



COFFEE IS FOR CLOSERS....AND FOR COACHES

You've likely watched the iconic scene from David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* where Blake, a young hotshot from downtown with an \$80,000 BMW and a holier-than-thou attitude, browbeats a room full of downtrodden salesman. He threatens them, insults their sales skills, and questions their manhood. His only advice?

"Always be closing."

While that makes for award-winning drama, it's not what we deem effective coaching.

Blake's biggest flaw as a coach - but certainly not his only one - is that he only addresses the problems without analysing the causes. He says a lot about what to do and nothing about how to do it.

Unfortunately, a lot of terrible coaching goes on in many sales organisations because so many managers are like Blake: they might be able to make things work for themselves, but they have no idea how to teach someone else. Nor do they do the analysis of what "is" going on versus what "ought to be" going on. They're just repeating advice like "Always be closing."

This happens for a number of reasons: managers don't have time to coach or they have too many competing priorities. More often than not, sales managers were good salespeople, and the assumption is made that they will also be good coaches. But as *Glengarry Glen Ross* shows us, a great salesman isn't necessarily a great coach.

Sophisticated sales organisations develop a model of what "excellent" sales behavior looks like based on what has proven to be successful. They train their people to observe actual performance against this template of excellent behavior, and to give solid, professional feedback about the gaps between the right way to do things and what's currently happening.

It is not enough just to say "Accomplish X" - it's far more relevant and beneficial to teach the skills that will accomplish X. Good sales coaches know the skills that correlate with success and act as diagnosticians rather than dictators.

For a good sales manager, it's not "Always be closing," it's "Always be Coaching."

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