VISUALIZE™

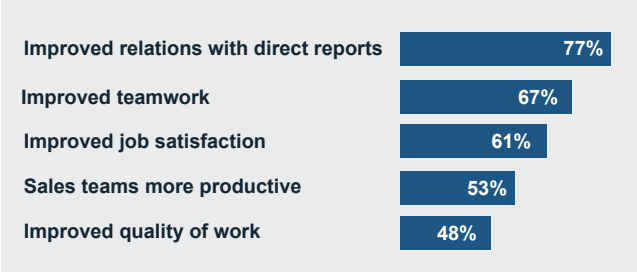
Migrating from Managing to Coaching

How to bring out the best in sales teams and increase the bottom line

The role that frontline sales managers play in coaching to the right skills, behaviors and attitudes of their sales forces can greatly impact individual performance and company revenue growth. Good coaches inspire, motivate and promote excellence that ultimately translates to highly productive sales teams eager to land new clients, bring in bigger orders and help the company build brand equity.

The best sales coaches model best practices, leverage available tools, seek expertise, measure success and recognize good work. Sales managers are responsible for getting work done; sales coaches help ensure that work is done well. Often, the person responsible for both is one in the same. This is particularly true when it comes to implementing a new sales process.

This paper outlines how sales managers can assist people in reaching their full potential and therefore build achievement, recognition and advancement within an organization.



Coaching's Impact on Revenues ... and Morale

In an oft-quoted study by Triad Performance Technologies, Inc., 67 regional and district sales managers for a telecom were evaluated after receiving coaching. Seventy-seven percent reported improved relationships with their direct reports; 67 percent reported improved teamwork; and 61 percent reported improved job satisfaction. Additionally, 53 percent said their sales teams were more productive and 48 percent witnessed better overall quality of work. Within a year, the company had seen millions in additional profitability attributed directly to the coaching. This is not an isolated incident. Similar results in other companies underscore coaching's impact, not just on sales managers but on the teams they oversee. For instance, a Gallup poll that measured sales employees' attitudes toward their coaches found that among those who rated their sales coaches highly, 56 percent had higher customer loyalty and 38 percent experienced higher productivity. Their sales coaches, in turn, realized a 50 percent reduction in turnover.

Of no surprise to anyone who's been in the workforce a while, an employee's relationship with his or her direct manager is the most important factor in determining employee satisfaction, production and retention. Yet often those direct managers also assume the role of coach without fully understanding all it entails.

"Coaching matters and good coaching really matters when you look at organizations and how they measure results," Julie Thomas, CEO of ValueSelling Associates, said.

The Essence and Essentials of Good Sales Coaching

Good coaching produces better customer relationships and, in turn, improved sales. But it also requires a mindset focused on much more than making or exceeding quotas. The best sales managers understand that difference, and embrace it. Great coaches have a passion for helping others in knowing – sometimes without any formal recognition – that they played a part in someone's success. Such an evolution from being a superstar at sales to enabling others to soar can be difficult, at least initially.

Other veteran sales-executive-turned-coaches agree. Tricia Raphaelian was one such great account executive who always met or exceeded her quotas and was promoted to manager without any formal training. "Coaching did not come naturally for me, nor did managing," she said, "because initially I thought it was about telling other people what to do. 'Do what I

> *"Oftentimes sales managers get promoted because they're really good sales people, but they turn out to be lousy managers. It's a huge transition to flip that switch. They basically tell people, 'this is how I did it and if you do it exactly my way, you'll be successful too.' The reality, though, is that (a) they can't, (b) they won't, and (c) they don't want to."*
>
> *- Scott Anschuetz*

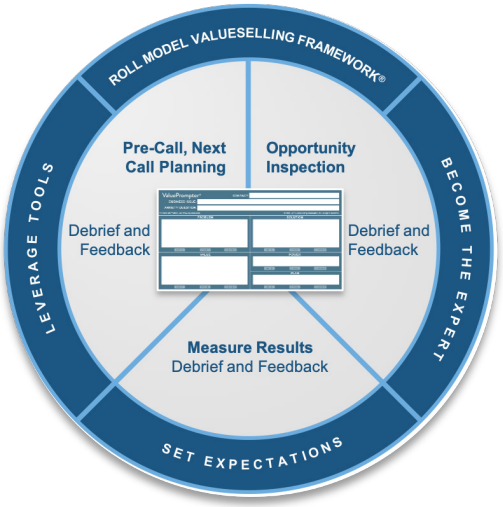
did as a rep and you'll be successful,' I thought." But the certified ValueSelling Associate wasn't successful using that approach and learned how to improve.

"Once I learned through ValueSelling that great coaching was just like great selling in that it was all about asking questions and helping people come to logical conclusions on their own, I was told I was a great coach."

The ValueSelling Coaching Model

The ValueSelling Coaching Model focuses on four specific areas required of every sales manager:

- Role model the sales methodology or skills sets the sales team is expected to use. People will do what you do before they do what you say. By "walking the talk," the manager is perceived as a world-class sales manager that another sales professional aspires to be. It also builds credibility, which is crucial to effective coaching, when people know you as someone of action, not just talk.
- Become an expert in the language and nomenclature of the industry. A good sales coach knows the answers to questions (or where to find them). This not only strengthens the coach's standing but helps build integrity and authenticity. People will respond to coaching if they believe the coach truly believes in them and is genuinely interested in their well-being.
- Know how to leverage sales tools, such as an organization's chosen customer relationship management software and myriad prospecting tools. This knowledge and continuous use drives productivity, mastery and habits. Companies today are making limited investments; the manager is responsible for making sure those investments work.
- Set expectations on activity levels that you can measure and allow for inspections along the way. When a sales professional understands expectations, he or she is more likely to meet them. Remember: What you measure, you can improve.

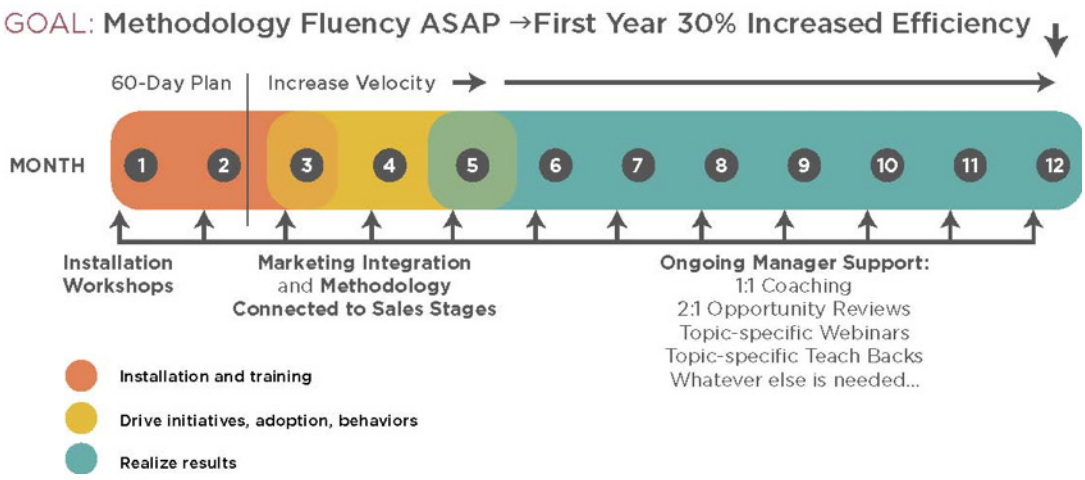


Though this model is important in daily work life, it's particularly important when it comes to implementing a new sales process. In fact, the success of new sales training may rest upon a manager's ability to excel in these four areas.

Maximizing Sales Training ROI

Doug Von Koenig, a sales trainer and coach based in the US, believes implementing sales methodology training includes two distinct processes: the installation phase when a new framework is introduced; and the institutionalization phase to make sure the methodology becomes part of the "cultural DNA" companywide.

"At the end of the day, on this journey to institutionalization, the single most critical component



is that frontline manager and how well he/she coaches the methodology leading by example," Von Koenig said. "If you don't practice and put it in real-time, day-to-day application, you're not going to become fluent at learning the new sales process that you've just learned, and the one to help the team become fluent is their at manager."

One way to help embed a sales framework into that cultural DNA is to keep it from becoming too complex. It should start that way and stay that way, highly effective yet easy to use.

Here is also where managers become key in making sure a business receives maximum ROI on its investment in sales training.

> *"If it's complicated, no one's going to do it. To embrace change and make changes is very, very difficult. We're creatures of habit."*
>
> *-JB Bush*

The organizations that get there quickly have managers that understand they must consistently inspect to see if new practices and tools are being adopted and to continue encouraging their use. That also includes making sure the sales team has all of the appropriate resources to bring in that sale.

Sometimes all it takes are some basic tactics.

"This could be as simple as having the primary templates stuck on walls, referred to in presentations, allowed for in incentive plans, included in team meetings, and so on," said David Bentley, a certified ValueSelling Associate based in the United Kingdom. "A second idea is the involvement of sales-related groups, such as marketing, product management and product training."

The Difference between a Manager and a Coach

We may be creatures of habit, but we're also people with a finite amount of time. As such, sales managers often struggle with how much of their day or week or month to devote exclusively to coaching versus managing.

However, that's the wrong way to view coaching. Great coaches recognize that there are moments every day that present opportunities to coach and develop their team – pre-call preparation, opportunity reviews, monthly and weekly forecast calls, reviewing follow up letters, product introductions. The list goes on.

There's also a particular sense of emotional intelligence that goes into shaping human behavior. Coaches that do well have a real caring about the person they are working with and they want that person to succeed.

When a sales professional is struggling, feedback is essential, but how it's delivered is as important as what is being conveyed. Such specific feedback must be truthful, specific, positive and timely.

In fact, one of the biggest pitfalls for some sales managers is "carrying the rep."

The biggest opportunities for improvement with many managers involves helping sales professionals stand on their own by modeling and mentoring the process for them, rather than going out and doing for the rep what they could be doing for themselves.

This is a critical success factor for any engagement, whether it's a client or an employee. "Being a supportive coach more than a numbers basher," Bentley advised. "Give yourself the chance to show real leadership by doing rather than talking, become the manager the team deserves."

And being consistent and diligent.

"It's a lot of work, not hard work," added Von Koenig. That investment of time, knowledge and modeling will pay off handsomely, all sales trainers believe.

"The bottom line is, coaching is important," Thomas, the ValueSelling CEO, said. "Find a good coach for yourself and build the skills to become a good coach.

"It'll make a big difference to you professionally and to the people you are coaching," she continued. "And it'll make a big difference to the companies that you work for and be reflected in their top and bottom lines. There's no question that coaching is critical to the long-term success of an organization."

About Visualize

Visualize for ValueSelling has helped fast growing start-ups and FORTUNE 1000 business-to-business sales organizations around the globe compete and win.

Generating revenue is the goal of all sales organizations. In order to do that, your team needs the right tools, skills and processes to succeed. As a certified ValueSelling Associate, Visualize has maintained its position as a leader in the industry by continually evolving to meet the new challenges faced by sales teams. Clients turn to the experts at Visualize for classroom training, e-learning, and consulting services that yield immediate impact, repeatable strategies, and sustainable results.

Visualize clients lead the field in many industries including telecommunications, manufacturing and high tech. Some of our clients include: Autonomy, Avaya, Citrix Online, Motorola, newScale, Osram, VMware, Right Hemisphere, Rotobrush, Salesforce.com, SuccessFactors, Telus, TheLadders.com, and Trimble Navigation.

For more information, visit the Visualize website at www.visualize.com, or call +1.888.88.GOALS (46257).

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