Step two:** You review the call with the sales person and ask them to identify;

How they feel the call went.

Three things that they believe went well in the call

One thing they think they should do differently on the next call

They should lead this part of the process, with you adding your thoughts and observations once you have listened to them.

The sales person then role plays the call just done with the manager to help embed the change in the process.

**Step Three:** You observe the sales person on the next sales call, implementing the changes discussed, with a review with the sales person following the call.

The second example is a 5 point role play and follows a similar path to the 3 point roleplay:

**Step One:** You observe the sales person on a sales call with a client

**Step two:** You review the call with the sales person and ask them to identify;

How they feel the call went.

Three things that they believe went well in the call

One thing they think they should do differently on the next call

They should lead this part of the process, with you adding your thoughts and observations once you have listened to them.

The sales person then role plays the call just done with the manager to help embed the change in the process.

**Step Three:** To strengthen the learning process, the manager role plays the call to the sales person to demonstrate the desired changes. The sales person then identifies the differences between the 2 role plays.

**Step Four:** The sales person then role plays the call to the manager to demonstrate their understanding.

**Step Five:** You observe the sales person on the next sales call, implementing the changes discussed, with a review with the sales person following the call.

The 3 and 5 point role plays are part of the training cycle, as shown below, but are ideal for “on the job” training opportunities.

Questions for you to consider:

How do you currently provide on the job training?

How often do you tell instead of show?

What do you observe them doing well?

How good are your sales people at identifying what they do well?

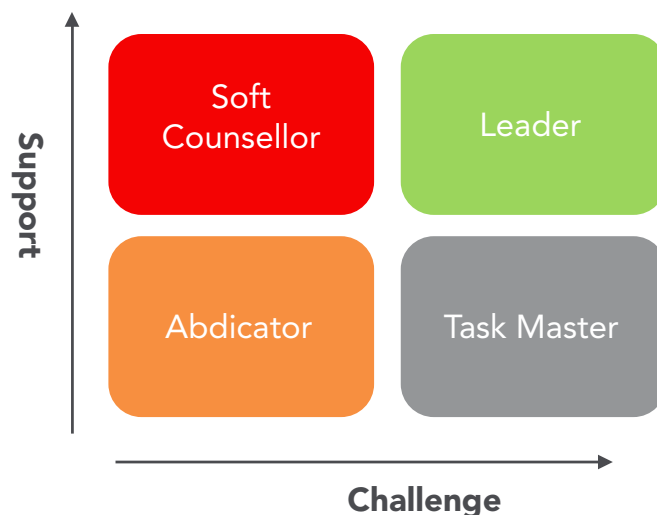
## 43 THE SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE MODEL

*"The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority."*

*– Kenneth Blanchard*

As Sales Managers we can provide different levels of support and challenge for our team. For some providing challenge comes easier than providing support and vice versa. It is also the case that each individual in our teams will benefit from differing levels of support and challenge.

In the Support and Challenge model below the ideal position is to be in the Leader box, as here you are providing high levels of support and challenge for your people. When you behave in this manner, your people will be stretched and encouraged to develop their skill set. The level of engagement in your team will be high as you will be there to encourage them and support them in their quest to achieve. Targets will be challenging but not impossible to reach and the culture will be one which fosters growth.



Too much challenge can result in you focussing too much on achieving the task, at the expense of your people. While this can work in the short term, for example when you have a deadline approaching, in the medium to long term you will alienate your people and run the risk of them “burning out”. Being too task focussed can lead to higher sickness levels and staff turnover. In extreme cases people describe Task Masters as cold, unapproachable and a control freak who micro manages everything that happens.

Too little challenge and a lot of support can result in you behaving as a Counsellor. This can be effective again in the short term with people who are struggling with personal problems for example. At such times providing people with a lot of challenge in their role can be detrimental to performance and instead just increase their stress levels. However, providing plenty of support and little challenge on a continual basis will lead to people becoming bored with their roles, not striving to achieve and losing respect for you as a Leader. In extreme cases Soft Counsellors are seen as indecisive, easy to manipulate, weak and the type of manager who avoids conflict.

Then there are those managers who provide little support and little challenge. They are not to be found and tend to leave their team to their own devices. They might be there to launch a sales campaign, but then expect their people to go and do their job with very little further input from the manager. Communication is poor or non-existent with little direction leaving a frustrated and rudderless team.

Questions to consider:

Where do you think you spend most of your time?

What do you need to do differently to spend more time in the Leader box?

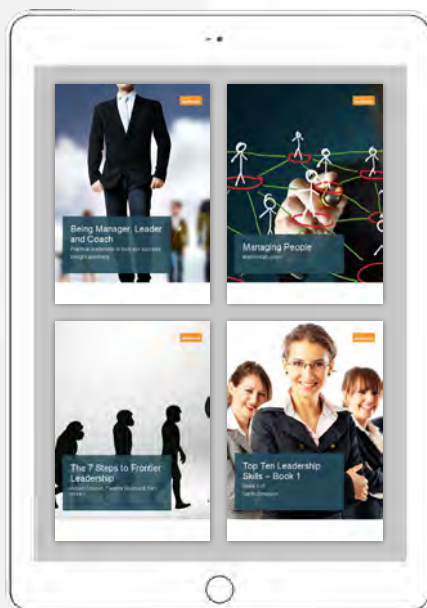
In which box would your people put you?

## 44 PRIORITISING YOUR COACHING AND TRAINING TIME

*"True leaders bring out your personal best. They ignite your human potential."*

– John Paul Warren

Many sales managers are faced with the challenge of trying to improve team performance and the sales results of individuals in their team. They will provide coaching and training on an individual and team basis, but how can they make best use of the limited time they have?



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All the individuals will be performing at varying levels, so should they spend their time with their poorest performers or their top sales people? When asking that question of sales managers the answer is often that they should focus their efforts on the under performers, as they feel they need to have a team that are all producing on target or above results. However this is not always practical, as there is usually a wide variance in skill and experience levels within the team. When you also add in a spectrum of different attitudes to the role, it doesn't necessarily follow that spending the majority of your time with the weakest players is the most logical use of your own skill and experience. Why spend too much time with someone who is not going to be receptive to your input?

Let's look at an example;



If you have a team of 9 people, 3 in group A are all performing well above target, 3 just above target in group B and 3 below target in group C, as mentioned many managers will spend most of their time trying to improve the performance of the group C people.

While you need to spend time coaching and working with all 3 groups spending more time with group C than the others is not the most effective use of your time. One argument is to spend more of your time with the people in group A as a 5% improvement in their performance will generate more revenue than if you generated a 5% improvement in performance from the other two groups. I think this is a very valid argument, but does tend to ignore the competitive nature of most sales people.

If instead, you focused your efforts on improving the performance of the people in group B, this would have a knock on effect on the people in the other two groups. The people in group C would see the three above them widening the gap between them and would feel more exposed than they currently do. The increased peer pressure will encourage them to either improve their own performance or lead to them leaving the company.

The people in group A are used to being the leaders in performance and will respond to the pressure of group B improving their performance, and will strive to maintain the gap they have built up between them and “the second tier” of performers.

Questions for you to consider:

How do you divide up your training and coaching time between your people?

How much could you improve team results, team harmony, team motivation and your own enjoyment of the role by spending more of your time with people who are eager to learn and develop?

## 45 GIVING FEEDBACK

*A gem is not polished without rubbing, nor a man perfected without trials.*

– Chinese Proverb

When I first started out as a sales manager, I was trained in the use of the “feedback sandwich” which was to be used when you wanted to give someone constructive feedback on how they could improve their performance.

First you would sit them down and praise them for one aspect of their work, then you would give them the feedback on how they could make the improvements to their performance and then you would follow up with a further piece of positive feedback. The theory was that the positive feedback would make them feel good about themselves and thus be more receptive to the more “negative” feedback in the middle of the Feedback Sandwich.

**So for example;**

*“I think the way you handled the customer’s objections on that last call was excellent, however I wonder if you had spent more time at the beginning of the call questioning the customer on his specific business needs whether you would have been able to build a stronger case for a larger order. The other thing I really liked about that call is how well you build trust with your client, so they are prepared to listen to you, as we saw when you dealt with his objections.”*

The problem with this method was that some people would only hear the positive feedback and ignore the real message you were trying to convey while others would only ever focus on the negative message and refuse to believe anything positive you have to say. As a result it would be difficult to maintain trust with your people as they wouldn’t view your communication as genuine and authentic.

A far more effective method is to separate positive and developmental feedback to help land your message. You still want to give them the positive feedback, assuming you believe it to be true!

With the above example, when reviewing the call you should identify the positive aspects of the sales consultant's performance;

*"I really like how well you build trust with your clients and this showed on this call with how he responded when you answered his objections; he was prepared to listen to what you had to say and he clearly valued your opinion. I thought you were really effective in the way you dealt with this."*

As you are preparing for the next call you want to deliver the message that could improve the sales consultant's performance;

*"With this call I want you to use the skill you have to build trust with your client just like you did on the last call, and this time I'd also like to see you asking more questions to encourage the client to really explore his specific business needs as I think you will be able to justify a programme that better suits his needs."*

By splitting the feedback in this way, you are giving the praise and recognising their strengths as soon as possible, which gives them the feel good factor and leaving the developmental feedback until they are in a position to do something with it.

## 46 SWOT ANALYSIS

*"Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy."*

*– Norman Vincent Peale*

People tend to be very good at identifying their weaknesses and where things can go wrong for themselves, but can have a reluctance to publically admit to what they do well. The SWOT analysis tool can be a good opportunity for you and your people to recognise strengths and weaknesses and how these can impact onto performance.

The SWOT can be used as a personal reflection tool, as part of a 1-2-1 update or as a team exercise, depending on how you intend to use it. In terms of a team bonding exercise it can be really powerful to use when people complete the SWOT for someone else. Everyone in the team could complete their own SWOT in private and then (depending on numbers in the team) have 2–3 people in the team complete the SWOT for that person as well. Then they share and compare their thoughts.



Whether this is done as an individual or group exercise it is a great method to generate self- analysis and feedback and at the same time encourage the people to engage in solution based thinking.

Some examples of the types of questions you can cover in each section are listed below.

These are not an exhaustive list!

**Strengths:** What advantages do you have that others don't have (e.g. skills, education, or connections)?

What do you do better than anyone else?

What do other people (and your boss, in particular) see as your strengths?

What makes you different?

Which of your achievements are you most proud of?

**Weaknesses:** What tasks do you usually avoid because you don't feel confident doing them?

What will the people around you see as your weaknesses?

Are you completely confident in your education and skills training? If not, where are you weakest?

What are your negative work habits (for example, are you often late, are you disorganized or are you poor at handling stress)?

Do you have personality traits that hold you back in your field? For instance, if you have to conduct meetings on a regular basis, a fear of public speaking would be a major weakness.

**Opportunities:** What opportunities would open up if you could increase your strengths and improve on your weaknesses?

What new technology can help you? Or can you get help from others or from people via the Internet?

Do you have a network of strategic contacts to help you, or offer good advice?

What trends (management or otherwise) do you see in your company, and how can you take advantage of them?

Is there a need in your company or industry that no one is filling?

What new skills could you develop?

A new role or project that forces you to learn new skills, like public speaking or international relations.

**Threats:** What would be the threats if you failed to improve on your weaknesses and failed to maintain your strengths?

What obstacles do you currently face at work?

Are any of your colleagues competing with you for different roles?

Is your job (or the demand for the things you do) changing?

Does changing technology threaten your position?

Could any of your weaknesses lead to threats?

The sections on strengths and weaknesses mean looking at the situation at present with the opportunities and threats encouraging future based thinking with “what if...” questions. This tool can help develop greater levels of strategic thinking for your sales people about themselves and their future. Naturally this same tool can be used to analyse various elements of their work from their approach to a sales cycle to the structure of their sales calls through to analysis of a recommendation they are going to make to a specific customer.

Questions for you to consider:

What does your SWOT analysis say about your Leadership?

Which are the areas you can focus on to bring about the biggest change in your impact as a Leader?

## 47 DELEGATION

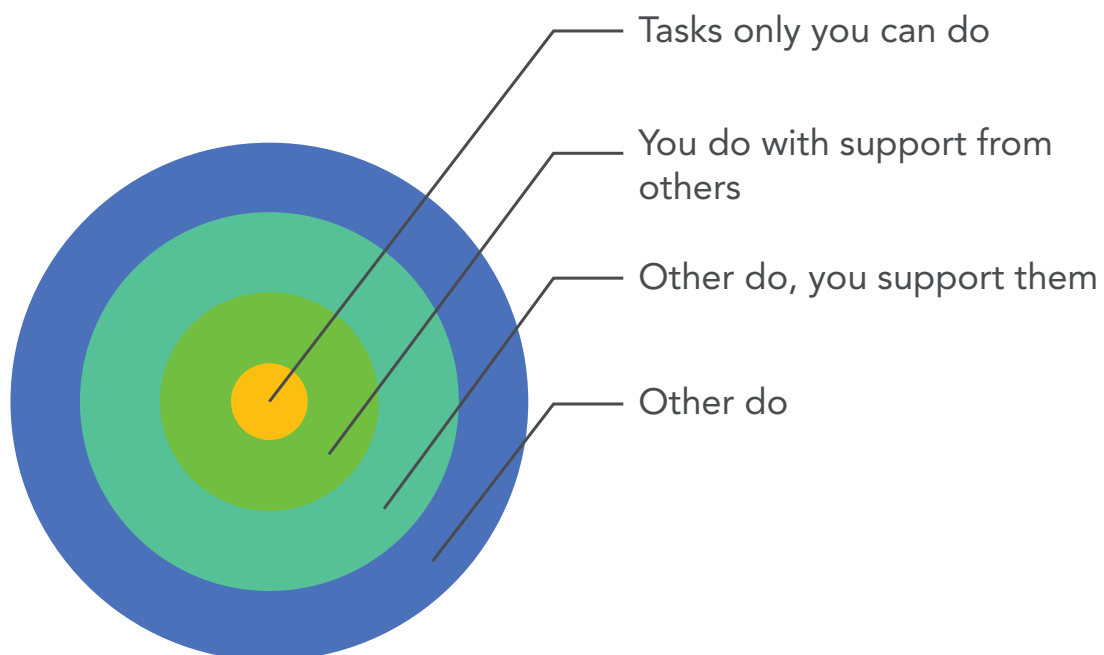
*"Surround yourself with the best people you can find,  
delegate authority, and don't interfere."*

*– Ronald Reagan*

Many Sales Managers we speak to are extremely busy, time is tight and often find it is quicker to tell people what to do, rather than show them how to do something and let them learn for themselves.

When we dig down into the reasons for this, it is often the case that they are trying to do too much themselves, not only doing their own job but often taking on other people's work. The key to success here is the ability to delegate, but apart from learning to say "no", it is also about knowing what to delegate. As managers we need to learn that delegating correctly provides our people with the opportunity to grow, but also frees up time for ourselves to spend on our own personal development. As a result the art of delegation is a key skill to have in our tool kit.

The model below is a simple method of identifying what we can safely delegate without it hampering our potential for success and at the same time preventing our delegation being seen as "dumping".





When we break down our tasks, they will fit into 4 categories:

- 1) These are tasks that we must do and no one else can do them – delivering appraisals for example. These tend to be duties that we have a direct responsibility for.
- 2) We have some tasks which we have direct responsibility for and for which we need to retain responsibility, but allowing others to have some input into the outcomes, will give them some exposure to your role and aid in their development. An example can be writing a report for the Senior Management team, you can have a senior member of your team helping to collate the information required, or asking them to help train a new member of the team in a particular process.
- 3) The third level of tasks are those which provide great development opportunities for your people and help raise their profile in the business. However, you need to provide them with plenty of support as and when required as you are putting them right out in their stretch zones. An example of this might be asking them to attend cross departmental meetings on your behalf. You will need to help them prepare for the meeting and debrief them fully afterwards, but the benefits to them attending the meeting are great for you and them.
- 4) The final group of tasks are those which you can safely delegate and leave them to manage on their own. It gives the individual a measure of responsibility and helps give them an insight into a role other than their own. Examples of this can include designing and managing a team incentive, organising a social event for the team, liaising with other departments on certain issues. These tasks can be great learning opportunities for your people as there will be tasks in this area where you can afford to allow people to fail. As discussed elsewhere, the greatest learnings often come from failure and give you the opportunity to gain greater insight into the characters of your people.

Following this model and delegating efficiently and effectively, will improve your image around the business and help you empower your team, and at the same time ease the time pressure on yourself!

**Questions to consider:**

How well do you currently delegate?

What could you do differently?

Who could you delegate to?

What is stopping you from delegating more?

## 48 MENTORING

*"The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled."*

– Plutarch

If you are going to lead your team successfully, it is important that you constant strive to become a better leader. The world of business is littered with examples of companies who rested on their laurels when they thought they had reached the top of their field. Complacency set in and they were quickly toppled with some going out of business as new competitors swept them aside and left them in their wake.

It is no different with leadership, become complacent, stop learning and take achievement of goals for granted and you are in for a rude awakening. Your team will mirror your attitude, performance will dip and they will start to lose respect for you.



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Finding a mentor for yourself is one way to help prevent this and can be an invaluable aid in helping you to progress. A mentor is usually someone who works in a similar field and is further up the career ladder than yourself and can therefore pass on the benefit of their experience to you. They are a great source of information, encouragement and advice, providing you with a sounding board when you need to discuss various challenging situations that you face. They should ask questions and challenge you and allow you to explore new ideas in confidence. It is a chance to look more closely at yourself, your issues, opportunities and what you want in life. Mentoring is about becoming more self-aware, taking responsibility for your career and directing your life/career in the direction you decide, rather than leaving it to chance.

If your organisation doesn't have an official mentoring scheme in place, there is nothing to stop you approaching someone who you respect to be your mentor. The vast majority of people will be flattered that you would consider asking them to mentor you and will offer you their time as a result. The mentoring can be informal with you catching up with them on an ad hoc basis, or you can agree to meet on a regular basis, say once a month, to discuss the issues that are of importance to you. They don't need to work in your organisation as they could be someone you know through networking or at other organisations/departments you are familiar with.

The benefits of using a mentor will not only be felt by you, but also by your team.

Questions for you to consider:

What are the qualities you would look for in a mentor?

What are the issues they could help you with?

Who could you ask?

How would you feel about being a mentor for someone else?

## 49 DEVELOP YOUR SUCCESSOR

Have you identified who is the likely candidate to take over from you when you are offered a promotion? Research suggests that the majority of companies do not have an official succession plan in place for their staff, which can lead to a disconnect and disruption in performance levels when a promotion takes place or when there is an unexpected resignation, while a suitable replacement is found.

Identifying and developing potential successors for yourself can have a number of benefits for all concerned; you will have someone you can rely on to share the load, your potential successor will have the opportunity to develop their skills set and will be energised by greater levels of responsibility and the organisation will benefit from a smoother transition when your promotion comes around.

I have been coaching a number of people recently who have been promoted to the next level of management in their organisation. One of the biggest challenges they have faced in the early days of their new role has been juggling their new duties with clearing the decks of their previous responsibilities. This could have been prevented by them starting to train and develop their successor earlier in the process so that they were able to delegate more of their role down the line, thus creating the time for them to have more exposure to their new role prior to moving up the ladder.

If you think about the people who could potentially take over from you they will tend to be those who are experienced in their current role and probably operating within their comfort zone. If we don't think about giving them more responsibility we run the danger of them getting bored and starting to look for other jobs, as they can't see a route of progression within the organisation. Seeing people being given further responsibility down the line also acts as an inspiration to others in the team as they can see visible rewards for hard work and success.

This is a similar story with your own position. As you gain experience in your current role you become accomplished at dealing with the processes and expectations placed upon you, and you can often operate almost on autopilot. To keep you energised and at your creative best you need to be stretched so that you continue to learn, and this is achieved by increasing your exposure to aspects of your line manager's role and responsibilities. This is the most effective way for you and the organisation to establish if a new role is suitable for you and your particular skill set.

Questions for you to consider:

How many people have the potential to be your successor?

What are you doing to test their potential?

What are their career ambitions?

What are the benefits for you of delegating more of your responsibilities?

## 50 MAKE WORK FUN!

*"People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing."*

*– Dale Carnegie*

The final piece of advice for managing your sales team, is simple – make it fun!

If people enjoy coming to work, if people feel part of something good, if people feel that they belong then they will contribute and give of their best. When people feel confident, when they realise they are good at something, when they know people have belief in them and value their efforts they enjoy what they are doing.

Your team will take their lead from you....

*"When you have confidence, you can have a lot of fun. And when you have fun, you can do amazing things."*

*– Joe Namath*

Questions for you to consider:

What do you enjoy about your work?

How do you have fun at work?

How would your team change things to enjoy work more?

# CONCLUSION

*"People buy into the leader before they buy into the vision."*

*– John Maxwell*

One of the most common clichés in the sales profession is that “people buy people first”, and if a sales manager is to achieve the best from their team they need to follow the advice of John Maxwell and “sell themselves” effectively to their team. The only way this can be done is to be their authentic selves and to make their people feel valued.

In this book we have discussed a number of techniques to help a manager share who they are, what they stand for and what is important to them. In doing this they will encourage their team to open up to them and have an open and honest dialogue with them. Most of what we have discussed in the various chapters will not have been viewed as rocket science, but more as common sense with many of the ideas already being put into practise. The time to worry is if it has come across as rocket science and something you have never considered before! Instead the aim of the book has been to remind you of the necessary steps required to build effective working relationships with your colleagues.

You and your team are on a journey together, and your role as sales leader is to show them where you are going, how they can get there, what is expected of them and how you can support them on the journey.

As mentioned in previous chapters research has shown that the most successful teams are fully engaged in the process with the Leadership style used by the Leader having the biggest impact on the level of engagement in the team. If you have a clear understanding of what drives you and how you impact onto those around you it is easier to communicate and motivate your team. People value the personal touch, so prioritise being with your people. Focus on them and helping them be the best they can be rather than concentrating purely on the task and you will find the results will take care of themselves.

Final questions for you to consider:

What has been the most valuable learning for you from the book?

What have you learnt about yourself?

What is the first thing you will do differently as a result of reading the book and by when?

What will a successful outcome be?

# SUGGESTED READING LIST

**Books:**

[First break all the rules](#): Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman (2005)

[Coaching for Performance](#): John Whitmore (2009)

[The New Leaders – transforming the art of leadership](#): Daniel Goleman (2003)

[To sell is human – the surprising truth about persuading, influencing and convincing others](#): Daniel Pink (2013)

**Videos:**

[How Great Leaders inspire action](#): Simon Sinek (Ted Talk)

[Michelle Obama's Convention speech 2012](#): How to use values to engage your audience

[Drive – the surprising truth about what motivates us](#): RSA and Daniel Pink