

This Just In: What Sales Leaders Do to Drive Strong Sales Now



What's the game-changer that organizations with surging sales have embraced and provides a huge competitive advantage in today's business climate? Hint: It's not a new technology, a flashy tool, or even a new training method.

Instead, many organizations that will meet – and most likely surpass – their current year goals are succeeding with a renewed emphasis on two core principles that have been sidestepped in the rush to all things technology. The two are a twin focus on purpose and values.

If that catches you by surprise, consider this: The combined annual investment in technology by organizations increases every year – some estimates say it'll reach \$50B in 2019. Additionally, training for sales teams also increases every year – and now approaches \$4.6B. And yet, annual quota achievement continues to decline – it's down 4% this year to an average of 40%.

Bottom line: Sales teams have more technology than ever. But the number of sales organizations with sales reps that make quota continues to decline.

In contrast, purpose-driven organizations with strong values-based cultures are seeing different results. The simple fact is these organizations win customers and keep them; they engage and retain their top talent; and they ignite the drive to achieve

among their sales teams. They achieve revenue targets AND purposefully make a difference to their clients.

Consider a couple of great examples:

Amica Insurance needed to develop a sales culture aligned with the high values around which they have built their organization. By doing so they have been surpassing growth objectives, as well as winning the JD Power Award for outstanding customer service for the past sixteen years.

Teachers Mutual Bank (TMB), one of Australia's largest mutual banks, trains their bankers on an integrity-based process that's focused on customer needs and reflects the values of advocacy, passion and sustainability. As a result, in addition to having one of the highest Net Promotor Scores of any Australian financial institution, TMB is honored to be recognized for the last five years by the global organization, the Ethisphere Institute, as one of the world's most ethical companies. In fact, TMB is the only Australian company on the list and one of only five banks globally to receive this recognition.

As for talent retention, according to the *Harvard Business Review*, employees who find work highly meaningful are 69% less likely to consider quitting their jobs within the next 6 months. They have job tenures that are 7.4 months longer on average than employees who find their work lacks meaning. In today's war for talent, an organization with a central purpose to make a positive difference in the lives of customers is increasingly more attractive than a company that only focuses on financial metrics.

Sales teams that are purpose-driven and sell in a way that aligns with their values connect more consistently with customers' realities and goals.

Now, let's bring the focus back to you: Are you focused on making a difference in the lives of your customers – or are you just looking to sell stuff?

Salespeople operating from a core of strong values and ethics view selling as a mutual exchange of value. They know it's something you do *with* people and *for* them – versus selling as something you do to them. They know that truly understanding a customer's wants or needs before offering any solution is a key to building trust.

Unpacking Three Conversations

Purpose and values-driven organizations understand the value of three conversations that are critical for salespeople:

The first is perhaps the most obvious: the conversation you have with your customers. And this one is rooted in important *skills* such as building rapport and trust, diagnosing challenges and needs, resolving concerns and gaining commitment. Without a doubt, it's the quantity and quality of those conversations that can drive success.

The second of the three conversations is one that's often overlooked: the conversation you have with yourself. Think of that as focused on *mindset*, the self-talk and beliefs we all have. The silent answers to questions that your subconscious asks many times a day will dictate your inner beliefs. These beliefs will be the key to your thoughts,

attitudes and actions, such as whether you think you can call on certain people, sell certain productions, or achieve x or y level of sales success.

The third conversation is the one you have with your manager – specifically in the role of a coach. Often, our interactions with managers are around numbers, details, and activities. That focus is an important part of *managing*.

Coaching, on the other hand, is focused on helping you improve and igniting more of your potential. A really great manager/coach will be adept at seeing more in you than you see in yourself.

Getting True Alignment and Congruence

Conversations with ourselves are governed by our belief barriers and paradigms in five specific areas:

View of Selling – If you could get into the minds and hearts of most salespeople to understand their deeply held belief about what selling is, what would you find? Do they believe they're creating value for people, or bothering them? Do they see sales as a noble profession, or one they drifted into because the money can be good? Your view of selling has a strong impact on how successful you will be in sales.

View of Abilities – Do you think you can be very successful at this or just average? What's your level of confidence in your current selling role?

Values – How does selling align with your personal values?

Commitment to Activities – Are you committed to doing all of the things that will help you be successful, even those that you dislike or don't enjoy?

Belief in Product – Do you have a level of passion for your company and what you sell?

When these ideas are in alignment – when you have a positive view of selling, and you truly believe in what you're selling and it comes through – when all that happens, when you're in congruence, -- then achievement drive and energy is released – and this becomes the multiplier of success.

When it comes to training, all three of these

conversations are critical. But in terms of building belief, part of that is helping salespeople understand the value they are creating for customers – and that selling is a noble profession. When people see they are creating value and making a difference for others, a greater sense of passion is released.

Achievement drive and passion aren't logical. They tap into something much deeper to help you realize the purpose of your job– and when you redefine your purpose, your energy and sales go up.

Lastly, here's a common question around all this: Is Achievement Drive innate or can it be developed? The quick answer is yes. If people are developed with this in mind – that they believe they can successfully perform at a higher level, that triggers greater passion and they can do it. It's about expanding their beliefs that they can do it.

Our challenge to sales organizations and sales leaders is simple. Yes, by all means pay attention to the important metrics of success. You have to. If

you're not achieving revenue and profit goals your business, and the livelihood of everyone associated with it, will suffer.

But perhaps a more effective way to achieve your goals is to focus on helping others achieve theirs. Namely, your customers, both external and internal to your organization. By giving your sales reps the tools to sell to purpose, and aligning “selling” with their values, you are equipping them to make a difference in the lives of others.

Whether you're selling banking services, consulting or industrial components, training and coaching them around the three conversations will be the key to unlocking their passion. The path to growth for your organization will follow more intentionally and confidently. ■

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