

## ***Eight Ways to Boost Sales Team Effectiveness***

Your sales team is the lifeblood of your business and keeping it doing well is vital to keeping the rest of your business thriving. Here are some ways to keep your team energized without dangling the usual carrots and lighting fires underneath.

**Encouragement.** Specific encouragement to individuals and the team is a great way to stoke the fire. Instead of the generic "Great job!" try pointing out things they did particularly well. Tell Sally she handled the Smith account with flair or Bob that he did a great job smoothing over a rough situation with the QT account. Singling people out in recognition for a job well done is a great motivator both for them and for those around them.

**Treat them well.** The golden rule says that you should do unto others as you would have them do unto you. If you treat your employees with respect, they'll respect you as well. If you treat your customers with honesty and respect, they'll be honest and respectful to you and your staff. Give what you want to get in return.

**Practice fundamentals.** We all know what they are: qualifying, demonstrating, asking rather than telling. These should be role-played and practiced regularly within your staff. Remember: clients and potential clients are not practice dummies, they're the real thing. This also encourages team work.

**Focus competition.** Your sales team should be competing against your competitors, not one another. Compensation and a competitive environment that encourages self-reliance over teamwork is going to fail eventually. Your team should be a team, not a group of individuals in the same office. They should be actively encouraged to not only get those sales, but to help one another to do it.

**Use threes.** The "rule of 3s" is to focus everything on the number three. Three steps, three measurements, three to a quota, etc. For your sales team, it may be three new prospects a day or week, three management review sessions a week, three steps to close the deal, etc. It's very likely that most of the processes in your company, from sales to everything else, can be broken into groups of three to make it easier to remember and quantify.

**Don't ask why.** Asking "why" implies it's the fault of the person being asked. Instead of asking "why" a sale didn't go through, ask "how" or "what" instead. "What could have convinced them?" "How did the competition land the sale?" These keep people away from the defensive and create solution-focused responses rather than excuses.

**Find their motivation.** Each person on your sales staff likely has different reasons for being there on the job. Some enjoy the work. Some like the money. Some like the atmosphere. Others might prefer the hours or even like working for you specifically. Whatever their reason, learn what it is and use it as motivation to keep them happy. Give rewards for personal accomplishments based on what they like about the job.

**Focus on positives.** Rather than telling your employees what you don't want them to do or using the word "no" a lot, instead focus on what they should be doing and using "yes." This is a positive affirmation idea learned from child care. People respond better to positives than they do negatives. So encourage them to do things by using positive ideas: "Do it like this" is better than "Don't do it like that."