

The Extraordinary Sales Manager

*How to Take Your Sales Team
from Good to Great*



Tony Cole

The Extraordinary Sales Manager



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*An excerpt from the
Sales Managed Environment® Curriculum



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“I can’t change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.”

~ Jimmy Dean



***“You are perfectly designed for the results
you are getting today.”***

~Tony Cole



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Introduction

The Extraordinary Sales Manager

At some point, most sales managers have asked themselves why their salespeople aren't selling. Clearly, there are many factors involved in the business of selling, and there is not always an easy way to determine the problem areas.

Likewise, as any salesperson can attest, the sales process can be a complex and daunting experience fraught with obstacles like aggressive competition, tight economic environments, shrinking budgets and incumbent vendors. While there are many obstacles like these that are outside of our control, there are many others that we can control, like number of phone calls and appointments made, good selling techniques and personal motivation. Our goal in this guidebook is to provide some new framework for the controllable factors and, consequently, give hope and clarity to frustrated sales managers.

There are many possible reasons that a specific group of salespeople may not be selling but there are some predominant dysfunctions that sales organizations can positively and dramatically affect if done properly. An energetic and dedicated sales manager can significantly impact the results of his sales team if he consistently implements the directions that follow.



In order to address these issues, we must first acknowledge that the sales management activities that we are performing today are creating the results we are achieving today. Many or few, consistent or irregular, planned or impromptu, the behaviors and activities that we, as sales managers, use to motivate, train and hold our sales team accountable are at least partly responsible for the success of those we manage. In other words, what activities are you doing now that are creating your current unsatisfactory results?

The old adage, “*If you do what you’ve always done, you will get what you’ve always gotten*” comes to mind. It is up to us as sales leaders to set higher standards for the behaviors and activities *and hold people accountable* so that we get better results.

So, in the interest of bettering your salespeople, I hope you will approach the following discussion with an open mind. A characteristic of truly successful individuals is that they welcome the opportunity to explore and implement new ideas and practices. Even if some of the territory that we will explore does not seem to apply directly to what is going on in your company, recognize that you cannot achieve different results until you are receptive and welcoming of analysis. You may find some unexpected value in the following information that will positively affect your team’s sales as we focus on the most common issues. Following this framework will help you make the most dramatic difference in your business results.

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do, so throw off the bowlines, sail away from safe harbor, catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore, Dream, Discover.

~ Mark Twain



Chapter 1

Setting Standards & Developing Strong Accountability Processes

There are two areas that must be addressed to achieve more effective performance. These include: (1) Setting Standards that are higher than the current ones and (2) Developing Strong Accountability Processes that allow no room for excuses. These performance management issues are interwoven, but we will address them separately to provide better clarity and a plan of action for each.

Setting Standards: Most companies set annual standards for sales teams and salespeople. Certainly, goals are established and communicated and are probably tracked and inspected on a somewhat regular basis. Typically, the process for setting goals is part of the annual business planning, usually an arduous ordeal in which the sales team has little say. Thus, it is neither enjoyed nor embraced by those who are actually responsible for the goals and the activity that supports the goals.

Yet, if this process is approached with the right attitude and the goal of helping the salesperson make more money, this annual business and goal planning process can be a positive experience that will truly motivate individual salespeople and bring sales teams together. So, let's describe how this can happen for your company.



The following exercise will help you align your thinking and thus, your expectations regarding acceptable sales performance. In this case, you will use the table below to analyze and set standards for your entire team's Annual Gross Sales Number, but you can use this exercise with individual salespeople as well. You can change the Annual Gross Sales Number to any other metric you might wish to identify and set, i.e., the number of prospecting calls, the number of first meetings, etc.

Critical Success Factor:	Annual Gross Sales #
Extraordinary	
Excellent	
Good	
Poor	
Failing	

Step 1: Write your team's current **Annual Gross Sales Number** goal in the box next to **GOOD**. This is what is expected this year. Achieving any number less than this will be considered poor performance.

Step 2: Now, pick the Annual Gross Sales number of an okay year from the past, but choose one when your team did not achieve its assigned goal. Choose a year when your team worked hard and put forth great effort, but did not quite reach the assigned number. Write the actual number achieved in the box next to **POOR**. Understand that this number is poor because your team did not reach goal. If you frame the year as pretty good, i.e. "we almost made it", you have communicated that you will accept less than **GOOD**. You will have accepted mediocrity, thus eroding the new standards you are trying to set.

Step 3: Select a number that would be completely unacceptable for your team and write this in the **FAILING** box.



Step 4: Select a number that would make an extremely good year, one in which your team exceeded goal. Write this number next to the EXCELLENT box.

Step 5: Select a number that would make a truly amazing year, a year that would go beyond expectations, far surpassing the current sales goal. Write this number in the box beside EXTRAORDINARY.

As you can see, you have clearly identified and raised the standards. This newly defined level of standards will become your communication platform for setting extraordinary expectations with your team.

Even more impactful is taking an individual salesperson through this process. Have the salesperson establish the sales metric for POOR through EXTRAORDINARY and the monetary/life rewards that will accompany each level. Then say the following: *“Bill, I don’t believe in micromanaging. You are a professional with X number of years’ experience in your sales role. I am sure you want to achieve high levels of success, so I am going to ask you to manage yourself. To what standard on this chart will you manage yourself?”*

In most cases, Bill will tell you that he wants to manage himself to EXTRAORDINARY or EXCELLENT, that he will put forth the effort to reach the identified goal. Hence your job of holding him accountable to the metric should become easier. Once you have had this discussion with each of your salespeople, you will have created and communicated extraordinary standards with which you can manage activity and results.

If, in the course of this process, you find a salesperson who is only willing to manage himself to a level of GOOD, and your company is like most and is trying to compete, then you may have the wrong

“I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions.”

~ Stephen Covey



person in this sales role. And worse, if you find that you have multiple salespeople who are motivated to be only mediocre, you have a problem because chances are good that your team will not achieve EXTRAORDINARY or even EXCELLENT until these people have been reassigned or removed and new standards have been communicated to those who are committed to this process.

Developing Strong Tracking & Accountability Processes

In order to have success reaching goals, we must hold people to the necessary activity by building strong accountability processes. We often describe the term “*Accountability*” as the 14-letter dirty word because in most organizations, the process of inputting, collecting, and inspecting sales activity is not well-liked, by salespeople or sales management.

Most companies desire accountability in their sales organizations, but fail to track the sales activities that are the most predictive of sales results. Too often, the metric of “closed sales” is the identified and inspected metric. Tracking only this metric is similar to looking in a rear view mirror in that this does not give you necessary, early predictive information. In hindsight, nearly anything is clear.

So, instead of tracking closes, we need to track metrics like number of prospecting dials made, the number of appointments made, the number of appointments kept, the number of second meetings, etc. Tracking this type of information will allow us to ascertain important ratios, like the ratio of prospecting dials to first appointments and the ratio of prospecting dials to closes. With this information, we can intelligently set and track activity goals. And, if we hold our salespeople accountable to their activities, we should be able to intelligently predict future sales.

As an effective sales manager, you must track, inspect and coach each step in the selling process including phone calls, contacts, opportunities, appointments, proposals and closed sales.



This detailed information will give you the raw data needed to see patterns. It will help you recognize the correlation between each step: prospecting to qualifying, qualifying to first meeting, first meeting to presentation, presentation to sale. Often, salespeople and sales managers do not know how many prospecting calls they need to make to close a sale (call-to-sale ratio). Yet, this detail is vital information to the success of each salesperson and organization.

This process of accountability is hard work, but if you have taken your salespeople through the discussion of setting extraordinary goals (explained previously) and your salesperson has agreed to manage himself to Excellent or Extraordinary, then you have done some heavy lifting by setting expectations.

Next, we need to address holding people accountable. Tracking activity is beneficial only if the data will be used to hold people to their promised goals. You must help each salesperson understand the ramifications of failure to achieve their promised goals.

Unfortunately, I have found it common that companies allow salespeople to make excuses for lack of success. If your company allows for excuses, it is likely that the other sales systems and processes are going to fail as well. You must be consistent in holding salespeople accountable to their behaviors.

To do this, you will hold the following conversation with each individual salesperson. *“Bill, what will happen if you don’t reach this goal? If you don’t achieve Extraordinary?”* Then you will wait for his answer, allowing him to think through the consequences.

In this way, you are asking him to determine what he will adjust, and what the consequences will be if he does not reach goal. Leading each

“To be successful, you have to have your heart in your business, and your business in your heart.”

~ Thomas Watson, Sr.



salesperson through this discussion will help the individual to take responsibility for his success or failure. It will also allow you to utilize your accountability systems with more receptivity. After all, your salespeople agreed to this process and each established his “stretch” goal.

If Bill shrugs his shoulders and says “*Oh well, maybe next month/week/year*”, you may have the wrong person in this role. If Bill is the right person for this role, he will be scrambling to figure out how he is going to meet his specified goal and he will verbalize his own personal pain by saying something like “*My wife will have to continue working.*” Or “*I won’t be able to buy a new car.*”

Our company uses a tool that evaluates strengths and weaknesses, and other things, in sales organizations. Approximately 66% of the salespeople assessed in OMG’s evaluation process make excuses for lack of performance. This means that they blame the company, the competition or the market, *not themselves*, for their lack of success. Clearly, this is a common issue.

There will always be things beyond our control. The object is to control those factors that we are able to control in order to affect success. Make this clear to your sales team. You cannot afford to allow excuses for lack of performance. If you allow one person to make excuses, you will be obligated to let the next do the same. If excuse-making becomes systemic, it will erode the standards you have painstakingly set.

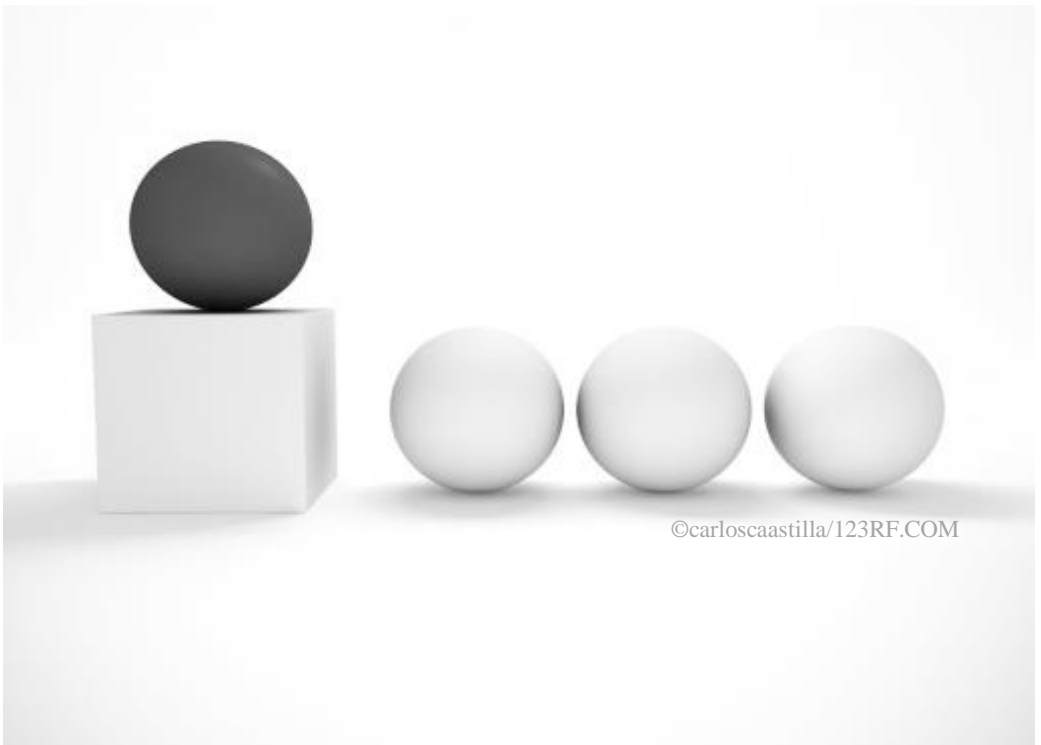
Here is an example and a recommended solution to help your organization create a “no-excuses” environment. A salesperson, Jane, has just told her sales manager that she did not reach her activity goal of phone calls this month because she had an unusual amount of operational support issues upon which she had to spend time. In other words, she is blaming the company.

Your response to an excuse like this should be “*Jane, if I did not let you use that as an excuse, what would you have done differently?*” This strategy requires Jane to take responsibility. Jane now has to think



through the problem herself and figure out what she must do differently to avoid this problem in the future. By asking the question in this manner, you are not allowing her to continue making excuses which lowers her own standards and those of the company.

Excuses come in all forms, so learn to recognize them and utilize the critical question; *“If I did not let you use that excuse, what would you have done differently?”* See how many times in one week you can use that question and note the results you achieve in a short time.

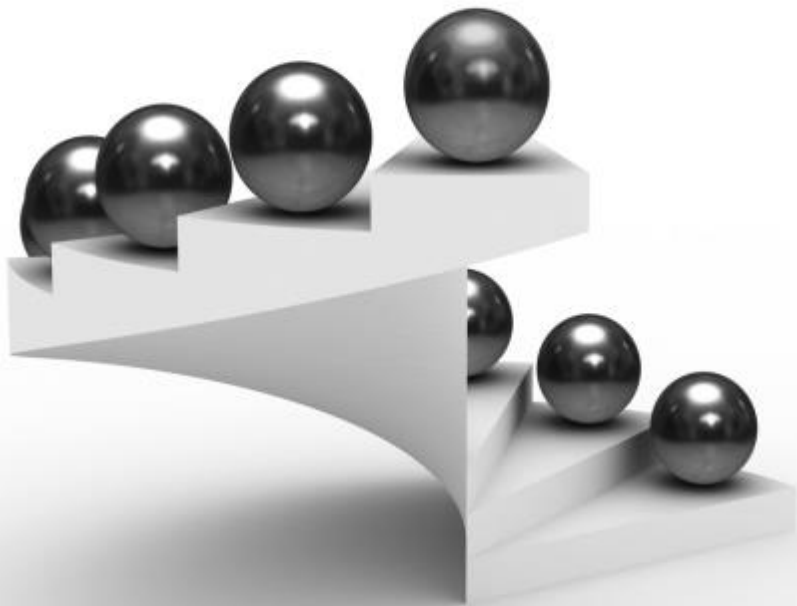


“Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve. Thoughts are things! And powerful things at that, when mixed with definiteness of purpose, and burning desire, can be translated into riches.”

~ Napoleon Hill

“Either you run the day, or the day runs you.”

~ Jim Rohn



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Chapter 2

Goal Setting & Motivation

When asked, most sales managers say that one of their greatest challenges is their ability to motivate salespeople. If a sales manager can figure out what makes his salespeople “tick”, he can help them hit their goal numbers. Motivation seems like hard work because nearly every salesperson values different things. There are, however, several steps a sales manager can take to establish a motivating environment for salespeople.

The first step is to recognize that motivation is an “inside-out” job. When the topic of motivation is discussed, we typically think about incentive compensation, sales contests and recognition programs. All of these certainly encourage sales teams to focus on selling because these are rewards. However, you will gain true engagement and enthusiasm if you create an “every day” environment which encourages each individual to identify and visualize his own *internal* motivation.

Do you remember Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs pyramid? The bottom two largest tiers are Physiological and Safety because these are the most basic needs of every individual, including salespeople who are starting at the bottom and working their way up to self-actualization. They must first have income for food, shelter, safety, etc. Only once they have attained all of these basic necessities can



they turn attention to the higher tiers of Love/Self-Belonging, Esteem and Self-Actualization.

To put it another way, salespeople do not care about corporate shareholder value unless they are shareholders themselves. What they care about is food, shelter, clothing, recognition, paying for college education or wedding, buying a vacation home, etc. These are personal desires and make up the vast majority of things that are important to people. So, the solution is to create an environment where this internal motivation can take place. (See *The Dream Manager* book by Michael Kelly.)

This means that it is up to you to help your salespeople identify what is important to them. Make the effort to set up time off-site that is dedicated to planning and spend time developing each individual's dreams and goals. This is time that you will spend ON your business instead of IN it. Take a day or two that will help you and your team take a giant step forward to plan for the future.

Create a process where people can establish personal goals because this is where the motivation comes from. This is also where the passion and desire come from. Hence, this is where the business plan must come from.

You might position this as though you are the coach and the salespeople are players on a competitive baseball team. Each of you has a part to play so that the whole team wins. When a salesperson objects to the dream building exercises by saying something like, "*You are just going to provide a goal for me anyway, so why do I have to do this?*", remind him that, just like a baseball team, each player must excel at his job so that the team can win and go to play-offs.

Say to him "*You are my shortstop and you want to win the Gold Glove, hit 310 and bat as clean-up, 4th in the batting order. Pretend you really are an ace shortstop and these are your goals. As coach, I will do everything I can to help you attain those goals. But, understand that*



I too have goals, and my biggest is that we get to the World Series. We are working together, heading in the same, not different directions, to accomplish the same goals. This is a win-win for both of us.”

Salespeople will understand this. If someone does not get this, he may not be suited for selling. Selling requires desire, commitment and a need to win.

Create an environment where people get a chance to unplug and sit down and outline their goals and dreams and establish timeframes, attaching financial values to these items. Once you have attached financial values, you know what level of prospecting and selling activity is necessary for each salesperson. You will also have a much better idea what realistic standards look like.

Reward yourself and your salespeople when they have a success. Many years ago, when just my wife and I were running ACTG, we celebrated every time we sold a new account. But, over the past 20+ years, selling new accounts has become business-as-usual. We unfortunately stopped celebrating our successes along the way. So, as your people go through and identify what their goals are, as you sit down as an individual salesperson and identify what your goals are, be sure to identify how you will reward yourself when you achieve them.

Reward Success & Discipline Failure--Salespeople are like kids in that they want to be recognized for their successes. In almost every home in America, we have a kid's Hall of Fame, otherwise known as the refrigerator door. Every time one of the kids does something great, they come home through the door and they look for attention “*Look at this. Look at my art. Look at the A on my science test.*” And what do we do? We put their success on the refrigerator door where everyone can be reminded of this accomplishment.

You will want to create a theoretical “refrigerator door” somewhere for your salespeople to reward their successes. A visual reminder, even a poster board with a graph and names that is posted where all can see, is a great way to keep everyone motivated and to reward those who deserve recognition.



A good sales manager will also have a system for helping a salesperson get back on track and correct problems that have led to failure. For instance, you must have a conversation with Jane who did not reach her prospecting goal for the month. You will ask her *“How important is it for you to succeed?” “What do you need to do to fix this problem?” “What kind of process or program could you put in place to get on track to succeed?”*

Assuming that Jane has desire and indicates she is willing to do the work, you will say, *“OK. This is what we are going to do. Every Thursday at 10am for the next four weeks, I am going to come to your office and listen to you make prospecting phone calls.”* Then you must follow through each week. This is the kind of discipline and structure that will get Jane back on the road to success.

These conversations are tough to implement. Most sales managers don't have these discussions, avoiding them entirely or softening the language that, in the end, renders the conversation ineffective. Unfortunately, *“Mary, you have to improve your results or we will have to...”* sounds threatening and punitive instead of constructive. We want to create a strong sales environment through instruction, motivation and mentoring.



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“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”

~ Chinese Proverb



Chapter 3

Coaching to Sales Success

If coaching *does* take place, it is usually done as needs arise. In other words, if a salesperson has a deal he needs to close, he may talk it through with his sales manager. Or if a salesperson has a specific problem submitting paperwork or a technology issue, coaching may take place. Of course, these items should be addressed. But, most importantly, we must coach for sales success. We must coach people to go out and win more business.

Success Formula: What are the Smart Numbers & Critical Ratios?

Coaching for success starts with math. The details in the numbers will help you help your people succeed. Ask yourself, “*What numbers must my team submit?*”

Start with the end in mind. Based on your Extraordinary goal discussions with each salesperson, you know how much each must sell in order for your team to reach the annual goal. Now, you must take the next step. Making the math easy, see the following example: Assuming you need \$500,000 annual new business sales and you have 5 salespeople; on average, you will need \$100,000 of new business sales per sales professional. If you know the average size sale is \$10,000, then you know each sales producer must make approximately 10 sales. These are called Smart Numbers.



But, we must continue this analysis. These Smart Numbers are supported by activities that also have Critical Ratios that must be calculated and tracked. So now, you must calculate the activity ratios per salesperson.

What is Jane's ratio of presentations to closes? What is her ratio of sales opportunities to presentations? What is her ratio of appointments to sales opportunities? What is her ratio of contacts to appointments? And what is her ratio of dials (or attempts) to contacts? These are called Critical Ratios.

Perform this math analysis with each individual on your sales team. Then establish a benchmark.

If you know that a salesperson's annual sales goal is \$100,000 and you know the current ratios needed, per the analysis above, you will then be able to extrapolate to get the specific behaviors necessary for each individual to reach his or her annual sales goal.

In other words, if the current ratio of a salesperson's dials (or attempts) to contacts is 10:1 and you know that his ratio of contacts to appointments is 4:1 and his ratio of appointments to sales opportunities is 3:1 and his ratio of sales opportunities to presentation is 1.25:1 and you know that his ratio of presentation to close is 4:1, then you can approximate that he will need to make 40 presentations, 50 sales opportunities, 150 appointments, 600 contacts, and 6000 dials annually (120 dials weekly or 24 dials daily) in order to reach his annual goal of 10 sales.

*"I have learned that people will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did, but people will never
forget how you made them feel."*

~ Maya Angelou



Or starting with the end in mind of \$100,000 per salesperson to calculate the levels of behavior that he must perform, take his current performance and calculate:

1. $100,000/\$10,000$ average sales = 10 Sales
2. $10 \text{ Sales} /.25$ (4:1 ratio) = 40 Presentations
3. $40 \text{ Presentations} /.8$ (1.25:1 ratio) = 50 Sales Opportunities
4. $50 \text{ Sales Opportunities} /.33$ (3:1 ratio) = 150 Appointments
5. $150 \text{ Appointments} /.25$ (4:1 ratio) = 600 Contacts
6. $600 \text{ Contacts} /.10$ (10:1 ratio) = 6000 Dials (or Attempts)

If these numbers are annual numbers, each of these behaviors should be reduced to weekly and daily activity numbers so that you have the data necessary to coach your people in real time.

In other words:

- $6000 \text{ Dials (or Attempts)}/50 \text{ Weeks} = 120 \text{ Dials (or Attempts)}$
per week
- $120 \text{ Dials (or Attempts per week)}/5 \text{ Days per week} = 24 \text{ Dials (or Attempts)}$ per day

This is an example of a *Success Formula* -- the daily and weekly numbers that must be identified so that you can hold your people accountable. You will coach your people to perform to these numbers. Each week, you will remind all your salespeople of the number of calls they must make.

Once these numbers are identified and communicated to each of your salespeople, you must evaluate individual performance against their Success Formula. Every week, you must compare actual activity against these benchmarks to see if each salesperson has completed the behaviors identified in his Critical Ratio analysis.



Once the activity numbers have been identified, communicated and tracked for a time, you will begin to see who is making the effort-- the dials, the contacts, the appointments, etc.

Is John making the effort? Is he making the dials and contacts? There is absolutely no excuse for lack of effort. If you have a salesperson who is not making the effort, you have a new set of problems and the solutions are few. John can either make the effort, resign or be terminated within a specified period of time.

If someone on your team is not making the effort-- the dials, the contacts, the presentations, etc., your sales figures will reflect it. If an individual is not meeting a conversion ratio level identified in the Critical Ratios, you will know what area you need to focus your efforts on.

When I was coaching at Iowa State University as a strength and conditioning coordinator, my first task was to evaluate each player's fitness level. As a result, we knew when George and other defensive linemen ran less-than-acceptable times in the 40-yard dash that we would get crushed by Oklahoma and Nebraska because their players were bigger and faster. At the time, our coaching technique sounded something like, "*George, you must run faster.*" At the beginning of fall practices, when players were out of shape, this may have been adequate coaching. However, as the season wore on and players were better conditioned, this type of coaching was ineffective.

I was subject to this same inadequate coaching technique when I was in the life insurance business. My manager, Bob, would look at my numbers and tell me that I needed to see more people. How many of us are guilty of coaching people that way? How many of us have been coached that way? This "run harder" coaching technique might be effective with a salesperson that is not making *any* effort. But, if he is working hard and doing the behaviors, you must discover the choke point and adopt a more constructive coaching technique.



Sales Huddles and Collecting the Activity Data

So, now what? You've got Success Formulas. Your salespeople are involved, engaged and doing the activities because you had them set their own personal goals. You know the Critical Ratios. Now, you must collect the Activity Data which you will do in regularly scheduled **Sales Huddles**.

A **Sales Huddle** is a brief and urgent meeting done at a consistent time daily, weekly, semi-weekly or monthly. Sales Huddles should be held on a consistent day and at a consistent time. In these ritualistic meetings, you will collect real-time numbers-- the Smart Numbers that will tell you if your people are performing the necessary behaviors.

Sales Huddles are used strictly for gathering real-time information about the future financial health of your sales team. Sales Huddles focus on burning platform issues--those things that must be attended immediately. They are not sales meetings. Sales Huddles are done on a consistent time and day with the same specific agenda.

The frequency at which you will hold Sales Huddles is dependent upon the type of business you are in and the length of your typical sales cycle. For instance, if your company is in the recruiting business, placing people in jobs, you might hold Sales Huddles as often as twice a day. But, if you sell consulting services where the sales cycle is often a month or more, once every other week might be sufficient.

Your goal in Sales Huddles is to collect the Smart Numbers. You will have each salesperson call out their numbers for Dials, Contacts, Opportunities, Presentations, Closed Business and Average Sale. You will record this information for immediate analysis.

When you collect this type of information in real time, you know immediately if your people are doing the necessary activities. Getting this information regularly and while-in-process can help you and



your salespeople, but only if you compare these numbers against the Critical Ratios for each producer. Doing this in a public forum will allow you to leverage peer pressure because no one wants to be the low-man-on-the-totem-pole.

Of course, it is much easier to do periodic check-ups and, in between times, hope your salespeople do their jobs as they should. But, this rear-view-mirror analysis will not help you to keep a salesperson on track. There are all kinds of reasons that salespeople fall off of their activity and you are looking to prevent this. The question you must ask yourself is, *“When do I want to know someone is not doing the necessary activities?”* For those of us whose job depends upon salespeople and their production, the answer must be *“The sooner, the better.”*

Your salespeople won't usually come to you if they have fallen off their activities and numbers. They will not want to call attention to the fact that they are struggling because they recognize that they are failing to do their job. So, they will usually try to hide. Sales Huddles make it difficult or impossible to hide unless someone calls out false numbers consistently. Eventually, if not immediately, you will know if one of your salespeople is lying about their activities because his production will not hold true to his Success Formula.

Sales Huddles are vital to the health of a sales team. This process of collecting real-time information allows you to provide real-time feedback and real-time coaching to get/keep people on track. Of course, this means you must have a way to gather and track the numbers and chances are you will not have a software system that can be customized to track the necessary specific activities. A paper and pencil for collection of numbers during the Sales Huddle and an Excel spreadsheet identifying sales behaviors and names are sufficient. If you

“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

~ Charles Darwin



need something that gives you better history and easier management that ties to each producer's Success Formula, we offer a tool called SuccessTracker, ACTG's tracking and analysis software.

Once you have collected the data, you must perform the next steps. First of all, you must evaluate the data to gain insight. What are the Smart Numbers telling you? How do they compare to the Critical Ratios? You must look at each salesperson's Success Formula and see if the numbers match up. If the numbers don't match up, you must know where they don't (where the problem lies) so that you can coach to the specific behavior(s) involved. The second thing you must do is to stack-rank salespeople by performance immediately after the huddle. The third thing you must do is to push this information back out to your sales team.

It is important that you share this information with the team to leverage the natural competitive nature of salespeople. The top two or three people in every organization are going to get this report and they are going to fight to stay on top. The bottom two or three people are going to fight to stay off the bottom. The middle people are going to take a look at the top and say, *"I'm not as good as Bill, the top producer, but at least I'm not as bad as Bob, the bottom producer."* Your goal is to help people move up the ladder to become consistent top producers or to move them out of a sales job.

Upon implementing Sales Huddles, a couple of things happen 100 percent of the time. The first is that sales activity increases immediately because *"we are inspecting what we expect"*. The second thing is that execution improves. The conversion of one step in the sales process to the next begins to improve without any additional skills coaching because people are being reminded regularly of their Smart Numbers, Critical Ratios and Success Formulas. Suddenly, a producer has better insight into his own business. As a result, he self-corrects with no additional help.

This is why this information is so important to those responsible for



selling and sales management. As a sales manager, you must collect the data, you must measure the data against the Smart Numbers and Critical Ratios and you must know conversion ratios in order to coach your team to sales success.

You must coach to move the Big Numbers – contribution margin, revenue, deposits, and fees. Most companies will identify the rocks. Many companies will even identify the activities. Unfortunately, they don't typically track and coach in real-time to the choke points.

If you are in a rapid transactional type of business (such as a retail type of operation where you have a lot of traffic), you might hold Sales Huddles and analyze data daily. If your sales cycle is a little bit longer, maybe weekly or every other week will be sufficient.

Coaching

But, certainly, you must coach your people to success at least once a quarter. The big challenge is that your salespeople are at different levels of success and need different training and you are limited by time.

Here's a quick way to coach people at different success levels.

1. *Top Producers:* Reward and recognize the top producers who are putting forth the effort and getting results. Beyond that, stay out of their way. Occasionally, ask what you can do to make it easier for them to do what they do best- sell.
2. *Producers with Results but Insufficient Effort:* Length of sales cycle often comes into play in this scenario. A salesperson becomes complacent due to current production. Unfortunately, he is probably headed for a future slump due to lack of current prospecting activity. Compliment the salesperson on current sales and then remind him that current prospecting activity produces future sales. Suggest that he may be headed for a slump and ask him, "*Is that where you want to be?*" The answer is always "*No.*" You will know in Sales Huddles whether or not he is doing his activities. If he is not, you may have to meet with him regularly until he is back on track.



3. *Producers with Effort but No Results:* Sometimes you will have someone whose performance does not support the activity numbers. In other words, your salesperson may appear to be putting in the effort, but the results are not there. In this scenario, you have one of two problems. Either the salesperson is entering invalid activity numbers or he is terrible at executing the sales process.

Sometimes you will have a salesperson who works the system until this is uncovered. This means that he will give you false activity numbers and it will be up to you to figure it out. If you implement Sales Huddles and collect the Smart Numbers, eventually you will see that the data does not match up in the Critical Ratios and Smart Formulas.

Your goal must be to coach this person either to success or to exit his current sales position. It is easy to allow lagging producers to take up space and time, but it is destructive to morale and to your bottom line. Most companies wait too long to exit a lagging producer and suffer lost sales revenue and money paid in the form of draw or salary. Thousands of dollars are sacrificed when these predicaments go unresolved.

Thus your coaching will sound like this: *“Bob, I see that you are making the effort, but your results are not there. We need to discuss where you are headed, and how you are going to fix this. My office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 2-4pm. Let’s schedule 15 minutes to talk through this. Please be prepared to show me the activity that is in your pipeline currently and how that will impact your results in 90 days.”* After this meeting, you will set up another and etc. until you determine whether you are able to coach him to better performance or if you must exit him.



“I don’t pay good wages because I have a lot of money; I have a lot of money because I pay good wages.”

~Robert Bosch



Chapter 4

Upgrading & Hiring Better Salespeople

Recruiting is the biggest problem identified by those participating in my workshops. The question is always, “*How do I hire better salespeople?*” Unfortunately there is no simple answer to this question. However, one thing you must recognize is that *you and your process* are responsible for the quality of the salespeople on your staff today. In other words, your recruiting process is perfectly designed for the team you have. So, if you need more productive salespeople, you will need to change your recruiting process.

Recruiting is like sales. You must have a system. You must have a pipeline. Your activity must be consistent. You must execute this recruiting process exactly like you wish your salespeople to execute their sales process. Recruiting, like selling, is not a “sometime” thing- it can’t be sometimes you do it and sometimes you don’t.

You *must* have a Recruiting Pipeline. While individual salespeople are held to pipeline numbers, sales managers and sales officers often are not. If you had salespeople who didn’t have a Prospecting Pipeline, you would be concerned about their future and the future of your company. The same should hold true for you as the person responsible for recruiting and sales production.

To implement a Recruiting Pipeline, go to your sales team and find out the four or five networking activities or opportunities they



attend. Ask your salespeople who they know. *“Who should we be talking to? Do you know anyone who might be looking to make a change?”* However, you must make your own efforts as well. Your salespeople may not be inclined to offer up names, thinking that these people might present competition.

Meet with other employees to find out who they know who might be a good fit. Put together a Recruiting Team and ask these people to submit candidate names once a week. Implement a Recruiting Huddle and hold yourself and everyone accountable. Talk to your neighbors, your tennis partner, your golf friends. Ask them who they know who might be looking for a sales position. You never know where you will find your next producer and your goal is to fill your Recruiting Pipeline with prospective hires.

You must also determine your Pipeline Success Formula—how many names must you have in your pipeline to hire one good recruit. How many names must you acquire to find one candidate that you will hire, contract and on-board. If you don’t already have a Recruiting Pipeline and have not done this consistently, you will have to guess until you get enough experience to figure this out.

Recruiting requires you to be proactive. Have a consistent process, do the behaviors and inspect your activity just like you do your sales team’s activities.

Last, but not least, you must identify the ideal salesperson candidate. What are the skills and strengths most necessary for success in your company, industry and marketplace? It is imperative that you determine a profile for the ideal candidate because otherwise you are likely to hire those who are similar to your current salespeople or you might hire just to fill an opening, thinking a warm body is better than none.

In this process you must identify the type of salesperson you need and how your current sales staff measures up to the ideal salesperson. How important is it to get people with the right skills and behaviors?



I recommend an objective assessment that screens for sales skills, weaknesses and compatibility, like the [OMG Sales Candidate Screen](#). The Sales Candidate Screen gives you a succinct and accurate glance at a recruit. Will he take responsibility for his successes and failures? Will he get referrals? Can he handle prospects? Will his desire to be liked get in the way of selling? Does he take put-offs? Will he make presentations to unqualified prospects? Is he a hunter who will go out and find business? Or a farmer who has the ability to cultivate current business?

How many of the right people do you have today? Would you have hired these salespeople if you would have had better insight? If you had this type of sales ability knowledge before you hired them, would your on-boarding be different? Do you even know what weaknesses you should be coaching to fix?

So, you must know what you are looking for and you should know in advance the problems that a candidate is bringing to the table because resumes typically present a stellar candidate and interviews can be misleading.

Next, you must implement a 5-Minute Prescreen Telephone Interview with the goal of initial discovery. Is the resume accurate? How does the candidate handle the phone call? In this case, you are the prospect and your candidate needs to sell you on himself.

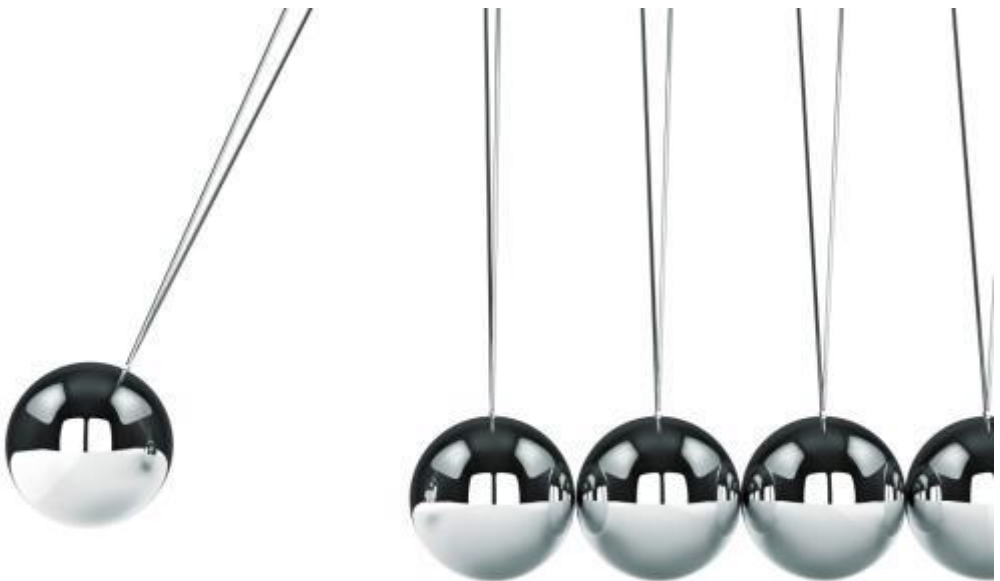
The 5-Minute Prescreen Interview sounds like this: *“You’ve seen the job post. What makes you fit?”* and let the candidate talk. The idea is to create an environment on the phone just like the salesperson will face when he is prospecting. Thus it is going to be uncomfortable. It is going to be high pressure. You must find out how the candidate will act under pressure. Ideally, he will ask you a lot of questions.

“The bad news is time flies. The good news is you’re the pilot.”

~ Michael Althsuler



At the end of the 5-Minute Prescreen Telephone Interview, you will say the following: *“We are going to make a decision by Tuesday. If you do not hear from us by Wednesday, that means you did not make it. OK? Thanks for your time.”* But, don’t hang up immediately. A good sales candidate will try to engage you by asking questions. This means that he will likely attempt to do the same in a sales situation with a prospect who is rejecting him. Perhaps he will even try to close for an interview. This means that he will likely attempt to do this with a prospect. If he does one or the other, he passes the 5-Minute Interview and is on to the next step.



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Chapter 5

Mentoring and Growing Salespeople

From Wikipedia: “*Mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career or professional development. Mentoring entails informal communication usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time between one person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom or experience and another person who has less.*”

Mentoring, as a sales manager, is a combination of all that I have explored in this document. Mentoring is similar to coaching, but in a mentoring role, you will focus more strategically—helping salespeople to work *on* the business, not *in* it. It is the concept of growing with the use of intelligence—the data and observations. What is the data saying? Is it relevant to effort or effectiveness? For instance, you might find that a salesperson has better success selling to a niche or that his long-term sale grows when he combines options in a certain strategic format. Salespeople are often so busy working *in* their business that they neglect working *on* their business.

The goal is to close more sales more quickly. By understanding the choke points of your salespeople, you will be more able to affect their performance. Do we need to create opportunities? Is the data giving you direction? Is everyone following the sales process?



What must we measure and coach so that we get better outcomes? Do you know what it costs to put a salesperson in the marketplace? What is the cost to acquire business? What is the margin per individual? And how about the competition? Do you know where you stand relative to others who are selling similar services and products? Think *30,000 foot view*.

Summary

Being an extraordinary sales manager is grueling and time-consuming. As you can see, it requires attention to detail, the ability to have tough conversations with those who are not meeting their numbers, the desire and commitment to grow yourself and your salespeople, consistent activity and patience. However, being an extraordinary sales manager can be very rewarding. Like the coach of a winning team, you have the ability to positively affect the success, hence the lives, of your salespeople and your company.

**For more information on
Sales & Sales Coaching tools, go to
www.anthonycollection.com.**

“Winning is not a sometime thing; it’s an all the time thing. You don’t win once in a while; you don’t do things right once in a while; you do them right all of the time. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing.”

~ Vince Lombardi



See the next page for a preview of Tony Cole's

Hire Better Salespeople

*which is packed with insights and useful real-time,
easy-to-implement advice for executives
and sales managers.*

Hire Better Salespeople

In today's challenging economy, one of the primary concerns for most business leaders is:

How do I drive consistent sales growth?

Part of the answer to this key question is to *hire better salespeople*. But implementing this goal can be challenging and can spawn a series of questions:

- *How do I recruit the best salespeople?*
- *How do I hire salespeople who are more effective than those who are currently on my team?*
- *How do I make new hires productive more quickly?*
- *What metrics must I use to measure early success?*
- *How do I reward "intrinsically motivated" sales individuals?*
- *What are "non-punitive" consequences for failure to perform?*

We'll address answers to these questions and others with a 3-step process for hiring better salespeople.

We believe that [Objective Management Group's](#) Sales Evaluation Approach provides the foundation for building a winning team. The process, while sometimes painful, provides incredible insights and information that will form the launching pad for hiring better



salespeople. Valuable analysis of sales and management skills and traits are uncovered. Crucial internal systems and processes, like sales force recruiting, are addressed.

Something is wrong with your sales force recruiting process if:

- *You are reactive in your recruiting – You only recruit when you need someone*
- *You transfer the entire responsibility of finding candidates to a search firm*
- *You don't have a candidate pipeline*
- *You aren't getting enough of the right candidates to interview*
- *The candidates that you interview and fall in love with fail to pass your evaluation process*
- *You interview quality candidates, but cannot attract them to join your company*
- *Candidates use you to improve their current position after you make an offer*
- *Your evaluation process is inconsistent*
- *You don't have a way to compare one hireable candidate against another*
- *You don't have multiple candidates to choose from*
- *You pay "A" compensation to "B" hires*
- *Your new hires are failing to succeed quickly enough*

There are three key steps to insuring that you recruit quality candidates that will maximize your organization's revenue potential. Step 1 will focus on preparation, Step 2 will focus on building a candidate pipeline and Step 3 will conclude with recommendations for screening those candidates.

You can get the entire *Hire Better Salespeople* whitepaper by ordering Tony Cole's free kit on *How To Find, Attract & Recruit an All-Star Sales Team* - a set of resources that will show you how to build a highly productive sales team that will consistently outperform their competitors.

Get your kit today! Visit Tony's blog at

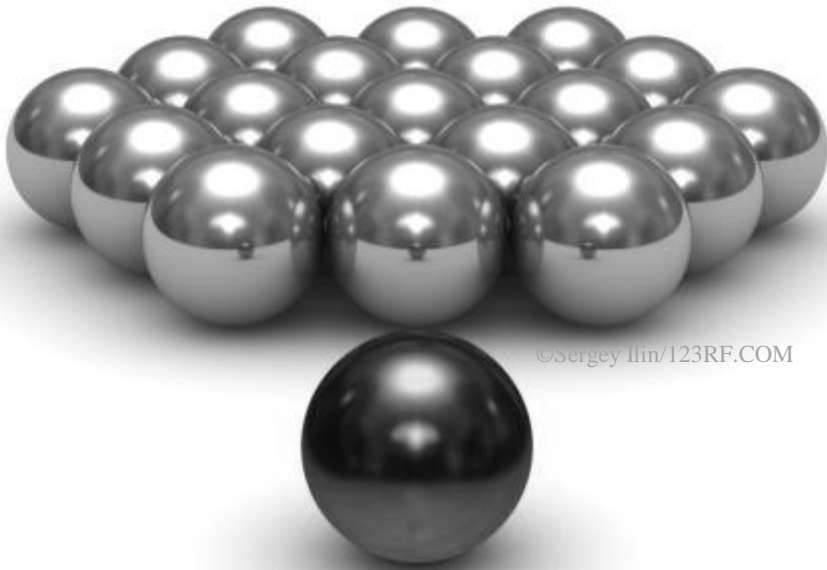
<http://blog.anthonycotraining.com/>

Or call us at (877) 635-5371



Appendix

Additional Resources



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For more free resources, go to our website,
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- ✓ **9 Keys Toolkit**: All the tools you will need to implement this program
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- ✓ **Live Webinars** on sales management topics
- ✓ **Online Access** to the workbook and support

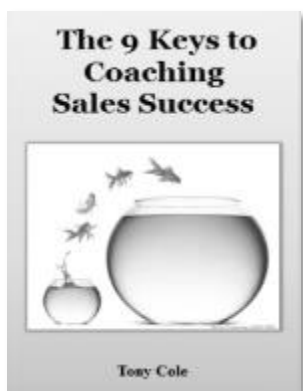
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“The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance; it is the illusion of knowledge.”

~ Daniel J. Boorstin



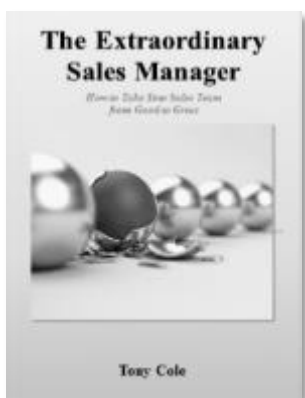
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For more information:
call Jeni toll-free at
(877) 635-5371
or send an email to
jeni@anthonycoletraining.com

“If you really want to do something, you’ll find a way. If you don’t, you’ll find an excuse.”
~ Jim Rohn





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Founder and CEO of Anthony Cole Training Group, Tony Cole, has successfully coached thousands of people. With a stellar twenty plus year career as a keynote speaker, presenter, successful sales consultant and business owner, Tony continues to bring proven wisdom and best practices to companies nationwide.

Tony spent more than 15 years in sales and sales management positions. He launched Anthony Cole Training Group in 1991 to build sales cultures within organizations and drive consistent and predictable sales results. With deep backgrounds in sales and sales management, ACTG's Sales Development Experts deliver training and consulting services to individuals and companies across the nation.



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“With your help, our sales leaders and salespeople are now executing a consistent selling process that has directly contributed to the bottom line revenue and growth of the company. We are far stronger for our association and work with Anthony Cole Training Group.”

Beth Mooney
Chairman and CEO, KeyCorp

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- *Encourages salespeople to set Personal Goals that are intrinsically motivating*
- *Rewards Success and Disciplines Failure*
- *Coaches through the use of Smart Numbers and Critical Ratios*
- *Holds Regular Sales Huddles and Collects Activity Data*
- *Uses Best Practices in Hiring Salespeople*
- *Consistently Upgrades Sales Team through Intelligent Assessment-Based Guidance*

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