

Achieving Sales Force Transformation

SALES & SERVICE
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Growth Dynamics



Have you noticed lately that hiring top performers in sales is more difficult than ever? Have you noticed your sales team is having to work harder to gain new business and retain and grow existing accounts? Have you also noticed that your team is having a harder time adapting or changing how they sell to support customers' changing expectations? If you said 'yes', then read on.

“Key to helping a sales team change, shift, or “transform” their efforts to sell requires having a clear definition and understanding of what defines Top Performance in the sales role.

Based on GDI research in 2015, the number one challenge facing today's businesses is attracting, selecting and hiring the “right” people that fit your company and stay. Today, most companies are keeping the sales force longer... which is a good thing, right? Well, not necessarily. Today, many companies struggle with a long-term team that struggles to change or adapt how they sell. They want to improve; they just don't know how. Leadership wants them to improve, but they are unsure how to lead them in the right direction to get increased performance.

The Changing Customer's Impact on the Sales Force

Ask any sales professional today if customers have changed how they buy and you will hear a resounding 'Yes!' As customers have changed how they buy, businesses like yours realize in order to stay competitive, you need the sales force to develop more new business rather than just manage existing customers. So, what is getting in the way of the sales team changing how they sell?

The key to helping a sales team change, shift, or “transform” their efforts to sell requires having a clear understanding of what defines Top Performance. Then, sales leadership must arm the team with the tools, training, and support to develop new customers and new business. At GDI, we call this Sales Force Transformation, the process of evolving the sales team to change how they do their job, where they focus their time, and what they must do to succeed in the future.

Although, to get our sales team to “transform” how they sell, we must first gain their insight or “voice” about what they do now, the challenges they face, where they focus their time, what they do best, where they struggle, as well as gain input on what they need from leadership to be the best. At GDI, we call this Sales Intelligence – engaging the sales team in a process to understand what they do today, so we can help them change or evolve how they must sell to accomplish success for the future.

Today's Remote Sales Force

Research states that over 60% of all sales roles today are remote (i.e. working from a home office) where there is minimal direction, sales leadership is at a distance, and it is harder to stay connected. Because of the sales professional's limited engagement with peers or their managers, the greatest challenge is that instead of developing new customers and new business, they focus too much time on already established customers with whom they have a relationship. They also get minimal opportunities to share ideas, collaborate or have a “team” engagement which can be isolating. This type of work environment makes it easy to breed bad habits, and it creates challenges when we ask the team to evolve or change what they are doing.

Sales Force Intelligence

Today, to understand how to train, develop, educate, or improve the sales team, leadership must first define their needs, expectations, and how they are spending their time. One solution is to offer your sales organization a “voice” to communicate and assess training, support, compensation and much more while providing an opportunity to offer suggestions and recommendations to improve the company. By surveying the sales force with role-specific and company-aligned questions, the leadership team can gain valuable insights, trends, ideas, and recommendations, “sales intelligence,” to optimize and transform the sales team. These are examples of targeted topic areas and questions:

- What motivates your performance in the field?
- How much time do you spend developing new business accounts per week?
- In your view, what is the ideal target sale for your company? And who is the decision maker?
- How are your customers changing how they buy?
- How can your manager best support your success?
- Do you have ideas for marketing or lead generation campaigns that would support your territory?



Sales Force Intelligence... Ideas for Success

1. Well-developed surveys must align with company and sales force goals and have targeted topics and questions that allow the sales team to assess, measure, and offer ideas and suggestions.
2. Pre-survey communication should occur to the sales team about the goal and value of the survey to elicit support, engagement, and response.
3. Share survey results at a collaborative sales team meeting to engage the team.

Providing an effective environment for the sales team to communicate their needs and expectations, while also allowing them to measure company support and offer insight into training or leadership needs will improve employee relations and drive increased sales performance. Most importantly, gaining sales force intelligence can help your leadership team develop strategies for improved sales performance and growth in the marketplace.

Sales Team Engagement & Transformation

Communicating, presenting and sharing

the results of a sales force intelligence survey with the sales organization at a team meeting is a highly effective method to engage the team in the process of change. This will also establish role awareness, sales improvement, and a focus on transforming the sales force. When is the last time you had a truly engaging sales team meeting that was focused on the needs of the sales team, as opposed to you telling them what they “should” be doing?

Providing the opportunity for the team to engage in a collaborative discussion regarding industry trends, changes in the role, and changes occurring in the field can drive awareness and solutions for developing new business.

The Result... An engaging, powerful, sales-focused discussion that looks at the role of sales and how to adapt, perform, change and transform their efforts for sales success.

Today’s Leadership Focus – Change!

Today, leading, developing, and retaining a top performing sales organization requires more than just competitive pay and incentives... it requires having a clear understanding of what Top Performance in the sales role is, and having a sales leadership team that effectively hires, coaches, develops, and leads a team to optimize their performance and sales success.

When we survey teams today, the issue is seldom that a team member is the wrong person. It is they are spending too much time in the wrong places and wasting valuable time in areas where they are comfortable. As a team seeks to change how they sell, the leadership team must consider how they must change HOW they lead. Leadership should consistently monitor, measure, coach, develop, and hold accountability for performance improvement.

Transforming a sales organization is not a one-time event, but rather, an ongoing evolution that requires consistent leadership focus, as well as performance accountability, to reinforce change and maintain momentum. By defining Top Performance in sales and gathering sales force intelligence, you will be on your way to a successful Sales Force Transformation!

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