

Growing Your Business

Boosting Sales Performance: Seven Tips From A Top Global Management Pro



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(NAPSA)—Whether you sell something or manage people who do, by understanding a handful of time-tested and universal sales management principles, you and your company can increase the chances of sales success.

In a nutshell, driving greater sales success is mostly about setting clear and simple goals, and delivering financial rewards quickly. Here are seven tips to help any company achieve and exceed its 2007 goals:

Tip # 1—Avoid goal vacuum: Set targets early

By simply getting the goals out there, even if they're still rough and will need to be adjusted, salespeople will have something solid to shoot for and they'll start closing deals earlier.

Tip # 2—Don't pad the sales target

In the average company, sales managers "sandbag" to hit their numbers. This turns reasonable targets into unrealistic goals that demotivate the sales team and stagnate the company. Instead, keep target allocations as close as you dare to the actual goal. In the end, it's going to help everyone.

Tip # 3—Keep goals simple

Equally important, sales targets, or goals, need to be simple for both executives and the sales team to understand, and easy to measure. If you can't properly measure sales performance, it's crazy to put sales force rewards in place, because that investment won't work toward your overall company goals and neither will your salespeople.

Tip # 4—Cash is king

Cruises, vacations and other prizes are great, but clear cash incentives are the reason we salespeople come to work every

day. So think of contests and promotions as fun ways to add to a cash compensation plan, but don't make them a substitute.

Tip# 5—Pay incentives as quickly as possible

Sales managers often make the mistake of outlining too long term a sales compensation plan and wait too long to pay their sales teams. It's better to set short-term goals and compensate your team regularly, as it reaches them.

Tip # 6—Everyone loves sales heroes, but they don't win the war

Sales heroes make great water-cooler talk and give everyone something to shoot for, but top sales managers know that in addition to the 10 percent of the sales stars who command the limelight, it's really the other 90 percent of the sales force who fight the good fight day in and day out, and who are actually responsible for winning the war.

Tip # 7—A bit of theater to get everyone on board with the plan

There's an age-old—and yearly—battle between executives and sales teams when it's time to review sales targets and results, but it can be prevented with one theatrical but powerful step. When goals are missed, management says the sales force doesn't "get it" or isn't motivated, and the sales team says the products aren't any good. To keep people from passing the buck, just circulate the compensation plan, get each executive to personally sign it and, voila, no more excuses.

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