

5 Tips You Must Know Before You Start Out On a Sales Development Initiative

Tip1: You will have less likelihood of success until you isolate and address those Hidden Weaknesses that will put the brakes on a sale person's ability to improve.

In order for sales development to be effective you must evaluate a sales person for those weaknesses, which are the opposite of selling strengths. The difference between can sell and will sell will lie in the number and the intensity of these hidden weaknesses. For example the sales development of Jim will always be below expectations because he has a hidden weakness called responsibility. This weakness will manifest itself as excuse making. This manifestation makes it literally impossible to develop this person due to his resistance to anything new being worthy of existence in his world. In his mind sales development will not work and he will tell you a million reasons why it will not work.

Tip 2: Successful Sales Development means knowing the difference between selling strengths and selling skills and being able to develop the sales person successfully from this information.

Selling Strengths the opposite of hidden weaknesses are the most heavily weighted criteria for sales success. Selling Strengths come from a combination of 21 Selling Competencies, which are derived from a certain grouping of selling behaviors. (<http://www.gulasgroup.com/sales-competencies.shtml>) Strengths are usually internalized and will surface under pressure. Selling Skills are more in alignment with aptitude and under pressure may or may not surface. The value of skills lie in the ability to predict which mixture will make a sales person a Hunter, Closer, Qualifier, Farmer, Account Manager or the opposite Timid, Intellectual or Ambassador. For those interested in sales development be careful not to use an instrument based primarily on aptitude, personality, psychological or behavior results because you only will get a can sell result as opposed to a will sell result.

Tip 3: Know how much time, energy, effort and resources to invest in your Sales Development initiative in order to justify your return on investment.

Until you know the growth potential of each individual in your team and in addition the growth potential of your entire sales team then any time spent in sales development for that team is a gamble. Growth potential tells you what kind of return you can expect on the time money and energy invested. It is calculated by adding ones selling strengths plus selling skills minus their hidden selling weaknesses You will also want to know how to customize growth potential by various exceptions derived from how you go to market, plus how you manage and compensate. In addition with the right evaluation instrument you can measure this

growth potential number at various stages of your sales development initiative to justify its continued existence as opposed to guessing is this working?

Tip 4: Do not enter into any Sales Development initiative until you consider the role sales leadership will play.

One constant is certain; the success of any sales development initiative is like a three-legged stool. The three legs are first the sales people second the sales leader and third the business advisor one employs. Unfortunately most sales development failures occur at the sales leadership level. The reason for that failure is one the inability to consistently execute the five necessary ingredients for success at that level. These five elements are, growing the sales team, inspiring the sales team, holding each individual in the team accountable for activities and behavior, recruiting for super stars and coaching. The second challenge from the leadership role comes from the Executive/Owner level. Either the support for the process is lacking, not understood or very little patience is available so it is constantly being tinkered with or changed before it has an opportunity for success. One thing to remember sales development is a slow, steady methodical process because you are dealing with every element of change at all levels. For more information on sales leadership development click here

Tip 5: No Sales Development initiative will be successful until it is customized and continually reinforced with a sales fitness component.

The most effective way to customize a sales development initiative is by using sales evaluations based on executables that will isolate problems that occur such as these: making unqualified presentations, wasting time due to ineffective selling system, not being able to control the selling process such as the games and lies from prospects, calling on purchasing agents before end user or decision-maker, not getting prospects to agree to make a decision, not developing bonding and rapport early enough, taking too many put offs, not handling people correctly, inappropriate follow up, wasting time with unqualified prospects and too many unqualified quotes or proposals. The second thing to insure success is to contract with a reputable company to provide a sales fitness component. (<http://www.gulasgroup.com/discoverysellingachievement.shtml>). Sales Fitness like physical fitness insures those sales muscles will not atrophy. Relying on in house sources to provide this structure will lead to the same issues discussed in tip 4 that is why for this part of the process to be successful one must consider contracting to a third party.