

Being a Good Coach

Every sales manager or director knows that they have to spend some time training and working with their staff so they continue to improve, however frequently managers get so caught up in their own schedules that they neglect coaching for other duties. When you've got new staff, that isn't a good idea. Whether experienced or not, all reps need polishing from time and time depending on their level of skill. It takes time and energy, but the results in the long run, are worth the time put in. Below are some tips to become a better coach for a new team:

Be sure to make time for coaching. Set up a weekly meeting with each rep to see how things are going and ensure that they are continuing to improve. Be specific in the meetings, discuss customer problems/challenges, and what the rep needs to do to make the best use of their time. By having defined goals the rep will be on track as they increase their skills and understanding of good selling practices. Ensure that reps are informed of what is expected of them. More experienced reps also need feedback; it helps build confidence which is important in keeping reps fueled.

Secondly, be sure to observe your reps in the field. It is difficult to determine where your reps need additional help, especially new reps if you aren't observing them on a live call. Watch how they interact with clients, use time management, and take care of their other job duties. It is a good practice to go on at least one sales call per quarter with your staff, and more often if you see a particular rep that is struggling. You may also want to consider having seasoned reps make calls with new reps, however ensure that you understand the potential expense of taking a top performer out of the field. It may make sense if the senior rep may lead into a management role, however if not, time away from selling will impact the bottom line.

Finally, be one step ahead of the game. Don't wait until reps have a problem, because at that point it may have left them feeling unconfident and demotulated. Seek out each rep monthly and ask how things are going, in a controlled atmosphere such as a meeting etc. Managers should make a dedicated effort to keep in touch with new sales staff whether face to face or with a phone call. Part of the manager's efforts in the beginning will determine the rep's willingness to go the distance.