



Attracting, Developing and Retaining Top Sales Talent

Rethinking the sales role No. 3

BY STEVE HASENMUELLER

THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITY FOR INDUSTRY-WIDE hot tub sales growth is better sales support and education from the manufacturer all the way through the retailer.

Most manufacturer’s representatives that I have met have no training or development in consumer selling. If the manufacturers’ representation can’t assist in retail sales, their only dimension is to try to get the dealer to buy their products without providing strong support for the sell-through. Factory reps must be well-versed in providing expert product knowledge training and fundamental sales skills. Multidimensional sales delegates at every level are needed to build momentum for industrywide improvement.

We are all looking for more sales. However, when the basics of the sales process aren’t fully developed, the sales effort is frustrating at best and impossible at worst. *Product* training is not *sales* training. It takes both.

There are two critical aspects: the macro, or the big picture of the spa industry, and the micro, or the individual salesperson. The only way to change the macro is by improving the micro.

Beginning with the micro, the first thing every salesperson needs to realize is they are accountable for their growth. Great salespeople are made, not born, and the critical ingredient for growth is the desire and humility to learn. When faced with obstacles, we must get smarter. Thankfully, there are many successful people who have shared their wisdom — Jim Rohn, Seth Godin, Zig Ziglar, Brian Tracy and Tony



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Robbins, to name a few. All these people put out life-changing information to help anyone with initiative help themselves. As the micro — the singular salesperson — we have two choices regarding our approach to sales: We can lead or we can beg. We cannot simply go to the highest levels of skill development and sales success; we must grow to get there.

To beg is to expect success without putting in the work, to blame external factors (like the company, economy, product or pricing) and to act as a helpless victim waiting for sales to magically improve.

To lead is to be accountable for yourself and all aspects of learning, growth, effectiveness and outcomes.

The best and quickest method is to simply begin, wherever you are at this moment in your sales path, by raising your performance standards.

For the macro — companies manufacturing products and providing services, as well as retail owners and management — the only sustainable competitive advantage for your company is your employees. While it would be nice to have a large talent pool of self-starting, growth-oriented salespeople to hire, that usually isn’t the case.

Until that day arrives, you must set a clear path and expectations for a sales role focused on continuous learning and growth, developing skilled professionals who excel at selling, rather than producing typical salespeople in ineffective roles.

Attract the best by evaluating prospects on their attitude and commitment to learning — no sales experience necessary. (Actually, no sales experience is preferred.)

Develop skills immediately and continuously, allowing them to show their distinct personalities within the sales role. Train them on the basics and commit to the process.

Retain the best prospects by being the resource that grows the person’s value within the company and their lives. Employees do not leave companies where they are challenged and growing; it’s the opposite that drives them away.

The macro becomes the path to the opportunity, and the micro becomes the accountability. It takes both. This isn’t easy; nothing worth achieving ever is. It will take time, resources and commitment to rethink and unlearn how we have been approaching sales in this industry for decades. ■



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writes and speaks about what it takes for businesses and employees to thrive in the demanding and ever-changing marketplace. With over 35 years of experience in front-line selling, he has conducted seminars and keynotes in nine countries, delivering challenging and uplifting messages along with real-life solutions for improvement. After 30 years on the road in sales, Hasenmueller retired and devotes his full-time efforts to speaking, training, writing and philanthropy. He currently resides in Belize with his wife Jane.