



Achieving radical and sustainable improvement in top line performance

Why is Sales Management Leadership So \$#@!~ Hard?



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The Situation:

In our work with clients we are always intrigued by the honeymoon period when a new "Sales Exec" is hired from outside the company to lead and manage worldwide

sales. This event happens after a lengthy and expensive interview and due diligence process ending with high hopes and great expectations for the new savior.

Setting realistic performance expectations for the new Sales Exec can be tricky and complex because of the current selling environment.

For example:

- What percent of the sales force is below, at or above quota?
- How profitable is the current mix of business based on what the sales force is closing?
- Is there a formalized and clearly understood sales process with well defined, accomplishment based phase lines versus an emphasis on activity management?
- How often has a rep been asked for an update on key deals in the forecast; every week, when the CEO asks for an update, etc.?
- Is there a clear understanding of the sales strategy, namely, who are we selling to, what are we selling, why do customers buy and why do they buy from us?



- When reps prep for customer meetings, do they do it in the car on the way to the meeting, do they show up and wing it or is there a agreed upon call planning template that everyone must use?
- How often are account plans reviewed? Is there a process and agreed planning cycle which is reviewed internally by peers and the leadership team and then validated by the customer?
- What is the current level of product knowledge? Are reps up-to-date? Is there a training budget?
- How well do the reps understand the strengths and weaknesses of their strategic competitors? Do they know what to emphasize and what to neutralize?

The Challenge

We know the pressure on the new Sales Exec is huge because of the pressure to deliver short term while balancing long term, future success. Yes, managing sales people is very hard with so many things to do; recruitment, setting targets, territory

and account planning, sales training and enablement, coaching, forecasting, quarterly business reviews, expenses, reports, travel, product meetings, sales meetings, kick-offs and arguable the most important, meeting customers.



Next Steps

While there is no quick fix and one size fits all solution for the new Sales Exec, a good place to start is helping your people focus on understanding ***why before what*** and ***what before how***. In other words, know the big picture plan and let the strategy drive the tactics and not the other way around. By demonstrating this type of thinking and role model behavior, you will end the honeymoon period with confidence and forward momentum.

For additional information about sales management leadership, please contact KappaEast at kappainfo@kappaeast.com.

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