



# GUIDE

## **PART 5: THE RHYTHM OF SUCCESS**

Everything You Need to Know to Coach Like a Pro

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COACHING  
GUIDE

## The Rhythm of Success

*The fortune is found in the follow-up.*

### Commitments vs. Conversations

#### Perception is Reality in the Coaching World

A coaching study ([https://www.xvoyant.com/hubfs/2017/pdf/SALES%20COACHING%20PROOF\\_V8.pdf](https://www.xvoyant.com/hubfs/2017/pdf/SALES%20COACHING%20PROOF_V8.pdf)) released in August 2018 identified that 48.2% of sales reps say they don't receive coaching. Surprisingly, 82.1% of the sales leaders of these reps claim they are providing coaching for each member of their team. This gap points out the importance of the 1:1 between leader and rep creating what the REP perceives as a "coaching moment."

Coaching happens when leaders and reps move past conversations and make commitments to change. Too often what leaders think is great coaching, a rep perceives as nothing more than a suggestion.

This is why 1:1s need to include commitments.

No commitment, no change.

I was speaking with a high performing rep of a team that recently started a structured coaching program. I asked him what the biggest change was. His answer was insightful:

"Before, we'd have 1 on 1's and I'd have a good conversation with my leader. She would make suggestions and I'd leave and go about my business. Sometimes I'd apply the suggestions better than others. The conversations were good and they built a relationship I appreciated. But I didn't feel like I was "on the hook" to do anything different."

"With the coaching plan, once I saw the email come confirming my commitment to modify my approach, I felt a responsibility to make sure I made it happen. This led to me applying the coaching points immediately. I blew past the coaching goal and had one of my most successful months in my history with the company."

"Having that commitment made all the

difference. This also changed my expectation of what to expect in these meetings with my manager. Now I come with ideas on what I think I need help with rather than showing up wondering what she will talk about in this meeting.”

## Coaching vs. Conversations

The study referenced earlier teaches us some big lessons:

1. Salespeople WANT coaching. This is particularly the case with the incoming Sales Generation.
2. Most of the time, salespeople don't interpret the conversations with their leaders as “coaching” sessions.
3. When they think they are getting coaching, 80% of the time, they follow the coaching advice and keep their coaching commitments.

So every leader needs a way to make sure every rep on their team knows when coaching begins and the high-level conversation ends.

Every rep needs to know they are making commitments to change.

Because if they do...80% of the time they will keep the commitment.

So what's in a commitment?

Commitments include the following attributes:

- WHAT the rep is going to change.
- HOW it will be measured.
- WHEN it will be completed and reviewed.

Every 1:1 needs to create those “Fork in the Road” moments described in Part 4 (Link) of this series. Perhaps the most important part of this is agreement to when the commitment will be reviewed and measured.

A distinguishing factor of a coaching goal is

## How Often?

Establishing a regular pattern of coaching is important, but how often should you hold 1:1s?

Conventional wisdom is that you should have your scheduled 1:1s at least once a month.

What are people in the field doing?

**73%** of managers spend less than 5% of their time coaching their sales teams.

**77%** of HR Executives say that their top performance management priority is encouraging more frequent conversations weekly or monthly.

Top performing sales managers **53%** are most likely to hold their team or group meetings on a monthly basis.

the only person that has to say “yes” is the salesperson. This is different than a sales goal.

Sales goals require a customer to say yes. They have to agree to buy.

Coaching goals only require the salesperson to agree to change. She or he agrees to do more specific activities, develop a unique skill, or use a company resource. The rep is 100% in charge of the success or failure of these goals.

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***As a result, the first part of every 1:1 should be to review the existing coaching goals.***

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This leads to a rhythm of change: Commit, Execute, Follow Up, Repeat.

## **Celebrate**

Salespeople stay where they are celebrated... not tolerated. Great leaders use the 1:1 as an opportunity to celebrate.

You should know if a rep has achieved their coaching goal before you meet with them. If they've achieved the goal, take time to hear their story. Understand the challenge associated with making the change and listen to the stories associated with the effort.

One of the strongest passion factors for a salesperson is unexpected rewards. Find ways to reward the reps that are achieving their coaching goals. Shout outs, commendations, discretionary awards, and primo leads are simple ways you can provide unexpected rewards for the reps trying to change.

But don't just check the box and say thanks. Make sure you relish the moment with the reps working to make change.

## **Calibrate**

Your follow-up meeting provides a critical opportunity to calibrate the rep's strengths in your sales process and their commitment to change. There are two calibration points your follow-up conversation needs to include:

1. **Calibrate Impact:** It is important to calibrate the effect of the change on the sales process. If you are setting effective coaching goals, the change the rep makes should result in something measurable in the sales process.

There are four leverage points for any B2B sales process. Coaching should improve one of these four drivers of growth:

- Number of new opportunities
- Revenue per customer
- Win Rate
- Sales Cycle time

Good coaching + good execution = predictable process improvements. If the rep is achieving their coaching goal, be sure to evaluate if the change is driving change in the process.

If change as a result of coaching doesn't show up in one of these metrics, find out why.

2. **Calibrate Coachability:** If you are setting coaching goals, you can measure coachability. Either a rep chooses to achieve their coaching goals, or they don't. Every coaching goal should be a specific activity to change or a specific skill to develop.

With this understanding, every coaching goal can help you measure whether the rep did or did not respond to coaching. After making their commitment, if they keep it, they get a positive score. If they don't keep the commitment, they get a negative.

## Everything You Need to Know to Coach Like a Pro: a Review

### Create a Coaching Mindset

1. Coaching is a non-negotiable for every manager.
2. Stack ranking < segmentation.
3. Stack rankings are a picture of the past, segments are a doorway to the future.

### Use Data the Right Way

1. Never ambush a rep with data in a 1:1.
2. Performance aspirations=target activities + target competencies
3. Create road maps, not travel journals

### Set the Right Priorities

1. Coach to process, not to outcomes
2.  $\$ = (\# \text{ of opps} * \text{Avg deal size} * \text{win rate \%}) / \text{length of sales cycle}$
3. Never prioritize until you have dollarized.

### Set the Right Goals

1. Create commitments around production, pipelines and performance aspirations
2. Conversations>coaching
3. Create “fork-in-the-road” moments.

### Effective Follow Up

1. A rep reveals their willingness to change by their approach to completing coaching goals.
2. Coachability → process → outcomes
3. Stay in the inspiration business, not the management business

## Remember:

“The Role is the Doorway to the Goal.”

“Metrics are for Mapping, Not Managing.”

“If Process is Strong, Success is Inevitable. If Process is Weak, Success is Unsustainable.”

“Transformational Results Require Transformational Activities.”

## The Coachability Quadrants

In Part 3 (LINK) of this series we suggest a framework for measuring strength in process. By evaluating coaching goal histories, you can also implement a framework for measuring willingness to change.

By calculating the coachability score using the +/- system you can quickly gain insight to how responsive a rep is to coaching.

As in the earlier quadrant, the up/down axis is a rep's year-to-date progress to their goal. On the cross-hair = hitting goal. Above the line = beating goal and below the line = missing goal.

The left/right axis measures the rep's coachability. On the axis means they are neutral in achieving coaching goals. To the right = positive coachability. To the left = negative coachability.

This creates four additional quadrants:

- 1. Outcomes Weak, Coachability Weak:**  
Toxic. Reps in this quadrant are not hitting their goal and they are unwilling to change. They make a commitment in a 1:1 but don't change their approach. Goals in the 1:1s need to be activity-oriented and create an expectation of what the expected effort is to stay part of the team. These reps often are a source of bigger problems than missing their number...they often become a source of toxicity to the team.
- 2. Outcomes Weak, Coachability Strong:**  
Future Star. Reps in this quadrant are not hitting their goal but they are responding well to coaching conversations. 1:1s with these reps should be centered around the key parts of the process that will help them create strong, predictable pipelines. Generally, this means either creating more pipeline or having more

success moving opportunities with higher win rates or shorter cycle times. Stay close with these reps as they are demonstrating a willingness to improve and they appreciate and value coaching.

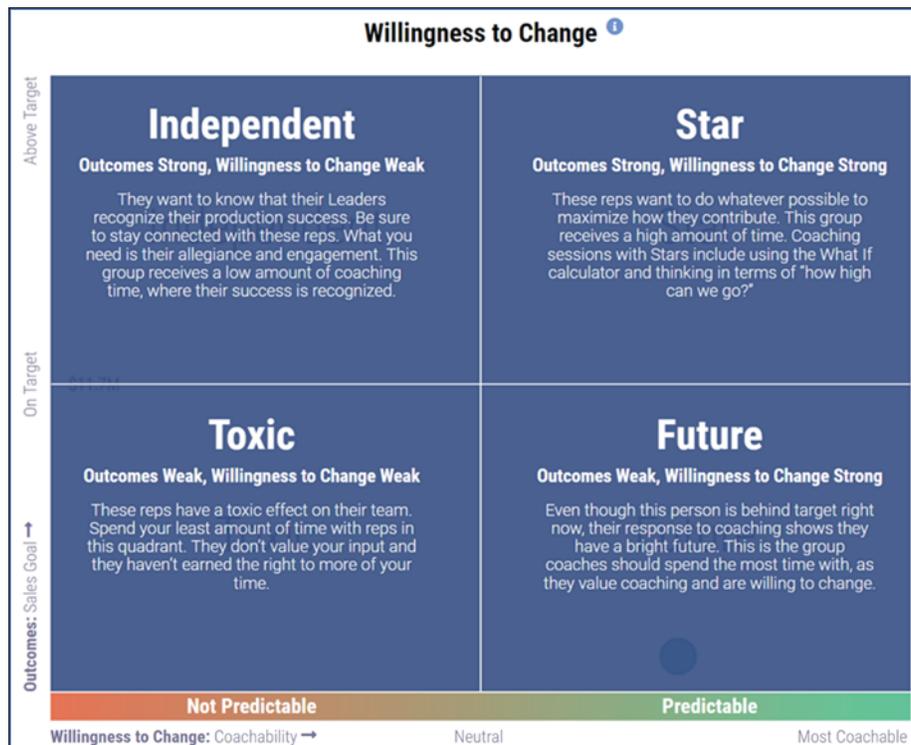
### 3. Outcomes Strong, Coachability Weak:

**Independent.** Reps in this quadrant are achieving their goals but resist changing their approach. This most often is seen with reps that have longer tenure with the company or in sales. In these cases, it is important to refer to their process quadrant and see if they are in the lucky or earned category. Reps in this category often respond well to discussions around “How good can you get?” It is very important to dollarize the impact of even the smallest changes and tap in to their aspirational goals. As a leader these are the reps that you need to have “so-what” conversations with as discussed in Parts 3 and 4 of this series.

### 4. Outcomes Strong, Coachability Strong:

**Stars.** Reps in this category are achieving their goals and they respond well to change. To be a leader in an organization you have to be able to do more than produce...you must be able to adapt and respond to change. That’s why the reps in this category are your future leaders. They welcome the “what if” conversation and often come to the 1:1 with their own ideas of what they want to improve. Provide context and insight and help them chart their course.

This chart is easy to use and helps a rep understand their response to coaching:



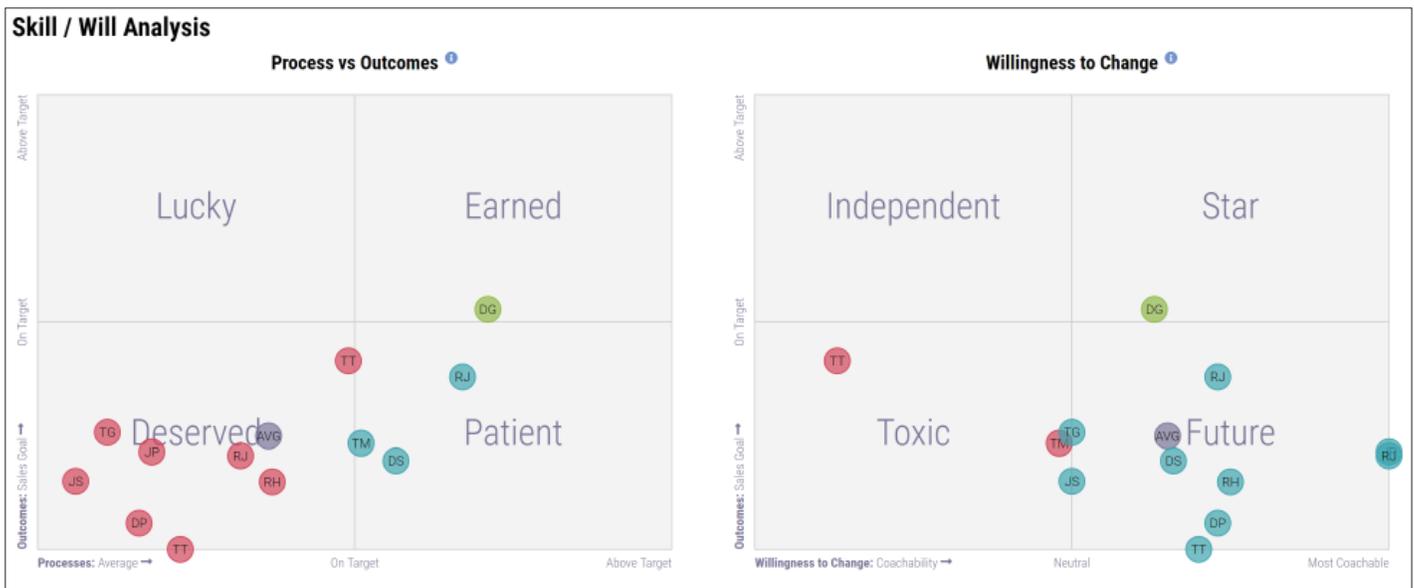
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This +/- approach can give you a running total for a quarter, six months or even a year to have an idea of the degree to which each rep shows commitment to change.

## The 8 Types of Salespeople in EVERY B2B Team

By tracking coachability this way, a leader has a powerful tool. By placing the process



and coachability quadrants side by side, a leader has a three-dimensional view of each rep on their team:

This creates eight types of salespeople in each sales organization:

1. **Deserved + Toxic:** Poor outcomes, weak process, and unwilling to change.

2. **Deserved + Future:** Poor outcomes, poor process, but responding to change.

3. **Patient + Toxic:** Poor outcomes, strong process, but resistant to change.

4. **Patient + Future:** Poor outcomes, strong process, and responding to change.

5. **Lucky + Independent:** Strong outcomes,

weak process, and not responding to change.

6. **Lucky + Star:** Strong outcomes, weak process, but responding to change.
7. **Earned + Independent:** Strong outcomes, strong process, but not responding to change.
8. **Earned + Star:** Strong outcomes, strong process, and responding to change.

The 1:1s for each of these reps will be different. You will have different conversations, set different goals, and spend different amounts of time with each one.

Your expectations can be tailored and a rep can understand why each coaching goal is relevant and necessary.

Some reps need specific, activity-oriented goals. Others will respond to bigger picture, more strategic initiatives.

## The Coaching Kinetic Chain

Measuring coachability is often the missing link for a sales leader. The concept of process driving outcomes is well-established and understood.

If Process drives Outcomes, what drives Process?

The answer: Coachability.

If process needs to change then a rep needs to be coachable. Markets change, customers change, companies change, and products change.

If a salesperson is resistant to change, they are in for unnecessary challenges.

The Kinetic Chain every sales leader can count on is simple:

**Outcomes are driven by Process, Process is driven by Coachability.**

Every sales leader measures outcomes. Most

measure process. Few measure coachability. Measure it and you'll have one of the most valuable tools most sales leaders never are able to use.

## Allocating Time

One of the most common mistakes sales leaders make is allocating equal time to each rep. Measuring coachability helps you avoid the "Time Trap."

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***Your time is your most precious resource.***

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So which reps should you spend your time with?

The obvious answer: FUTURE.

These are reps that are missing goal but respond to coaching.

But who gets the next-most amount of time? The answer may surprise you.

## STARS

Many mistakenly prioritize the toxic category simply because they are underperforming.

By measuring coachability you can see the reps that value your time as a coach. **You should maximize every minute you can** with the reps that value and respond to coaching.

Future should get as much time as you can give them.

Stars get most of what's left.

Independents get enough time so they know you value them.

Toxics get a 1:1 and not much more.

Once a Toxic teammate starts hitting their coaching goals they will quickly swing to the Future category and then you have time for them in spades.

This is why you want to use an emotional label like Toxic. **Don't make it politically correct to under-perform AND be unwilling to change.**

Remember...Toxic only applies when a rep says they are going to do something and then choose not to.

The only difference between a Toxic teammate and a Future Star is their willingness to change.

Why? **Because Coachability drives Process, and Process drives Outcomes.**

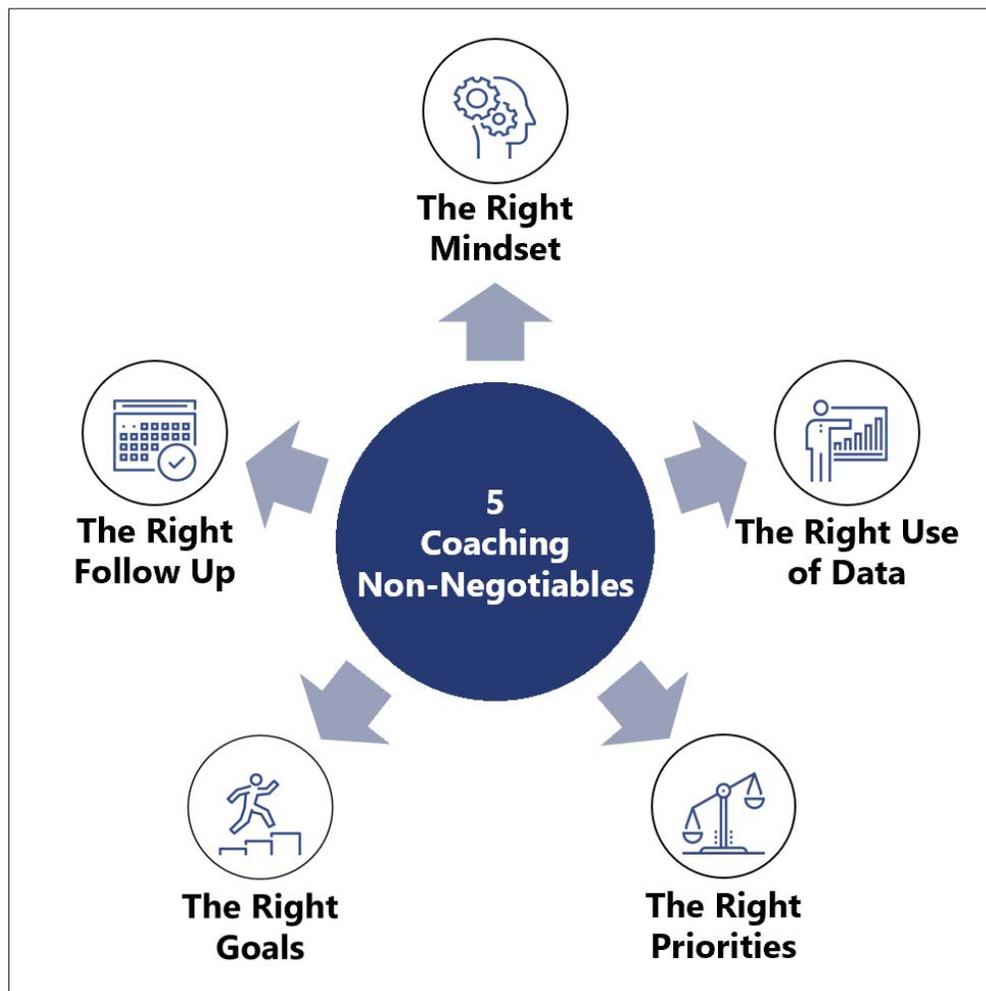
Make sure those that value your time get as much of it as possible.

## A Model for Coaching Success

This series has identified the 5 drivers of coaching success:

1. The Right Mindset
2. The Right Use of Data
3. The Right Priorities
4. The Right Goals
5. The Right Follow-Up

These are the hallmarks of the world's most successful sales coaches. Implementing these drivers in a consistent way will create intentional improvement with each rep willing to commit to coaching.

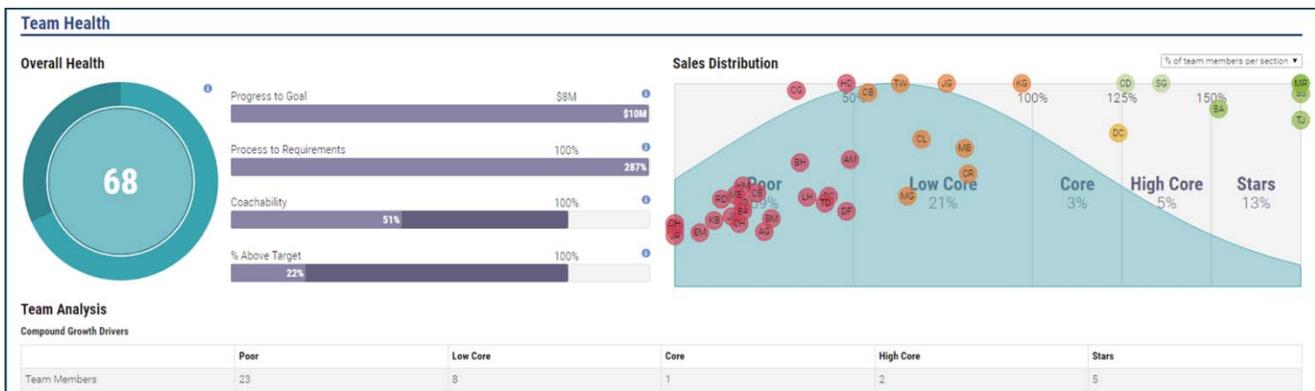


This also helps you identify those unwilling to respond to coaching who might not be a good fit for your team in a non-emotional, non-defensive way.

As a sales leader, you can expect powerful transformations as you make coaching one of your competitive strengths

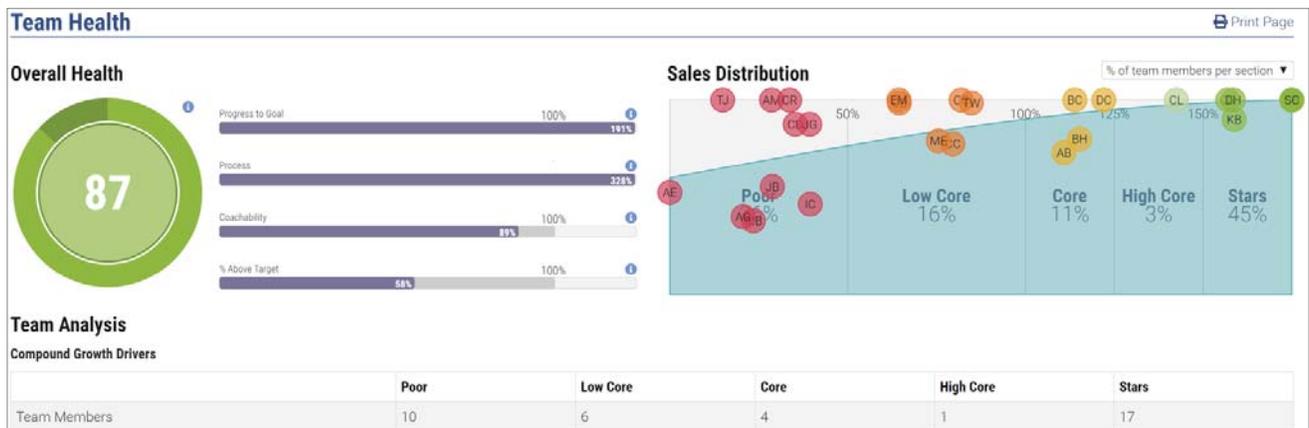
## A Transformation Story

A market leading financial institution recently applied this coaching model to their sales organization. The organization was already a high performer experiencing some of their best performance in company history.



At the end of a reporting period, a strategic team with nearly 50 salespeople had beat their goal by 20%. In most cases, this would be cause for celebration.

This team beat their goal by 20% with only 22% of their salespeople hitting goal.



At the end of the reporting period the team looked like this:

59% of the team was in the poor category and only 8 reps were hitting goal.

The team implemented the coaching system described in this series and in 90 days experienced a complete transformation:

24 in the poor category became 10.

5 in the star category became 17.

20% ahead of goal became 191%

All because 22% hitting goal became 58%, and the entire team shifted up.

In **90 days**.

1 Quarter.

**No new salespeople. No new training. Just segment-based, commitment-driven coaching.**

But the real success is the lives that were changed because they had coaches that fully committed to their success.

The business case for coaching is strong enough that every sales team can build the case to invest in coaching. It might be the most ROI-positive decision a leader can make.

But the impact to the lives of your salespeople is so real that you can't afford not to.

## 5 Things You Can Expect with World-Class Coaching

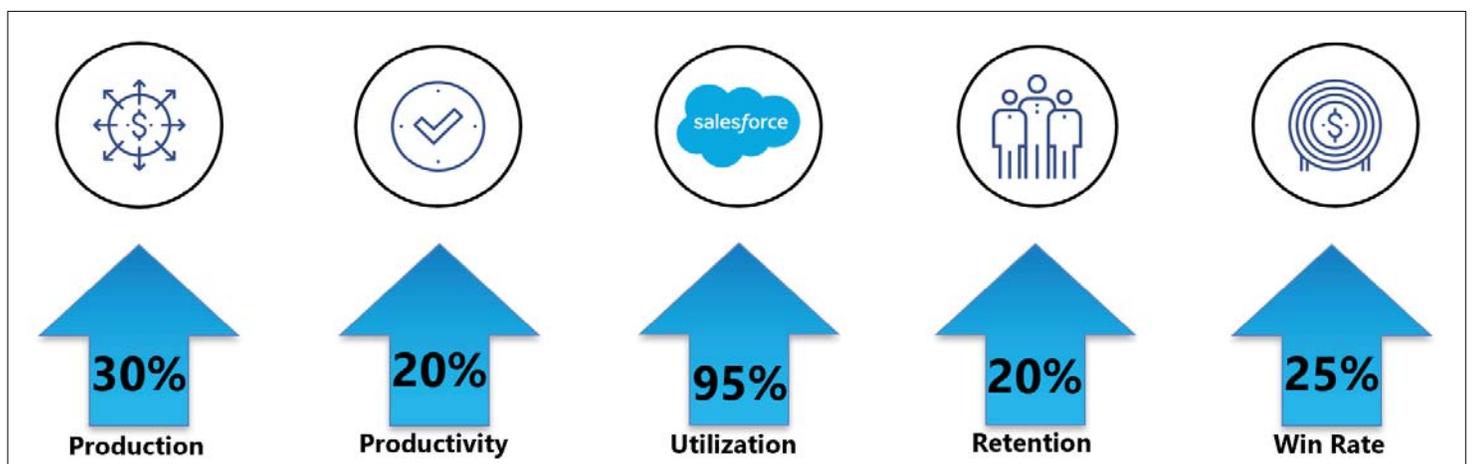
We've found that AT LEAST five predictable outcomes happen with great coaching:

- **Production (Sales)** increases by **30%**.
- **Productivity** (% of reps hitting goal) increases by over **20%**.
- **Salesforce (CRM) utilization** increases by **95%**.
- **Retention and Engagement** of salespeople increases by over **20%**.
- **Win Rates** increase by over **25%**.

Coaching is the lever that helps a sales organization grow faster and more efficiently than any other lever they can turn to.

Got questions about coaching? Want to kick ideas around or discuss best practices? Want to change the lives of every rep on your team faster than you thought possible?

Use these principles. Your team will thank you.



# Other Guides in the World-Class Sales Coaches Series

This guide is part one of a 5-part series on Sales Coaching. Don't miss the other guides in the series:

Part 1: The Right Mindset

Part 2: Using Data Like A Pro

Part 3: How to Prioritize

Part 4: Setting Effective Goals

Part 5: The Rhythm of Success

To download copies of any of the guides, simply visit:

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