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Sales Leadership Excellence: How to Recruit & Retain More High-Producing Sales Leaders

By Gregory Stebbins



As a sales leader, have you ever felt like you were at war in your business?

No surprise there because modern business is based on a military model. However, today's business environment is rapidly changing, requiring sales managers to look at new and different approaches to leading sales organizations.

Now the question is: what will replace the old business model?

You have probably heard of the idea that everything is based on either fear or love.

If today's business model is based on fear, then the answer to what will replace it is apparent.

How the World of Business & Getting Sales Became War

In the 1500's Niccolo Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* where he answered this question: Is it best to be loved or to be feared. Machiavelli wrote, "The answer is, of course, that it would be best to be both loved and feared. But since the two rarely come together, anyone compelled to choose will find greater security in being feared than in being loved." He related this to military models, providing examples of Hannibal and others.

As time progressed new business models arose. The master/apprentice paradigm was created as business owners looked for ways to increase productivity with a largely uneducated work force. Frederick Winslow Taylor, author of *The Principles of Scientific Management*, proposed what was a thinly disguised military model. From then on, fear was injected into the workplace in continually greater ways.

Why Your Sales Leadership Style Must Change

As work becomes less about muscle and more about intellect, sales leadership styles need to change. Today, we have an ever-increasing number of "knowledge workers."

We also have a new generation entering the sales workforce –The Millennials.

These workers have loyalty to their manager and sales team, but not to the company. Managing them through fear usually results in them voting with their feet, and finding a different type of company to work for.

Now, with baby boomers increasingly leaving the sales workforce there is a rapidly growing shortage of qualified workers. So how do you recruit more members for your sales team? And, how do you turn them into high-producing sales leaders.

How Showing Love Will Help You Recruit & Retain High-Producing Sales Leaders

Do you have employees who tell you they just love their sales job or the work they do? Do you have employees who complains loudly and constantly about how screwed up their sales job is and especially who they work for, including you? Which type of employees are more productive for your sales organization?

There are many reasons why people love their jobs:

- Some people love business because of the money they make.
- Others love business because of the recognition they gain.
- Some love the security it provides for their family and themselves.
- Some love their work because it allows them to contribute in making a difference.

Once you know what causes a worker to enjoy their work, you can provide that experience they want to motivate them to become a high producing sales leader. And, when people love their work, they'll tell others. This means more people will want to work for your sales organization.

However, there's a lot more to love than that. Love is unique in that it is a choice, an attitude, and an outcome all at the same time. So, regardless of a work situation or its circumstances, a person can choose to love. The trick is to create a work environment where this form of loving is at least allowed and at best, encouraged.

Here's a step in that direction...

How to Create a "Loving" Sales Organization

The famous cartoon sailor, Popeye, had a great statement: I yam what I yam and that's all what I yam." If more people followed that, there would be less fear—and more room for love in the sales organization workplace. However, most people, not having been trained otherwise, choose to serve their ego. This automatically perpetuates the fear-based Machiavellian model.

When a person adds an adjective to the words, "I am," they are declaring an ego position, which inherently has fear attached to it. It looks something like this: "I am a sales manager." If I have an ego position in being a sales manager, which I have declared by saying I'm a sales manager, then I will either consciously or unconsciously choose to protect that position. Inherent in the protection is fear, specifically fear of loss of my identity as a sales manager."

Is it different if you choose to declare, "I am loving?"

No.

The same thing happens: You need to convince others about how loving you are, even if you're not feeling particularly loving today.

The challenge for most people is declaring, "I am," and not adding anything else to the declaration. It's too amorphous. It has nothing others can relate to.

Here's the most interesting part. By stating "I am," with nothing attached you have declared your freedom. You can choose to love unconditionally. You could also choose to hate unconditionally. It's your choice.

In today's world of knowledge workers who will job hop in a New York minute, which choice do you think would attract more qualified sales leaders to your sales organization? This is not a trick question. Support your workers and associates in knowing they are whole people doing a job, not being the job. In that awareness, fear falls away, job enjoyment and satisfaction increases and the whole company moves into the new paradigm of enhanced excellence, productivity... and loving.

About the author:

Sales Psychology Expert Gregory Stebbins has helped sales professionals better understand their customers so they can outsell their competition. His book entitled "People Savvy for Sales Professionals" is now available. You can learn more about Gregory and his book at:

<http://www.peoplesavvy.com/book.htm>

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