EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR SALES LEADERSHIP

The Secret to Building High-Performance Sales Teams

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A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK
OKAY, YOU’VE MADE THE decision that you are up for the chal-
lenge and reward of sales leadership. You recognize the skills
needed to lead and direct a sales team are very different than
those needed to be a great salesperson. Sales leadership requires
skills such as training and coaching, giving feedback, account-
able, and running effective sales meetings. We’ll get more
into these skills in future chapters, but first let’s talk about one
more sales management skill you will need to master. Without
this skill, the rest doesn’t matter.

Learn how to hire great salespeople. It’s the difference
between hell and happiness in sales leadership. The golden rule
in hiring is, “Past behavior is the best predictor of future sales
results.” It’s a great rule to live by. Another rule: interview and
hire for emotional intelligence.

When conducting our sales management hiring workshops, I
open up with a fun exercise called, “Your worst sales hire.” See
Figure 3.1 for what bad hire stories usually include.

![Figure 3.1]

This exercise creates an “ah-hah” moment because 90 percent of
what participants share has nothing to do with selling skills. Failure
to launch and culture misfits stem from lack of soft skills, emotional
intelligence skills.

Sales EQ and Sales IQ

When we help sales organizations improve their hiring processes,
we find that many are focused only on qualifying candidates for
the hard skills, the Sales IQ competencies. These competencies
range from number of years in sales to specific industry experi-
ence to size of deals that the salesperson closed. These criteria are
very important—so don’t eliminate these competencies in your
selection process.

Equally important is interviewing and testing for emotional
intelligence skills, Sales EQ. If you’re serious about creating

✓ Negative attitude
✓ Arrogant
✓ Not coachable
✓ Poor work ethic
✓ No desire to learn
✓ Not ethical
✓ Bull in a china shop

FIGURE 3.1
Passion, Perseverance, and Sales Performance

A FEW YEARS AGO, I was having a conversation with a successful colleague of mine, who is also in the sales training business. Pete had just returned from an appointment, one where the purpose and objective was to close a $100,000 deal. Upon arriving at the company, his supposed-to-be new client apologized and informed him that the company had made a decision to sell the firm. I asked, “Ugh . . . what did you do?” He responded without missing a beat, “Some will, some won’t, moving on. In fact, this deal not coming through has actually taught me a few lessons on how to be better in the next selling situation.” No time was lost to a pity party or “why me” conversation.

That’s resiliency. That’s perseverance. That’s success.

Now here’s the backstory on Pete. He grew up in a home with an alcoholic father. At a very young age, Pete became the provider of the house, both emotionally and financially. If you were going to measure an individual on resiliency and perseverance, my colleague would score off the charts. His not so easy childhood produced a very resilient individual.

Your job as a sales manager is to identify and disqualify these salespeople quickly. They are actually not that hard to spot because an external locus of control salesperson has always had a history of blame (see Figure 5.1).

...AND THE LIST GOES ON AND ON!

FIGURE 5.1
It’s Time to Teach Time Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salespeople with an Instant Gratification Mindset</th>
<th>Salespeople with a Delayed Gratification Mindset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prospecting Calls and Outreaches</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prospecting Calls and Outreaches</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not effective because the salesperson didn’t invest time in analyzing whether or not this prospect fits the company ideal client profile. Keeps meeting with prospects who can’t or won’t buy.</td>
<td>Effective because there was time invested to determine if this prospect fits the company’s ideal client profile. Achieves sales results because they are meeting with the right targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospecting outreaches are deleted because they look and sound like every other salesperson. They’re really busy reaching out to prospects with canned, generic, and nonrelevant value propositions.</td>
<td>Connect with prospects because they invested time in crafting prospecting messages customized for the buyer, industry, competitor gap, and pain point. They avoid one-size-fits-all value propositions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Referral Partner Meetings with Non-Competing Vendors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Referral Partner Meetings with Non-Competing Vendors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not effective. The salesperson keeps meeting with potential partners that can’t or won’t refer the right type of business.</td>
<td>Effective because the salesperson designed qualifying questions to determine if this potential partner can/will refer business. Questions such as:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(cont.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salespeople with an Instant Gratification Mindset</th>
<th>Salespeople with a Delayed Gratification Mindset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your salesperson’s coffee partner doesn’t call on the C-suite. Keeps referring your salesperson to non-decision makers.</td>
<td>Who and what level is their potential partner calling on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The salesperson’s coffee partner wins business on low price so only gives referrals to cheap, transactional prospects.</td>
<td>Does this person sell on value or price?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The salesperson’s referral partner is treated like a vendor, not a partner, by their clients.</td>
<td>What is their relationship with their clients?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your salesperson receives the same treatment when given an introduction.</td>
<td>Are they treated as a partner or a vendor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your salesperson’s coffee partner doesn’t embrace the power of reciprocation. They are a taker, not a giver.</td>
<td>Are they a giver or taker?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Multitasking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salesperson is checking email every five minutes or each time an alert pops up.</th>
<th>Productive salespeople don’t! They’re effective because phone/email alerts are turned off.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never completes intentional work or focused work. And if they do, there are mistakes and rework. Completed work is average at best.</td>
<td>They focus on one sales task at a time, completing the task in less time and the completed work is high-quality work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conducting Sales Meetings with Prospects and Customers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ineffective because the salesperson didn’t take the time to engage in pre-call planning. He is winging the sales conversation rather than mastering and leading an effective conversation.</th>
<th>Effective because the salesperson took the time to pre-call plan. Compelling questions are developed and asked during the sales meeting.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He didn’t plan for objections so ends up defending and justifying, sending prospects into flight or flight responses.</td>
<td>Didn’t get stumped by objections because the salesperson created a strategy for preempting or handling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blows the call in the first five minutes because she didn’t adjust her communication style to match the prospect’s style.</td>
<td>The salesperson identified the prospect’s personality style and adapts her approach to create rapport and trust.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The reward is seeing your salespeople gain an understanding of why they aren’t getting everything done or why they are working long hours and still not achieving goals. See the steps in Figure 17.1.

1. Give each person on your team a large piece of flip chart paper. Have each salesperson draw a circle in the middle of the paper with the words “weekly calendar” written in the middle. (As they master this technique, they can move to a “monthly calendar.”)

2. Next, have each salesperson write down everything that needs to be accomplished that week. Have them create random circles around the main circle. The circles might include prospecting outreach, sales meetings, existing client calls/meetings, creating a pursuit strategy for new customers, etc.

**FIGURE 17.1**

- **Attend Educational Webinar**
- **Internal Meeting**
- **Create Sales Forecast**
- **Follow-Up Calls**
- **Prospecting**
- **Existing Client Meetings**
- **Research Prospect**
- **Create Value Proposition**
- **Objections/Responses**
- **Usage**
- **Pull Reports**
The Sales EQ and Sales IQ of Teaching and Coaching

Mirror, Mirror, on the wall, am I modeling what I am teaching at all? It's a great question for all of us in sales leadership roles to ask ourselves.

I've focused on the importance of teaching your sales team emotional intelligence skills. In the next few chapters, I will turn the focus back to you. Look in the mirror and ask: Am I modeling the emotional intelligence skills I teach?

Quite a few years ago, we were referred to a company that was interested in obtaining EQ coaching for one of their top sales managers. Steven was a classic example of a sales manager who was really good at the mechanics of sales management. He was intelligent and good at holding his sales team accountable to activity metrics and sales results. His sales team was hitting quota and they were also starting to hit the doors, leaving the company because of his abrupt and condescending sales management style.

Senior management was looking at the crystal ball and the future didn't look bright for Steven. He was putting up the numbers but his behaviors didn't support the core values of respect and teamwork espoused by the company. This caused many employees

Take time to reflect and tune into your emotions, which in turn helps you tune into the emotional state of your salespeople. See Figure 18.1 for the “S” framework we teach to move beyond superficial and generic coaching conversations.

Figure 18.1

For example, a salesperson states emphatically that the new CRM system is too difficult. Now, you know from other members of your sales team that the new CRM system is easier and twice as effective as the old system. Your initial response might be to make up a story about the salesperson. “This salesperson is always pushing back on change.” Or, you get emotionally triggered and start defending and justifying the new system. To build your case, you share success stories from salespeople on the team who aren’t having any problems with the new CRM system.

Yeah, this is a great way to make an emotional connection and build trust. Slow down. Stop and really think about your salesperson’s perspective, whether you agree with it or not. (Easier said than done.)

Step into your salesperson’s shoes. Empathy is being able to hear the conversation that is not being said. What the salesperson

THE “S” FRAMEWORK OF EMPATHY

Slow down.  
Stop to think.  
Step into your salesperson’s shoes. 
State what the salesperson is thinking or feeling. 
Be Still and listen to their Story.
The Neuroscience of Teaching and Coaching

Many years ago, I heard Pam Gordon speak. She is an award-winning former principal and expert on adult learning. She shared great insights around the adult learning model to help speakers and trainers avoid the curse of, "That was a great presentation. Too bad none of the participants will remember or apply anything you said." Information and knowledge are power, but only when applied.

As I listened to Pam, I experienced another one of my "duh" moments. "Duh, this is why sales managers have trouble transferring the knowledge that made them so successful. This is why really good salespeople often don’t make the leap to sales leadership." Successful salespeople often fail in their new role as sales manager because they’ve never learned the fundamentals of teaching, which is an essential skill for developing salespeople.

As the late, legendary basketball coach John Wooden said, "Don’t equate your expertise with your ability to teach." Think about it. Professional teachers attend four years of college in order to learn how to teach their future students. Professional salespeople attend four years of college in order to learn how to sell.

Take a look at the model below. The beginning of the letter is where your sales team’s current selling and mindset skill sets are. They aren’t bad, but they aren’t good enough to win in an increasingly competitive business environment. When you teach your sales team new selling skills, there’s a very good chance they will get worse before they get better because they haven’t logged enough hours of practice to form new neural pathways. In the early stages of learning, their neural pathways look more like jumbled-up balls of string than the desired T-line of mastery (see Figure 19.1).

FIGURE 19.1