



How to Build a Top Sales Team

Most companies go out and spend money to get people through the doors. But when all of these people come through your doors to spend money, what are your sales staff doing?

Are they up-selling, cross-selling, making add-on sales, selling intangibles such as rental programs and extended warranties? Is the money you're spending on advertising going to waste due to poorly trained sales staff?

Get Your House in Order Before Advertising

Rather than continuously spending money on advertising, why don't you reinvest those funds into your staff? There are five variables to increased profits. Advertising influences only one variable, while your sales staff impact three variables.

1. **Leads:** The number of people who walk through your door.
2. **Conversion Rate:** The number of visitors converted into customers.
3. **Average Transaction:** The dollar amount of each transaction.
4. **Frequency of Transaction:** This is the measurement of how much loyalty your business has.
5. **Profit:** Your gross margin percentage.

Retailers primarily work on two variables. They advertise aggressively to get people through the door (Leads), and hit up suppliers for trade discounts, return-to-supplier programs, rebates, co-op advertising and the like (Profit).

But consider this:

"It costs six times more to get new customers than it does to increase sales to existing customers."

If you want to reduce your marketing dollars, or the cost of customer acquisition, reinvest your dollars into strategies that will retain your customers, so they keep shopping in your store(s). How about investing money into your staff, so that they build loyalty for your business.

Characteristics of a Championship Sales Team

You must have a Common Goal: In sport it is to win; in business it could be the mission, or targets to achieve. The key questions are do you have a mission, if so what is it? Does it include your team, does it inspire them?

You must have a Winning Culture: In business this needs to be clearly defined and displayed and committed to by all team members, such as ownership, excellence, commitment fun, and balance. Do you have a code of culture? What values do you wish you team members to display?

You Must Have a Strong Leader: In business this is the owner or nominated operator. This person lives the culture, knows the boundaries, coaches and everyone guides towards the common goal, is congruent with all these points and stretches the team members to perform above their comfort levels.



Photos • Nick Raman

You Need 100% Involvement from Everybody: No excuses. You cannot afford to have passengers, who are not on board and who can bring the morale of the team down or do covertly sabotage operations to undermine the leader. We cannot stress the importance of this one enough. We have seen this as one of the major parts of building a champion team that most business owners find so hard to solve.

Flat Salaries Breed Flat Performances: A flat salary can only breed flat performances. Over time even it becomes obvious. Why put in the extra effort? You see this everywhere. People who want a flat salary with all the perks, make you feel that they are doing you a favour to work for you (or worse, serve you!).

There are creative ways to effectively increase a person's salary package without burdening the company's cashflow. What do you think they are?

Develop an Incentive Program Based around a Simple Philosophy: Reward them for the things you want them to do, and penalise them for the things you don't want them to do. Incentives drive employee priorities and therefore their behaviour. So you can align their priorities (and focus) with your business goals. This creates a real team.

You Need To Be Supportive of Risk Taking: Think back to a game scenario. Imagine if you told a champion football team that they had to stick rigidly to the rules and 'Don't try

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any fancy stuff as it may not work out! It would make a pretty flat team. You must have an environment where risk takers and creative team members are able to blossom, within the boundaries, rules and culture without being in fear of losing their jobs. Allow people to become champion athletes in your company.

You Need Clear Job Descriptions, Roles and Duties:

Time and time again team members lose focus simply because they are not sure of what they are meant to be doing. Even worse are business owners who say, “I have no idea what Mary really does, but if she left we would be in trouble!” How dumb is that? By the way, this should be in place before you hire any body.

Hire People who Already have the Passion and Heart You Want to be a Championship Player:

Too often we recruit people based on their qualifications, resume or what they look like, only to find they are unmotivated with no driving passion. You can always train and teach skills (especially with great systems and training) but you can’t easily put the passion inside someone. If you must, wait for the right person...don’t grab just anyone. And be wary of family members, friends or friends of friends. If you must, put them through the recruitment system and get an independent check.

Train Them on How to Sell: Coach your staff on how to sell, how to build positive relationships with customers, and how to increase the dollar value of each transaction. Coach your sales team to become problem solvers, not just order takers.

The Five Different Types of Sales People

We discussed the different types of sales people in our last article on ‘Multiple Strategies to Grow Your Business’, but it is good to have a refresher.

Take a look at the different types of salespeople and ask yourself what categories your staff fit into.

1. **The McDonalds Worker:** Waits for the customer to ask if they can buy.
2. **The Techie:** Tries to impress with their technical knowledge. They only succeed in isolating the customer who won’t know as much as them, but to avoid looking uneducated will just nod their head in agreement.
3. **The Counter Shark:** These are staff that wait for the customer to bring the item to the counter, so they can process the sale and pocket the commission.
4. **The New Messiah:** A sales person who promises the world just to get the sale. These are the ones that give you nightmares!
5. **The Problem Solver (Our Favourite):** This person qualifies and listens to the customer and helps them buy what they need. They focus on the customer’s needs, not the features of the product.

The Retail Sales Success Cycle

Now that you have identified your employees’ weaknesses, you can train them in the process of building customers for life.



Here is the Retail Sales Success Cycle, a tool that looks at the continuous process of building loyal customers.

Remember, these are not the steps to selling. This is a process that keeps recycling itself as long as the customer continues to renew the relationship.

1. Inception

This is the beginning of your relationship with the customer. First impressions are important, and how you handle the first seconds with a customer will determine how they judge you and the company. Take note of the following points:

- 1 Get to prospects early
- 2 Don't say 'can I help you?'
- 3 Smile
- 4 Ask their name and use it

2. The Relationship

The customer isn't going to buy from you if they think you are an idiot. While you interact with the customer they must like you. You can start by:

- 1 Being enthusiastic
- 2 Giving them all of your attention
- 3 Being friendly
- 4 Asking questions
- 5 Focusing on the person, not the product

You must have an environment where risk takers are able to blossom, within the boundaries, rules and culture without being in fear of losing their jobs.

3. Establishing Needs

Now that you are best mates with the customer, turn your attention to making them want a product. People buy based on their emotions, so you need to use this to your advantage by building the customer's desire for a product. This is done by:

1. Showing how a product will give them pleasure

4. Providing Solutions

You are a problem solver. By developing a relationship with the customer, you put yourself in a position to help them buy. Keep them keen to buy by:

- 1 Starting at the most expensive. You can always go down, but you can't move up
- 2 Offering only two choices, since too many can confuse
- 3 Improving their perception of a product, even if the reality is unchanged



- 4 Focusing on value, not price
- 5 Focusing on how the product will benefit the customer

5. Closing the Sale

An effective close involves asking a question that eliminates ‘no’ as a possible answer. You won’t get the ‘yes’ as a result of simply eliminating ‘no’, but you will get an answer or objections that will eventually lead to a ‘yes’.

If you want to hear the cash registers ringing, use one of these closes:

The Assumption Close: Simply assume the customer is going to buy. Say something like “OK, great Mr. Customer, I’ll go write it up”. Then take the customer to the register and close the sale.

The Alternative Close: Give the customer a choice of two options and the chance is they will take one of them. “Do you want the LG or the Sony?” If they pick one or the other you have got the sale.

The Return of Serve Close: If the customer asks a question like “Does it come in black?” reply with “Would you like it in black?” If they say yes, you’ve made the sale.

6. Ensuring Tomorrow

Don’t just go back to the tearoom and high five the other sales staff once you have made the sale. Spend some quality time with the customer so that they keep coming back. Get in their good books by:

- 1 Walking the goods to the car
- 2 Handing out a personalised business card
- 3 Getting their details onto a database
- 4 Signing them up to your loyalty program
- 5 Sending a thank you card to your Top Five customers each week
- 6 Call the customer in a fortnight to see if they are happy with the purchase

Your Gun Sales Team

Understand that you must get the foundations right in the business, before your sales team can be successful. Job descriptions, KPIs, getting the culture right are extremely important before you start giving them incentives, and spending huge amounts of money on advertising.

About Achievers Group

Tony Gattari is the Managing Director of the Achievers Group. He built Harvey Norman’s computer business from \$12 million to \$565 million in nine years.

Shaun Mooney has been in the sports and leisure retail industry for over 10 years. He has experienced first hand successful and poor performing bicycle retailers, through his productivity, inventory and marketing analysis.

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