How to Clone Your Best Sales Performers?

Sales team every size grapple with common sales productivity challenges. The challenges vary from inaccurate forecast, inconsistent sales processes, low sales productivity and only a few sales people making or exceeding their quotas. Statistics show that only 20% of the top sales persons contribute 60% of the team targets. Another study from CSO Insights suggests that the percentage of salespeople making quota has dropped from 63 percent to 53 percent over a five-year period. This is not a situation in which sales leaders would want to be in. Almost everyone wants to have evenly spread out mix of performers and more number of sales teams making quota. One of the ways to do this is to clone your best sales performers.

One of the most important jobs of sales managers is to identify what's working and replicate it. The process identifies the mindset, traits, knowledge, skills, and behaviors of best sales performer as a blueprint for replicating and cloning that profile across the sales organization.

Conducting an analysis like that:

1. Provides more insights into effective new hire sales Onboarding
2. Closes the sales productivity gap amongst team members
3. Produces better business results and even distribution of performance
4. Improves the sales productivity improvement efforts ROI

But before we even start to do this some fundamental questions need to be answered

1. Who's your top sales performer?
2. What defines your top sales performer?
3. How do you identify the gap between the best sales person and other team members
4. How do you Replicate best sales person behaviors

1. Who's your top sales performer

The first step is to identify the criteria that determine who the top sales performers are in your business. Look at your business metrics and identify the leading and lagging indicators which define your sales team into top performers, average and laggards.

Consider factors like, over attainment of quota, forecast accuracy, average deal size, product mix, evenly spread out performance, sales velocity, activity levels, etc. to create an all inclusive criteria.

Once you have the factors set, perform a 360 degree analysis to verify the data and build consensus as to whom management sees as top performers and why. Interviews, group meetings, and ride along may be helpful in expanding the input. Carefully identifying what is meant by "Top Performer" is critical: Highlighting the wrong criteria may result in replicating poor behaviors.

Please also keep in mind that top performance is not *just* about top sales numbers but about behaviors as well. As part of the identification process, it's equally important to determine who *not* to include. If the sales numbers are great for a territory, but the sales person achieved them by inheriting a great territory or winning a big deal that accounted for the majority of their quota attainment or was a single deal wonder, but due to the efforts of others, you should exclude them from the study. The key is to find the performers who you want to clone.

2. What defines your top sales performer

Once you've identified the true top performers, the next step is to determine what traits and behaviors are present and how they affect performance. Try to look not only at the behavior or activity data but also some of the traits they exhibit. Look at both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the things they are doing.

Doing a 360-Degree analysis including, surveys, interviews, ride-along can help to put weighted criteria for the frequency and quality of each behavior. The prime question that needs to be answered is that, "What are they doing differently and how is it affecting the performance positively?" Are they doing more activities or the quality of activities is better. Are they doing more prospecting or they are doing better qualification or reach the C-level prospects? What kind of technologies or automation they are using?

It is important to agree on which behaviors to study so they can be isolated, defined and cloned.

3. Identify the gap between the best salesperson and other team members

To have the best impact, identify the gaps in behaviors between top performers and the average and laggards. Use technology to identify the gaps in the skills and quality at each stage of the sales process. Maybe the gap is in terms of qualifying a prospect or converting a PoC into closure. It's important to document the gaps to also identify the opportunities to coach the individuals and group level.

Self Score
Manager Score

4. Clone Top Performance Behaviors

Finally, the goal of the cloning is to replicate the top performers' skills and behaviors across the rest of the sales organization in order to improve the sales process.

Once the Gap Analysis is done, it should be the base for individual, team or group level interventions. Help other team members acquire those skills and enable managers to coach and review these skills.

Also invest in creating your Sales Guide and Sales Books documenting the sales processes, stages and entry and exit criteria's. Create a unified sales language across the organization. If the behavior requires implementation of a sales methodology, the same should be invested in to take sales to the next level.

This should also help HR and Sales leaders define the skills and traits they should look at while hiring the new candidates and setting up the base for their success.

Cloning top performers is not a magic bullet, but a methodical approach to top performers replication is a huge leap from interventions done at a generic level. The interventions are done based on what is working across the organization is not a copy of someone else's best practices. This also allows creating the first 100-day road map for new hires to set them on a path to success and defines their Onboarding mechanism. This also sets the stage for overall sales training and coaching that produces better sales results based on what is actually working in the field.

> **To help your sales organization identify and clone your top sales performers, reach out to us at www.saleszee.com**

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