



# ARE YOUR SALESPEOPLE PERFORMING TO YOUR (and their) EXPECTATIONS?

*Why is this happening and is it EVER likely to change?*

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I am pretty sure every sales executive has contemplated the above question. Why do some people excel in their roles while others struggle? After all, you trained them the same way. You on-boarded them the same way and you manage them with the same sales managers. Consider the following scenario:

Acme Software Company has 88 sales people in the USA, managed by 10 regional sales managers, all reporting to you, the VP of Sales. Twenty-two reps are achieving or exceeding their sales targets, forty-one are between 50-90% of their target, and the remaining twenty-five are below 50% of plan (including the eight new reps hired in the past six months to replace reps who left the company). (Did you really just add up the numbers to make sure it totaled 88? I thought so!)

As the VP of Sales, you feel as though all of them have had sufficient product and sales training and just “don’t get it”. Your reps are as frustrated as you, and certainly do not enjoy struggling every day at work. They are looking for guidance and you want to help them improve.

You cannot continue to carry the seventeen reps that are below quota, but with turnover rates already at 20% per year, the thought of a self-inflicted increase to nearly 40% will kill any chance you have of hitting your number in the next two quarters.

So what do you do? You could train them again...you could initiate marketing campaigns to increase their lead flow...you could fire their manager...you could fire them...you could manage their activities more closely to make sure they are working...you could apply more pressure to them to sell more. All of the above are try-it and see actions. “Let’s try this...OK, now let’s try this.” All the while, time and money is flying out the window.

The story you have just read is true, the names have been changed to protect the innocent. The answer to the above scenario is not simple, nor is it typically corrected by one or two actions. There could very well be several reasons for the issue. Maybe the people are trying to do a job they are not hard-wired to do...their DNA may not be suitable for the role. Or, they could be matched with the wrong type of sales manager. Possibly, the systems you have in place may cause stress for some of the reps, while others don’t worry about making sure every little detail in the CRM system or SAP back-office system is accurate. Maybe the metrics you use to measure them are driving behaviors in conflict with your desired goals and objectives. Their previous employer may have utilized team selling and now the rep must act more independently. Maybe they had one specific solution to sell and now they have four options which causes issues. I could go on and on here, but my guess is you are frustrated enough by now.

So what is the answer? It depends on the actual problem or problems your team is facing. It probably boils down to one or more of the following areas:

- PEOPLE - You may have the wrong people trying to do a job they are not capable of doing.
- SYSTEMS - They may be too complex or salespeople don’t understand “what’s in it for me.”
- METRICS AND REPORTING - When you measure everything, you measure nothing.
- SALES TOOLS - Salespeople never have the right tool for the specific situation before them.
- KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES - Not all of the salespeople have the KSA’s to perform.
- SALES & MARKETING DISCONNECTION - Marketing develops content salespeople ignore.
- BUYER & SELLER MIS-ALIGNMENT - Sellers are not selling the way buyers want to buy.



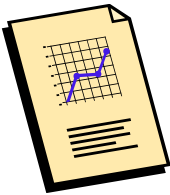
## PEOPLE

People have a naturally strong desire to be successful. I have never met a person who said, "I really want to under-perform today!" So if you agree this statement is true, why do so many under-perform? It could be the work environment or other factors out of their control. It could be their hard-wired behavioral traits, their DNA if you will. Their DNA will not allow them to perform the task for which they were hired. They may have the greatest desire in the world to perform but absolutely were not given the correct chromosomes to perform the task at hand.



## SYSTEMS

In sales the most common system in place is the CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system. Here is one definition - a model for managing a company's interactions with current and future customers. It involves using technology to organize, automate, and synchronize sales, marketing, customer service, and technical support. Salespeople typically despise CRM systems...but why? CRM systems are most often designed to provide information for management to make better business decisions. So what is wrong with that? Nothing really, unless you are a salesperson who doesn't want to take the time to enter information into a computer. A salesperson who doesn't know why they should perform such a menial task when they could be spending their time selling, is going to avoid the system by whatever means possible.



## METRICS AND REPORTING

Be careful what you measure and report to the sales team as a whole. Measurements and reports drive behavior. Are your measurements too trifling or too general? Do you measure activities or results? Do you measure all salespeople the same way? Remember, measurements which drive one kind of behavior in certain reps will drive a different behavior in others. (See DNA above) If you have a seasoned rep who consistently makes quota and is a model employee, do you really care how many customer meetings she has per week? What about a new hire who has yet to sell anything and has been there six to nine months, can you tell anything from looking at their YTD attainment? What about the rep who made quota the last three quarters but this quarter has not sold anything? How should you measure him? It's complex but there are answers.



## SALES TOOLS

What exactly is a sales tool? Think about how much time your sales enablement and marketing teams spend building these "sales tools." Now think about how often your salespeople actually pinpoint which of these tools can help them with an upcoming customer meeting. Oh, you say your salespeople don't search for the tools they need? Is it because they lack the confidence that they will actually find the exact item to fit their specific situation. Someone has spent tons of money on web-portals, data repositories, libraries of information, custom built sharing technology, which salespeople don't use. Ouch!



## KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

Knowledge is a familiarity with something, acquired through experience or education. Skill is the ability to use acquired knowledge, through practice, to improve performance. Ability is the natural aptitude of acquired proficiency to perform at the highest level possible. Do your salespeople possess the appropriate level of knowledge to sell your product or service? Are your salespeople practicing their skill of leveraging the acquired knowledge to be able to perform at the highest ability? Are you consistently reinforcing your company sales philosophy, methodology, and processes? Remember, your people are either growing or going!



## SALES & MARKETING DISCONNECTION

I am not really sure why many salespeople think marketers live in the sky and why many marketing people think salespeople are not smart enough to use what they have created. Product Marketing often builds content too focused on the technical benefits of the product and doesn't include the business challenges aligned to the company capabilities. Strategic Marketing builds content to be used across many different media, the web, mailings, newsletters, forums, sales meetings, etc. Sellers must then take the marketing collateral and bring it down from 30,000 feet to have a single conversation with one customer at a time. The truth is, most salespeople are not wired with such ability.



## BUYER & SELLER MIS-ALIGNMENT

Much has been written recently about the changes in the way buyers buy. So it was the same for 100 years and now all of a sudden the internet changed it all? I don't think so. Sure the internet has changed the availability of information today and often buyers gather all the information they need to make a decision without speaking with a salesperson. But here is something which has not changed in centuries...LISTEN to what the buyer is telling you and LISTEN for what they are asking of you. Very early in my sales career, the top salesperson in our company told me this. "CJ, if you listen very closely to your prospect, they will tell you exactly how to sell to them." Buyers are different...just as salespeople are different from one another. Some buyers are very transactional today, they know what they want and won't let you guide them in any other direction. Some, believe it or not, still appreciate the value of a GOOD salesperson.

## MY POINT IS...

If you have the right people selling for you...who have adopted the simple systems you have deployed...with the correct behaviors driven by good metrics...using the easy to find sales tools to the best of their abilities as a result of proper onboarding and reinforcement of your company's sales philosophy and methodology. And marketing actually develops content based on what sales will use...and salespeople listen to buyers who all want to buy differently than they want to sell...YOU CAN INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SALESPeOPLE PERFORMING TO YOUR (AND THEIR) EXPECTATIONS.

**CAN YOU AFFORD NOT TO CALL US TODAY? 844.377.3770**