



SALES TRAINING TIP – HOW TO RETAIN TOP SALES PEOPLE

There are four primary reasons a good sales person, who is producing at high-levels at a company, will choose to leave that company. Surprisingly, the top reasons are not about money.

Top Reasons a Good Sales Person Will Leave A Company

1. Lack of feeling that the company “cares” for them
2. Lack of personal or intangible satisfaction and reward
3. Lack of a defined or desirable career path and future
4. Lack of sufficient or desirable income

Let us look at each of these areas and see how to prevent the problem.

1 - Lack of feeling that the company “cares” for them

The number one reason a sales person will leave your company is that deep down, they feel as if you and the company do not really care about them. They feel as if the company just cares about making money and could care less for their health and welfare. How do you make them feel like you really care for them? Simple: Really care for them!

As the sales manager, you should take the success of your sales people personally. Your sales team should know that you would face upper-management, the government, the competition or anyone else, to defend them and help them succeed. Your sales team should believe that you put their success above your own. And you should because when they succeed you succeed. You have to be the captain who goes into battle in front of the troops leading them. When your sales team knows that you will take a proverbial bullet for their sake, you will never have to worry about retaining good sales people. Again, the answer for making sales people believe that you care for them is to really do it.

2- Lack of personal or intangible satisfaction and reward – In this, I am referring to the things that make the sales person feel good about himself or herself and what they do. Most sales people or their management may not even realize this, but this is a critical area of needs fulfillment. Everybody has to “feel” good about themselves. The job has to give you some heightened level of self-esteem, especially in the business of sales.

Remember a sales person is already thought of in many circles as a charlatan or a con artist. There are many slang terms and pejorative labels that are often automatically attached to a sales person in the eyes of many consumers. Public trust becomes a big issue in the life of a professional sales person and with that public trust, comes personal trust.

A sales person must be made to “feel” as if they perform an honorable and trustworthy function in society. The problem is that when this atmosphere is not present for the sales person it does not materialize in a recognizable fashion. In other words, the sales person does not go up to the management team and say, “You know, I don’t feel important or like I am performing an honorable job function...”

No. In fact, the sales person will rarely understand exactly what is making him or her feel less than enthusiastic about the job. This problem will manifest itself in a number of symptoms that often seem unrelated:

- a. A lack of enthusiasm
- b. A erratic closing average
- c. A feeling of being overworked
- d. A feeling of repetitiveness
- e. Erratic work ethic and increased time off
- f. Forgetting the “basics” or taking “short-cuts”
- g. An overall attitude of, “I just don’t care...”

These are some signs that this sales person does not “feel” important. Below are a few ways to help solve this problem:

Have a clearly defined company and departmental mission statement and vision statement that include the wide reaching effect of the product or service. (Look for Ask-The-Expert article “How to keep motivated”)

Continuously explain to the sales team the entire scope and importance of a sales person’s mission. For example, if you sell cars, a car sale does more than just satisfy the car buyer. A car sale helps the community, it helps the buyer’s family, it helps keep two dozen people employed at the dealership, it helps sell more petroleum, it helps the economy, and more. Find the long-range affect of your product or service and help the sales people understand their real importance.

Supply personal gratification in private and recognition in public. You should have regular private conversations with your sales people, keeping in touch with their wishes and dreams and their problems. Learn how to “listen.” Seek out the sales person’s personal goals and objectives in private.

Does she want to get married?
Have a baby?
Does he want to go back to collage one day?
Does she want to get into management?
Does he want a new car?
Does her and his family want to move to a bigger home
Etc.

Take a personal interest in the life of your sales people. They will tell you what is on their minds—listen.

Make complements and uplifting statements in public. Recognition for hard work and a job well done is critical to a sales person’s mental health.

Ask the sales person to teach the newer sales people. This is a powerful management tool that solves many potential problems. When you have a seasoned sales person who is beginning to loose the enthusiasm for the sales process as things begin to become routine, have that sales person help you in teaching a sales training class or having newer sales people watch them. Promote the sales person as a “long-time expert,” to the newer sales people and charge the veteran sales person with helping to train the new recruits. Find a way to add bonus or override income for the sales person and this will help him or her begin to refocus.

3 - Lack of a defined or desirable career path and future – This is simple but often overlooked. Make sure you know exactly where your sales people want to go in their career and in life. Make sure that your company has incremental steps of promotion. Often a sales company will have two positions:

1. New Sales Person or rookie or probationary period
2. Sales Person

Some offer a few additional steps like

3. Sr. Sales Person
4. Manager

It is important that you have a number of “steps” that a sales person will have something to work for all the time. Also, make sure that your company’s goals

match with the sales person s. Often you will have sales people who view the company as a means to a NEW BEGINNING and not as a means to an end. This is fine, as long as you know what they want. For instance, you may have a sales person who's goal is to earn enough money to start a bridal shop. Fine. But when you know this, you know how to help motivate this person.

4 - Lack of sufficient or desirable income – Your sales people should be the highest paid in your industry. How do you do this? You hold your sales team to the highest standards of excellence in the industry. You hold your sales team to the highest levels of accomplishment in and customer satisfaction the industry.

How can you do that? You hold your company to the highest level of product or service in the industry. So often a company will think that they can provide the best service yet pay their sales people the least. This does not and will not ever work. Many companies pay their people just barley enough to keep them from quitting. In return, most employees work barley enough to keep from being fired. No. Pay your people the most you can pay them and hold them to the highest standards.

When it comes to retaining good sales people the old adage is key: The more you help other people get what they want, the more you will get what you want.

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