



A High-Performance Sales Management System

Three dynamics characterize top-flight sales organizations: a predictable, consistent level of peak performance, a vibrant learning environment, and the steady emergence of salespeople who acquire strong leadership skills. These three characteristics are closely linked. Salespeople and managers in these environments frequently develop the kind of advanced business skills typically associated with senior executives. Managers mentor and inspire individuals and teams to achieve to their fullest potential. And a flourishing system for sales leadership pays off in growing, profitable sales.

A salesperson in an ideal organization is nurtured to develop the kinds of skills that excellent senior executives possess—vision, creative thinking, independent analysis, and the ability to collaborate with all levels of people on cross-functional teams at both the client and within the publishing organization.

Such sales people evolve into natural leaders and an environment of leadership begins to thrive within the organization, creating a culture that takes root from “below.” In other words, salespeople are empowered, challenged, and mentored to think and behave as business owners and entrepreneurs.

In a high-performance sales organization, managers sell through their teams through effective coaching, behavior modeling, and training. Sales team members learn from each other through effective knowledge sharing and team-building strategies.

The individual salespeople, in collaboration with their managers, map out compelling strategies for key accounts that can be used to enable the senior managers to understand how to be engaged and allocate adequate resources.

Typically sales organizations manage and train “from above”—leadership flows from the top down. The job of senior managers is to direct and lead their teams. Yet this approach often fails to allow the sales team members to cultivate skills in key account selling, strategic business planning, and cross-functional team leadership.

In the best organizations, a learning and leadership culture emerges when these dynamic characteristics take root:

- A dynamic sharing of effective strategies and tactics occurs regularly and organically.
- Key account salespeople become adept at strategic planning, enabling senior executives to effectively allocate resources for highly profitable sales objectives.
- Sales managers deepen their market and client knowledge, which they use to establish value-based relationships with their advertiser clients and ad agencies.
- Sales managers guide learning systems that enable the team to build on individual successes and highly effective selling methods.

