

# BUILDING A SALES TEAM THAT *FITS* YOUR COMPANY

*Your customer's world has changed... how has your sales organization responded?*

Ty Swain GDI

As a company who specializes in the sales force performance and customer intelligence market...never in the past 10 years have we seen business change so frequently and so rapidly. "Change" has become the norm in order for businesses to compete and succeed in the marketplace today.

## ***The Changing Customer Environment...***

Research shows that the way companies are buying and operating today differs greatly from any other time in history. Technology, competition, economic pressures and the impact of a global economy have changed how companies do business...which then impacts and changes how you must sell and how the sales team must perform.

The question is...how has your sales team changed or adapted to support changes in their role...and is it possible the role of sales today in your company no longer fits the team you have? How will you know if you don't first define the role of sales today...and then determine how your team fits?

## ***The Sales Environment... Adapting to Change***

As you may be experiencing, customers today are aware of the vast resources of information found online and may even prefer to make purchases through your company's website or other e-commerce sites. They may be using technology, smart phones, iPads, etc. to communicate with the sales force, creating a higher degree of reaction and sense of urgency for immediate response.

A sales team may accept iPads, new phone technology, cars with more gadgets, and even CRM programs that require them to learn new ways to track and support customers...but then may resist changing how they sell, support or retain customer accounts. Why?

The answer is simple...often they are unsure what or how they need to change...so they continue to do the same thing and hope for a better result. GDI studies of today's top sales organizations prove that successful sales teams must adjust to keep pace with the ever-changing customer environment and shifting market pressures. This requires a sales team that can adapt and align itself to navigate the increasingly competitive marketplace. Some people can adapt, some will work to

adapt, and some simply are unwilling, unable or not motivated to change or modify their approach.

## ***Customers Want More for Less...***

Selling and managing and retaining customers has become increasingly demanding...the customer wants it all faster, at the best price, with the best service...resulting in a truly complex sales environment. To be successful, top performing sales professionals must understand their customer's business, make recommendations, and offer solution-based services...not just take orders.

To offset the competitive marketplace, many companies are strengthening what are known as the value-added services they provide. This solution-based approach is tailored to fit today's customer. To create trust and credibility that enhances the customer relationship, the sales team must adopt a consultative, solution-oriented approach for success. And, the sales person must be able to work independently and autonomously in a territory, sometimes with significant travel, and keep themselves motivated to persevere and sustain their efforts.

## ***Evolving the Role of Sales...***

In addition, today's leaders are also realizing that "sales" in their company may take differing forms. In some companies, there are multiple sales roles such as new business development and customer account management/retention...very different sales roles with very different expectations. A company may have sales managers, route drivers and inside sales...all may have selling responsibilities at a different level and with different expectations. Each role of sales changes the type of fit you need for hiring, retaining and developing the best team.

To best optimize sales growth, leadership must look critically and strategically at their sales structure and organization and then hire specifically to the top performance standards of the role requirements. Many companies are unaware that the role of sales is unique to their company and culture. How they compensate, lead, develop, or even go to market impacts who will fit and be successful in the role. This is why one sales professional will do very well in one company, leave and go

to a similar organization, and then struggle or fail to perform in their role. It's no longer hiring ANY sales person; it's hiring the right person. To do this, you must 1st define "right."

In this complex selling environment, many companies will work to create a benchmark that defines all the unique aspects of the sales role to assure they attract, qualify, hire and retain the right people who will fit, stay and perform to optimize company growth and saturation in the marketplace. Top performers must have the "right fit" of attributes, motivation, experience, skills and fit to the role, company culture and customers to be successful.


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**Sales Leadership and Change...**

As companies today seek to select, develop and retain better top performers that fit the role, the team becomes more effective and the expectation is higher for increased leadership and support. Better performers expect better leadership...or they will leave because they can.

As sales professionals today look to change how they perform, sales leadership must ask their team, "What can I do to help?"

Company leadership must also look internally and ask "What should I do to better my skills, my efforts...and optimize the team?" They must also provide the tools, resources, leadership and accountability to assure team success. Top sales leaders that eliminate obstacles, effectively coach, engage and partner with their team will win.

If your sales team understands the changes that are occurring and how to perform better...leadership can create the platform for transforming your sales organization for success today and in the future. As companies work to "change" in order to compete and succeed in the marketplace today, the role of sales will change as well. Is your team ready, aware and willing? 



*GDI provides world-class sales leadership solutions for the selection, performance and retention of top performers in today's leading organizations.*

Ty Swain  
Growth Dynamics, CEO  
tswain@gdicorp.com

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