

Getting Your Sales Teams To Actually Sell



Using The 5 Foundations To Drive Sales In Your Stores

The Sales We Lose

“How much more can you sell?”

That’s the essential question you must answer before moving forward. If you don’t think you could sell any more than you are currently selling in your stores, stop reading right now! That’s right, if you think you’ve maxed out your opportunities for sales, that you sell to every customer possible and get the most money out of each transaction, then quickly delete this file, go to the fridge, grab a beer and hit the couch. Then, call a doctor because you’re likely delusional. Don’t make any important decisions or operate any heavy equipment until you see a doctor.

OK, if you’re still reading, let’s look at this question of ‘lost sales’ a little closer. How much more do you think you could have sold in your stores over the past 3 months if you had to do it all over again? Let’s make a few assumptions to help you formulate your answer:

- Assume the state of the economy, however good or bad, was the same
- Assume the inventory on hand, both over and short, was the same
- Assume pricing, marketing and promotions were the same
- Finally, assume the level of competition was the same

So, now with these assumptions in place, how much more do you think you could have sold? What was the % of lost business that walked out your door? How much money did you leave on the table every day?

5%? 10%? 15%? 25%? 30%? More????

Here’s what I know, and you should too. You’re losing at least 10% in sales every day in your stores. Probably more, quite frankly. How do I know, and why should you know too?

Go sit on a bench outside of one of your stores with an invisibility cloak (ask Harry Potter if you can borrow his) and just watch what goes on in your store. You’ll probably want to take an Advil or two before doing this (it’s not going to be pleasant).

What will you see? Certainly, and hopefully, you’ll see lots and lots of great things going on in your store. Customers being waited on, staff moving quickly, and friendly service. But wait. Let’s be perfectly honest for a moment. What you would also see is a barrage of lost sales, poor service and frustrated customers. Customers not being waited on. Staff talking amongst themselves. A lack of urgency to make a sale. Staff clerking through one item sales with no attempt to add on an obvious item. Cashiers being cold, aloof and almost the equivalent of the walking dead. Product knowledge not being known on key items. Staff pointing a customer to where something is instead of walking them over to it and making a sale. Store Managers ignoring their teams. The list goes on and on and on and on. (You can see why you’ll need the Advil if you’re going to do this).

Here's the problem: This seems to have become the norm, the accepted level of incompetence, in most retail stores. We somehow have been sucked into believing that it can't be any better than it is. We think it's inconceivable for staff to actually perform at a higher level.

But why? Retail seems to have mastered the back end of the business. Logistics, supply chain, inventory management, CRM and marketing have become brilliantly sophisticated. I constantly brag to anyone who will listen that retail today is just as sophisticated, if not more, than any other sector of the economy. We rock ... almost.

But, what about the front line staff? It's like the Wild West in most organizations when it comes to the store level staff. Hire them, throw them on the floor, ignore them, hope they don't steal too much and then either wait for them to quit or fire them some time down the road. I'm shocked how many times I work with a large retail chains only to discover that the 'cupboards are bare' when it comes to programs and systems to support, develop and drive staff performance (I guess they used all that money on a shiny new POS system).

Look around though and you'll see thousands of outstanding individuals working in retail who care, who are bright and are hard working. You'll see them do amazing things every day. But, all too often these individuals are stars of their own making. What is **it** that makes these people so successful? What are they doing that not everybody on your team is doing? What drives them to be successful? If you can figure this out (**and we have**) you can get better productivity and higher sales out of everybody inside your stores. It's true!

So let's go back and think about how much more you could actually sell inside your stores. Think about it. If more customers were waited on, if everybody was better skilled, if everybody knew their product knowledge, if everybody operated with a greater sense of urgency and wanted to taste the sweet success of the sale, then you know what we know. You could and **you should** be selling more of what you sell. And a lot more of it too. Most of you reading this are losing 15 to 20% in sales every day. Ridiculous!

I don't know about you, but I would be losing my mind right about now if I realized I was losing that many sales each day. I get cranky when we lose just one sale. You're losing hundreds! You should be a nut case right about now. How could this have happened? More important, what are you going to do about it? (If this were a movie, this is not the time to go to the bathroom!)

It took a long time for us to understand why some people were far more productive than others and why some training programs worked far better than others did. We would constantly watch two stores in the same chain, equal in every way, get completely different results out of the staff. Let me take you back to 1988 when I started my company. Well, in fact, the entire period from 1988 through to 1998. We designed training programs for retail chains all across North America. We thought they were brilliant programs. We used nice paper for the handouts and had the best clipart (read: cheesy) on our visuals (sometimes the handout and the visuals are the best part of so many training programs). The

problem was that we were designing typical, old-fashioned training programs. We put them into place for our clients only to see that results were short lived, if at all (umm ... sorry to all of those early clients, but my lawyer assures me the refund period has passed).

It took us a long time to really understand what was at the heart of driving success in a sustainable manner. We began to do more research to really look at what was driving human performance. We kept stumbling across these five 'things' that were consistent in every success story. We began to understand what we needed to do to get each individual working in a store to perform better, what we needed to do to make action plans executable, and what we needed to do to make training programs stick for the long term inside a retail organization. We learned how to actually drive up sales.

The 5 Foundations were born.

Sometimes the things that take the longest to learn are the most important things of all.

(the above is an excerpt from Kevin Graff's soon to be released book titled, "The 5 Foundations: Your Guide To Getting Better Staff Performance")

On the next pages, we'll share with you important steps you can take right now to start selling more in your stores. No fluff. No theory. Just proven, actionable steps you need to take to sell more.

Focus on Goals



If you don't have goals set in place you need to kick yourself in the butt, because you are foolishly leaving thousands of dollars in sales on the table. There is no excuse for not taking the time to set meaningful goals for your stores and staff.

The first foundation, focus on goals, when executed properly in your stores, will significantly drive effort levels and ultimately more sales. Just get it done.

Your Hot List

1. Set your goals on the shortest timeframe possible. Make them daily.
2. If it fits your store, track individual performance.
3. Get your staff involved in setting the goals for their own store.
4. Talk about goals all day long. When you call a store the first question you should ask is what's your sales goal today?
5. Challenge staff with goals that are achievable, but that will make them stretch higher than ever before. Apply the 70% rule to your goals: Goals should be achieved at least 70% of the time. If not, they're too high and risk de-motivating your staff. By the same token, if goals are achieved 90% or more of the time they're too low and aren't pushing your staff.
6. Set goals not just for total sales, but for each of your key selling metrics.
7. Make sure everyone knows the targets they are chasing every shift.

Share Results Constantly



Your staff has to be constantly aware of how they, and the store, are performing. They need to know if they're winning or losing. A beautiful thing happens when you constantly share and talk about performance results: First, you succeed at reinforcing the Goals you set in Foundation #1. Second, your staff instinctively begins to feel more responsible and accountable for their performance (that's the next Foundation).

Your Hot List:

1. Do mid-day readings throughout the day and share current results with everyone.
2. Begin every shift by reviewing the previous day's performance.
3. Post a BIG board in the back room that gets updated every day with your most important metrics and results.
4. Don't have the Manager being the only one to track and post results. Make it the responsibility of everyone on the team.
5. Get everyone, including the part timers, involved with discussions about total store performance, and how they can help improve it.

Accountability for Success



Accountability creates ownership inside your stores of the problems, successes, goals, initiatives, and most important of all results. Things get done right. When your staff owns their results and achieves success they feel rewarded. People start to care, they work harder, they aspire to grow, they want to win... And they do!

In a nutshell, achieving success must matter. Otherwise, complacency takes hold.

Your Hot List

1. Clearly established goals must always be in place and be reinforced.
2. Constant measures of performance must take place continuously.
(Did you notice that these first two items are in fact the first two of the five foundations?)
3. Implement weekly coaching sessions with your team to review performance so that nothing is allowed to slip between the cracks.
4. As Managers and Leaders, you must hold yourself accountable for your own performance, actions and words.
5. Assign ownership of various tasks in the stores to select individuals as a means of assigning accountability throughout the store.
6. Create a culture that values open and honest communication about performance. More feedback is required at all levels on a daily basis.
7. Clearly define minimum performance standards and measure everyone against them constantly.
8. Never tolerate poor performance.

Ongoing Training and Coaching



If you're going to raise the bar on performance, you have a responsibility to give your team the skills and information they need to succeed. That's Foundation #4, Ongoing Training and Coaching.

The most important thing to understand about this foundation is the very first word of it: **Ongoing**. Training and coaching must be a daily occurrence inside your stores. Training is not an event and it's not a program that you go to just one time. Coaching must happen throughout every shift with every employee. If you don't get the ongoing part right, you'll never make progress.

Your Hot List

1. Get serious about training your staff how to sell properly.
2. Get serious about giving your Store Managers the skills they need to succeed at managing their stores and staff.
3. Get serious about training your District Managers on how to actually manage a territory of stores.
4. Get serious about doing more Product Knowledge training.
5. Be certain you have daily 'shift starter' meetings in your store up and running.
6. Implement short, 5-minute one-on-one or small group coaching sessions between the Manager and staff at least every other week.
7. Recognize that you're store staff today are more important than ever before ... give them the skills and tools they need to succeed at selling more.

Make It Worthwhile



Consider this question: If there were no difference in your **total pay package*** whether you sold \$10,000 or \$1000 this week, why would you bother trying to sell more?

*(*Total pay package refers to everything the employee gets from their job which includes money, rewards and recognition.)*

You must make it fundamentally worthwhile for your staff to try harder and to achieve success, and that's the basis for Foundation # 5, Make It Worthwhile.

By now, you certainly must be getting the point that you're going to be raising the bar on performance for everybody that works for you. It's up to you to make it worthwhile for them to try harder.

Your Hot List

1. Run more contests and incentives throughout every month.
2. Have Senior Executives start calling stores and speaking to top performers.
3. Never lose a top performer over money ... pay them more!
4. Learn to say 'thank you' much more often.
5. Lighten up and allow everyone to have more fun at work.



By now, you likely get the picture that you could, and should, be selling much more in your stores.

Part of your solution may involve providing your sales teams with better selling skills, and your Store Management teams with better management skills and tools to run your stores better.

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