



STRATEGIES

SALES STRATEGY TO STRETCH YOUR PEOPLE FOR INCREASED SALES.

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There is a strategic approach to facilitating dramatic sales increases. We initiate this process by asking how much clients agree and live out the following statements:

- People tend to support what they help to create.
- Big goals inspire big actions.
- Strategy is a process.

Do you involve your team in setting objectives, or do you set them? Do you allow your team to set objectives that are almost unreasonably high and give them room to miss them without reprisal? Or do you have quotas that are the main measuring rod by which you manage and motivate your sales team?

Are all your objectives reviewed and adjusted at least quarterly, and does each objective have a set of measurable activities that are the benchmarks of progress, or do you chiefly review the progress toward the end result, e.g., sales revenue?

We've seen it proven time and again with stretch objectives and a process-oriented approach to strategy, especially around managing sales growth, that dramatic increases in sales can be cultivated.

The first principle is to involve your people. Getting them to at least contribute ideas around what they think the objectives can be, gives them a sense of ownership, even if their objectives are not used.

We had one client who was ready to unveil a dramatic sales growth strategy in his company. He was concerned that the team might not believe the target was feasible, but he thought the stretch was worth the try. We advised him not to challenge them with his preferred company sales target but to first ask each of them individually and see what they thought the potential sales increase might be for each of their territories. He was concerned they wouldn't be so optimistic.

Collectively they not only set a revenue number

that was much higher but they also sold by year's end a total revenue number that was much higher than the original goal he thought was such a stretch. What do you think might have happened had he made the lower goal their target or quota?

The second principle is to manage toward the possible and not the probable. True, there is a need for a conservative sales projection for your CFO and production facilities, and perhaps another number that is a quota for overseeing the standards of sales productivity. Yet, every rep should continually be asked, "What is the highest possible sales result that you think could be achieved?" Granted, all the stars may need to align—the economy, weather, prices etc., but what is that highest possible target that might be achieved if you had and did all that could be done to maximize sales?

This stretch target should be on what the sales team focuses, not their quota. People are more likely to hit at what they are aiming. They should have the license to fail hitting that stretch goal without reprisal, but be coached on reaching the higher goal rather than the minimum goals.

The third principle is to make strategy a process that focuses on the improvement and progress around measurable activities and not just the results. Every objective has a Critical Success Factor, i.e., the measurable activity that if improved in quantity or quality will most accelerate progress toward the objective. Coaching should focus on a person's progress around improving their measurable activities/Critical Success Factors and not just sales.

We have seen this approach to sales and strategy literally double sales. If you would like a free copy of our *Strategy Handbook*, send us an e-mail with the word Strategy in the subject. **AG**

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