SELL MORE WITH SALES COACHING

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR EVERYDAY SALES CHALLENGES

PERI SHAWN

WILEY

Praise for *Sell More with Sales Coaching*

"If salespeople had to be certified to sell, this book would be part of the licensing process! Practical, specific, solid advice."

—Dianna Booher
Author of *Creating Personal Presence* and *Communicate with Confidence*

"I love practical, how-to strategies! The real-life examples demonstrating both the good and not-so-good sales practices in this book simplifies the guidance process. This is a wonderful guide for sales coaches to get better results from their efforts."

—Tom Hopkins
Author of *How to Master the Art of Selling*

"If you would love to increase your sales, read Peri's Shawn's newest book *Sell More with Sales Coaching* and learn from a master coach of coaches. Her book is both inspiring and informative."

—Dr. John Demartini
Best-selling author of *The Breakthrough Experience*

"*Sell More with Sales Coaching* is an easy and practical way for sale managers and salespeople to increase sales by reducing 10 common sales mistakes on their way toward great sales results."

—Dr. Tony Alessandra
Hall-of-Fame Keynote Speaker;
Author of *The Platinum Rule for Sales Mastery*

"In any field of endeavor, the 'best' in the world seek out top coaches to get even better. Peri Shawn understands what makes sales people better . . . and delivers that clearly and concisely."

—Donald Cooper
MBA, CSP, HoF, Business Speaker and Coach

"The wisdom contained in *Sell More with Sales Coaching* will help your sales team 'grow their wings' so they can soar to success. Learn from Peri, one of the best sales coaches in the industry."

—Joseph Sherren
CSP, HoF;
Author, *iLead*, *Five Insights for Building Sustainable Organizations*

"I'm very impressed with the practicality of Peri's work! The application of her sales coaching ideas will make a huge difference to your sales. Take the ideas and run with them for the sake of your sales results."

—Warren Evans
HoF, Futurist

"While there are numerous books on selling, Peri Shawn's is by far the most useful blueprint for *coaching* your team to extraordinary sales growth. This is a must-read for sales managers."

—Jeff Mowatt
Best-selling author of *Influence with Ease*

“*Sell More with Sales Coaching* provides great insight on how to coach while making your sales team feel valued, knowledgeable and an important part of the organization and its sales growth. *Sell More with Sales Coaching* is practical, easy to use, and relevant for today’s sales environment. Peri Shawn uses great analogies not only to make it an enjoyable read, but also to drive the sales coaching point home.”

—Suzanne F. Stevens
Chief Edge Optimizer, Ignite Excellence Inc. Group

“This book delivers a proven blueprint to foster a quiet confidence to shift activity to productivity. Your team will close more sales, more often for more money”.

—Tim Breithaupt
Author of Canadian best seller, *Take This Job and Love It: The Joys of Professional Selling*

“Peri has taken her vast experience and made it immediately accessible. This is a very practical resource for sales managers.”

—Adrian Davis
Keynote Speaker, Consultant;
Author of *Human-to-Human Selling*

“Peri shares her extensive and highly effective sales coaching experience in a practical guidebook filled with real world examples and how-to steps. Apply the powerful approaches in this book to truly sell more with sales coaching!”

—Jim Clemmer
International Leadership Author, Speaker, Coach, and Retreat Facilitator

“Attention Sales Managers – read this book! – Sales Coaching demystified and a step by step coaching plan revealed to help teams catapult sales and leave self-imposed sales barriers in the past.”

—Richard Peterson
North America’s Presentation Coach™;
Certified Sales Professional

“*Sell More with Sales Coaching* is not only written to help sales managers achieve ultimate success, it’s also the ‘go to’ guide for salespeople who want the inside scoop on peak performance. . . . . a memorable read!”

—Bob Gray
CSP, HoF Memory Expert;
Guinness Record Holder

“Remember when you got your first sales management position? You wished there was one book that not only navigates the typical mistakes managers make, but point out how to leverage learning principles. With *Sell More with Sales Coaching*, your wish has come true!”

—Tom Stoyan
Canada’s Sales Coach;
First Inductee in the Canadian Speaking Hall of Fame

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CHAPTER

1

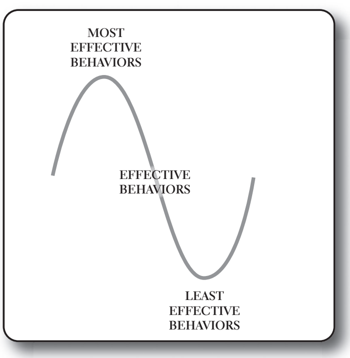
Ensuring Your Sales Coaching Gets Results

Salespeople sell more when they're coached effectively and regularly.

Results prove sales coaching increases sales, the *Harvard Business Review* has reported on it, and the Sales Executive Council documents it. Yet, you may be wondering how it works in your world.

Picture this: You have a new salesperson on your team. Joe's an average-performing sales guy, and you're about to have your first sales coaching session with him. He's just finished a sales interaction with a potential client, Susan. He's done some things well, and he's done some things that need improvement (like most salespeople).

Here's what the line graph of his sales behaviors with Susan looks like:



The high point on Joe's sales behavior curve represents the most effective behaviors he engaged in with Susan. These include:

- Asking some great discovery questions.
- Providing relevant information at the ideal time in the conversation.
- Remembering to set the agenda for the next time they meet.

The low point represents the least effective behaviors Joe demonstrated with Susan. These involve:

- Forgetting to ask Susan which product solutions her company had tried unsuccessfully.
- Agreeing the product he suggested was expensive without illustrating its valuable ROI.
- Not sharing the success story of a client with a similar issue to Susan's company.

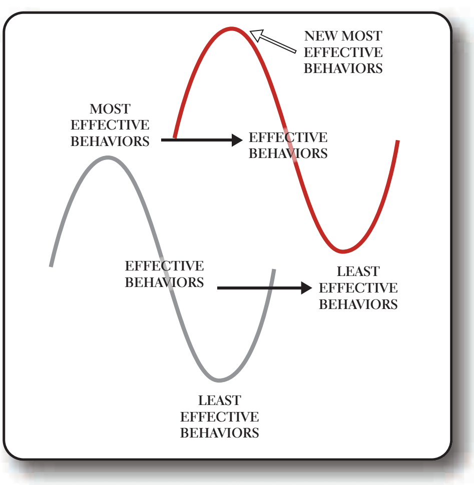
Despite Joe's efforts, Susan decided not to buy during their sales interaction.

The magic happens after you coach Joe and he sells to the next potential client with an issue similar to Susan's.

During the call with that next client, Maria, Joe does not repeat the ineffective behaviors from the low point of his interaction with Susan. His techniques that, on the graph, were labeled "Effective Behaviors," become his least effective behaviors, while the most effective behaviors from his interaction with Susan now represent his average performance. Overall, the standards of Joe's sales behaviors trend upward.

And here's the most exciting benefit of sales coaching with Joe: He engages in new, even more effective sales behaviors with Maria, so his most effective sales behaviors are stronger than they were previously. Therefore, Joe sells better and sooner in his sales conversation with Maria than he did with Susan. As proof of his success, Maria decides to buy during the interaction.

Here's what the improvement in Joe's sales behavior looks like:



The line graph to the left shows his sales interaction with Susan, and the line graph to the right is his interaction with Maria. Imagine the sales results Joe will get when you coach him on an ongoing basis. He'll incrementally continue to sell better and sooner. *Translation: He'll sell more.*

This kind of improvement is typical for salespeople who are coached regularly. I call this the Quantum Coaching Effect. If you maintain a coaching relationship with your team members, they'll continue to reach new sales heights. You'll find they'll let go of their least effective sales behaviors and engage in more and more effective ways to help potential clients with their buying decisions.

Sales coaching can be very rewarding for sales leaders and their team members when they experience this level of improvement. It starts with your coaching focus. It's not about you being the source of all answers; it's about coaching your team to improve sales behaviors. The following story illustrates this:

With an added glint in his eye from his blade's reflection, my brother finished off his third victim. And I was his accomplice. (*A melodramatic start, yes. Yet you'll find this holds an essential sales coaching lesson for you.*) You see my brother, Brad, was different. At the age of eleven, he was an entomologist (*translation: a very serious bug guy, into beetles, butterflies, moths, and spiders*).

Among the many creatures he nurtured, were monarch butterflies, which he bred in his bedroom. I remember watching in awe as dozens flew from one end of his room to the other. *Orange never looked so beautiful.*

Brad would get the monarch butterflies as caterpillars and let them mature. Every year, he and I would watch them go through their metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly.

When the caterpillars would reach their chrysalis stage, which is when they are in cocoons, we would patiently wait for the chrysalides to hatch. We'd watch the growing butterflies inside move around and struggle, and struggle, and struggle. Then finally each one would break free with beautiful wings and hang there before eventually flying off.

One year, Brad and I decided we wanted to help and make the metamorphosis easier on the butterflies, so when the next butterfly started to struggle to emerge from its chrysalis, Brad took out his X-Acto knife and very carefully cut open the side of the cocoon.

We waited and watched.

No struggle. *Yes!!!!!!!!!!!!*

We shared the kind of smile only co-conspirators can understand. I felt like a superhero in the world of nature. We had single-handedly saved the butterfly. I was so proud that I wasn't prepared for what happened next.

The butterfly fell out of the chrysalis with crumpled wings. It sat there and sat there, and sat there. And then, *flop*, it died.

I hate to admit this, but did it three times before we figured out that the butterflies' deaths had something to do with us. Brad went to the books, and discovered this: The butterflies' struggle gives their wings the strength to fly, and when we took away their struggle, they couldn't fly and they died. So much for being the heroes of nature.

How This Relates to Sales Coaching

Just like Brad and I enjoyed watching the butterflies mature and fly, you probably have wanted your sales team to fly; and just like we wanted to help and make it easier for the butterflies, you probably have wanted to help and make things easier for your team. Just like we thought it was better for the butterflies not to struggle, you may have thought it was better for your team members not to struggle. Just like we had good intentions when we cut open the butterflies' chrysalides with an X-Acto knife, you probably have good intentions when you give your team members all the answers because you thought you were making it easier for them. Just like we learned that taking away the struggle for the butterflies kills them, you might have discovered that telling your team members the answers doesn't necessarily improve their thinking or their sales skills.

What No Struggle Means

For the butterflies, no struggle means no strong wings, which translates into no flying. For your team, no struggle means no new neurological connections, which means the same old thinking, which translates into no flying and the same old sales results. *Not good.* Each time you tell your team members what to do, recognize you're just like Brad and me. You're killing your team members' abilities to think and sell better.

The OSF Cycle

As you've probably already discovered, it's easy not to sales coach. It's far easier to fall for the struggle and resort to providing answers. If you fall for their struggle, you create the OSF cycle. What's the OSF cycle? It's the *Oh-So-Familiar* cycle of:

- A problem arises.
- Your team comes to you for the answer.
- You give them the answer.

And next time they have a problem, they come back to you for the answer and you give them the answers. Then you are officially trapped in the OSF cycle.

Consequences of the OSF Cycle

If you get caught in the OSF cycle, your team members' thinking and sales skills don't usually improve. They become dependent on you, taking up more of your time than you would like, and they continue to get the same sales results. *Not very productive for either of you*.

Transforming the OSF Cycle

Avoiding the OSF cycle positively influences your team members' thinking and sales skills. They take up less of your time in the long run. They become more self-reliant. *They get better sales results*.

Your role as their sales coach is to help your team members make new neurological connections so their thinking is stronger and, consequently, they yield better sales results.

> Sales coaching is about helping your team make new neurological connections.

Academic research indicates that struggle is essential for improved performance. I won't bore you with citing the details, but suffice it to say, it's similar to a light switch. You don't need to know why electricity in the light switch works. You just use it *because* it works. The same holds true for the use of struggle in sales coaching. You don't need to know *why* struggle works; integrate it into your sales coaching *because* it works.

> Struggle is essential for improved sales results.

Telling Them What to Do

Does this mean you never tell your team members answers? No. I'm not talking about leaving your team members out to dry and never giving them a helpful piece of information. There are times when it is appropriate to share and provide guidance. We'll touch more on this shortly.

I'm talking about helping your team members develop their mental strength (as the butterflies developed their physical strength) so they can fly with the best of them—and surpass their sales targets.

When you hear, see, or feel someone on your team struggling, don't fall for it. No matter how rushed they may seem, no matter how long they are taking, and no matter how poorly they are doing. Instead, here's the secret: Focus on asking questions! This will instantly put you in an ideal position for sales coaching.

The goal is to ask enough questions to give your team members a chance to make more neurological connections and you a chance to determine—of all the things in your sales coaching toolbox—what will be most helpful for you to share (or not share) with your team members.

Effective Sales Coaching Looks Like This

The most effective sales coaching is about listening to your team members first. Providing information for them is a distant second. For many sales leaders, this may seem counterintuitive, but like the light switch, it works.

Just like the most effective way for your team members to sell more is to listen to prospects to determine what from their toolbox is most helpful for their prospects. The most effective way for you to sales coach is to listen to your team members while they process their sales thoughts and develop more effective approaches to use next time they're in a similar sales situation. You share additional information only when appropriate.

To help you understand what this means to the allocation of your sales coaching time, mentally divide your sales coaching time into percentages.

Your behaviors in a typical sales coaching session would be:

- Demonstrating listening: 70 percent.
- Asking questions: 20 percent.
- Providing relevant information: 10 percent.

Demonstrating you're listening (driven with your sales coaching questions) is your first and primary focus during your sales coaching conversations. You'll find your team members will often come to a sales solution that is an improvement over what they chose to do during the sales conversation. This is why providing information can sometimes be optional. They may have just needed the space to find the more effective solution rather than have you be the supplier of the answer.

While you're listening to your team members during sales coaching, you may also discover they knew exactly what to do, but they simply didn't do it. If this is true of your team members, this is another example of how your team members don't necessarily need additional information. Instead just ask them to walk you through their plan of action. We'll talk more about this later.

Think of supplying answers to your team as an optional part of your sales conversations, and instead put your focus on getting your team members to process their sales thinking, selecting more effective sales approaches, and committing to what they are going to do differently. Only if you find a gap in their knowledge, do you share relevant information.

> Put yourself in the position to be listening during 70 percent of your sales coaching conversations.

Another way to look at the allocation of your sales coaching time is from your team members' perspective. During a typical sales coaching session, your team members' behaviors should be:

- Talking and processing ideas-70 percent. (This is when you are listening.)
- Listening: 30 percent. (This is when you are asking questions and sharing information.)

When you focus on your three sales coaching behaviors (demonstrating listening, asking questions, and providing relevant information only when appropriate), you help your team members to make stronger neurological connections between their sales ideas, which improves their sales thinking. This puts them in the position to learn more from their experience and, in turn, change and improve their sales behaviors and sell more effectively.

You Probably Do This More Poorly Than You Think

Almost everyone I've worked with thinks they are better listeners than they actually are. It really doesn't matter how good a listener you *think* you are. The reality is, when it comes to measuring your listening, your opinion doesn't matter. Listening is really measured by *the person you are listening to*.

The most important element may not be the skill of listening but the *feeling* of listening. The measure of your success as a listener is based on how much the person *feels* you are listening. To help you become a better listener, let's not review techniques to improve your listening skills, but instead, let's get really practical with assessing and developing your listening, with an emphasis on how your listenees *feel* about your listening.

Where to Start

To assess your current level of listening, get feedback from your family, friends, peers, and team members. Ask them to rank your listening on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is a terrible listener and 10 is an outstanding listener. This will give you a baseline to measure the improvement of your listening (and give you a reality check).

Then, get live, in-the-moment critique from these same people, so you get immediate feedback. The quicker you get the feedback, the quicker you can improve your listening. As you know, it's all about the listening you demonstrate (as opposed to your listening potential).

What Your Live Feedback Could Look Like

Your live, in-the-moment listening feedback can be a simple hand gesture. Many of the leaders I work with choose a tug of the ear or a touch of the cheek. When your chosen individuals feel you're not listening as well as you could, they will raise their hand and tug their ear or touch their cheek. This response could be triggered if, for example, they notice your response indicates you didn't hear the details accurately, your words interrupt others, or your comments don't naturally fit the conversation.

This way, you get immediate feedback so you can quickly adjust your listening appropriately. And *presto*, you're on your way to listening even better (getting closer to a coveted 10 ranking).

Why Is Listening So Important?

One of the complaints I hear from many sales leaders is they wish their team members would let them know more of what is really going on, so they can be more helpful. Well, guess what? Your team members will tell you more of what is going on if they trust you. How do I know? I have surveyed hundreds of team members and my research indicates that trust is a major component of performance improvement. Yet, what is trust? And what difference can it make to your team's performance?

Here's what I've discovered: If team members trust their leader, they will share more, provide more feedback, participate more, treat clients better, and so on.

> Trust building is essential to sales coaching.

This begs the question: How do leaders develop trust? My research indicates the number-one behavior leaders can engage in to earn the trust of their team members is to listen to them. Out of more than 52 specific trust-building behaviors, listening is ranked most important. If you would like to know which specific trust behaviors will earn your team members' trust, go to www.CoachingandSalesInstitute.com to arrange to have your team take the CSI Trust Survey.

Listening to improve performance is a simple concept—and as a bonus, it easily fits your budget. Listening more effectively to your team members encourages them to share with you what is really happening and, it bears repeating, it helps them treat clients better.

What's the Lubricant?

The key to transforming behavior is your ability to ask meaningful sales coaching questions to position you to listen more effectively. Your questions are the lubricant to get the listening going between you and your team members. Without your sales coaching questions, it's virtually impossible to keep your team members talking and sharing what is going on for them.

In some ways, you can liken the importance of sales coaching questions to the importance of sales questions. Imagine if your team members didn't ask sales questions. How well would they be able to sell? They wouldn't know their clients' needs to ensure that what they would say is relevant.

Imagine if you didn't ask sales coaching questions. How would you be able to sales coach effectively? Without knowing your team members' needs, you can't ensure that what you say is relevant. *You get the picture*.

In each chapter of this book, you receive sample sales coaching questions to assist you.

Then Comes . . . What Do You Say?

After you've demonstrated your great listening (peppered with your sales coaching questions), it is time to determine if and what information your team may need. Why *if*? As I mentioned earlier, you may find by simply asking your sales coaching questions, your team members become aware of a more effective solution, and don't need any additional information.

Before we move on to supplying information for your team members, I would be remiss in my duties if we didn't talk a bit about the timing for providing information in your sales coaching conversations. I'd like to caution you: Providing what you *think* is helpful information too early in your sales coaching process is like salespeople telling clients something about a product before asking any or enough questions. As you know, this can be a recipe for a lost sale. The same holds true for sales coaching. You want to ask enough questions to get your team members thinking more deeply and to ensure that the information you are about to share is relevant to their needs.

If you've asked enough questions and you know your team members need some information, your role is to make sure it fits their current sales needs. To help them sell more effectively and profitably, provide the information in a coach-like fashion.

How You Do That

Ensure the information *is* relevant. If you find yourself doubting the relevance of the information you are about to provide, you need to ask more questions. And when you are sure your team member needs some information, ask. You do this to check that what you are about to share is of interest to them.

Delivering the information in a coach-like manner may sound like, "Joe worked out a system for that. Would you be interested in what he did?" or, "What product manual do you think we would find that information in? Shall we take a look?"

By checking their interest level for the information, you know with certainty whether it's relevant to their current needs. At the same time, you increase their engagement in discussing how the information can help them sell more effectively.

When you provide information, either give them time to process it or help them plan what they are going to do with it. This is another part of your coach-like strategy when providing information. Don't give them information without the opportunity to utilize it. As you know, just because you tell them something doesn't mean they know how to use it.

> Just because you said it, doesn't mean they can use it.

Coaching your team members to practice using new information in faux sales conversations ensures they can apply the information with clients. It may mean asking them to walk you through a product demo. It may mean asking them to read aloud the new product specs step by step, explaining why this or that is important to the client. Or, it may mean you role-play the conversation they are about to have with a client.

Something for You

Each chapter of this book includes an exercise for your team members. These exercises will help prevent your team from committing sales mistakes. However, this chapter's exercise is for you. It will help you determine which sales mistakes your team has committed and where to start in the book.

Every team makes sales mistakes. The question is: Which ones are your team members committing, and how quickly can you help identify and prevent them from occurring so your team can sell more?

Start with reading over the following sales mistakes to see if any of them seem familiar to you.

1. Not being clear who's buying
2. Forgetting why people buy
3. Being self-focused
4. Telling mistruths
5. Being ill-prepared
6. Taking too much of the client's time
7. Sharing what's not relevant
8. Missing prospects' buying cues
9. Acting like a traditional salesperson
10. Treating clients as enemies

Do you recognize any of your team members' sales mistakes? If not, it doesn't mean the sales mistakes are not being committed by your team. It may mean you're like most sales leaders who don't know which mistakes are being committed by which team members.

To help identify what is happening on your team, use the Sales Forensic Evidence Audit, which focuses on the symptoms of the sales mistakes. You may recognize the symptoms more readily than the sales mistakes.

Circle all the answers that apply for you. Then go back over the ones you selected and prioritize where you will begin. Beside each statement in parentheses are the chapter numbers to best assist you.

What do you need to increase each of your team members' sales?
Circle all that apply.

1. Get clients to return/take more of my team members' **calls**. (2, 4, 7)
2. Reduce the length of my team members' **sales cycles**. (2, 6)

3. Get clients moving more quickly through my team members' **sales funnels**. (2, 7)
4. Increase my team members' **close ratios**. (2, 6)
5. Reduce my team members' **unprofitable busyness**. (2, 9)
6. Increase the sales results from my team members' **sales activities**. (2, 9)
7. Increase the amount of **repeat business** my team members earn. (3, 6, 8, 11)
8. Reduce the number of **price objections** my team members get. (3)
9. Increase my team members' **quote to sales ratios**. (3)
10. Increase my team members' **conversion of prospects to clients**. (2, 4, 5, 6, 10)
11. Increase the number of **referrals** my team members earn. (3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11)
12. Reduce the number of client **complaints on the Internet**. (5, 11)
13. Reduce the number of client **complaints the company gets**. (5)
14. Help my team members **sell more**. (3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10)
15. Increase the effectiveness of my team members' **prospecting** efforts. (6, 10)
16. Increase the number of **sales appointments** my team members book. (7, 10)
17. Increase the number of **follow-up appointments** my team members receive. (7, 11)
18. Reduce the **length of time** it takes my team members to close. (7, 8)
19. Increase my team members' **long-term business**. (8, 10, 11)
20. Increase the results my team members get from **referrals**. (11)

As you read this book, think of your team members and which ones are committing which sales mistakes.

Enjoy your venture into sales coaching. And, as you know, the goal is not to shame guilty salespeople, but rather to prevent sales mistakes and rehabilitate perpetrators on your team. Ultimately, your team members will sell more than they did before you engaged in regular sales coaching.

Action Items from This Chapter

1. Embrace your team members' struggle.
2. Avoid the OSF cycle.
3. Work on the percentages in your sales coaching.
4. Improve your demonstration of your listening.
5. Leverage your sales coaching questions.
6. Get ongoing, live in-the-moment feedback on your listening.
7. Work on the timing of when you share information.
8. Provide information in a coach-like fashion.
9. Get your team using information.
10. Determine which sales mistakes are being committed by your team.

CHAPTER

3

Sales Mistake #2

Forgetting Why People Buy

Welcome to my e-mail inbox. You're about to read the first few lines of a series of e-mails from Fred, a salesperson for ABC Software. The e-mails are verbatim except for the change of names. As background, Fred did not contact me in any other way.

Monday morning, week one:

> Peri,
>
> Here is a suggestion from the Mary Beth Smith, our owner. I hope that you gain some knowledge from it.
>
> Call me if you have any questions.
>
> Thanks,

Monday morning, week two:

> Peri,
>
> In addition to being an inspirational leader here at ABC Software Mary Beth, also has tons of knowledge to share.
>
> Check out this amazing advice!
>
> Call me if you have any questions.
>
> Thanks,

Monday morning, week three:

> Peri,
>
> We can all use a little help every now and then. Below is a great pointer from Mary Beth.
>
> Call me if you have any questions.
>
> Thanks,

For six months Fred continued to send me the same kind of e-mail every Monday morning. There were very slight variations to these e-mails but they were pretty much the same: introducing something from Mary Beth, "call me if you have any questions" and a "thanks." (Typos also varied week to week.)

In case you were wondering, I never read beyond Fred's e-mail to see what Mary Beth had to say because Fred's e-mails weren't enticing enough for me to want to read more. In fact, Fred's e-mail turned me off from reading any further.

Would e-mails like this entice you to buy? Would they create interest on your part to investigate what Fred is selling—or trust to buy from him? If you were a sales manager at ABC Software, would you want Fred on your team?

Sales Mistake Report Form

The Offender/Perpetrator – Enter the name of the company.

ABC Software, salesperson Fred.

Sales Mistake Committed – Identify the mistake made.

Forgetting why people buy.

Your Statement – Clearly state the facts of what happened.

- *The salesperson sent prospect e-mails that didn't speak to why she would buy.*
- *The salesperson's interaction with prospect did not connect with her interests or concerns.*

- *The salesperson lowered the reputation of the company by sending e-mails that provided no value.*

Evidence – Indicate what you wanted to buy but didn't.

Their software. I didn't buy it until two years later.

Future Potential Business – Outline what future business you represented.

Me, directly. If only 5 percent of those I know bought this software, it would amount to over $18,000 per year. My colleagues with their clients would represent even more.

Fred's series of bland, unprofessional e-mails is a perfect example of Sales Mistake #2: Forgetting Why People Buy.

When it comes to sales mistakes, this one is typically not one that comes to mind. Yet many salespeople commit this mistake and many sales are lost because of it. Some of your team members may be committing this mistake without you even knowing, and if they are, they are losing sales.

Even if your team members are selling, do they know why their clients are buying? For example, do your team members really understand the reasons behind their clients' purchases? Do they recognize which piece of information made the difference for their clients? And do they know what would cause their clients to buy more?

When you include why clients buy in your sales coaching, your team will close more sales.

Here's the Problem

If your team members don't know why their clients are buying, they won't be speaking to clients' needs and, consequently, will lose sales.

If your team members don't address why their clients are buying, they'll waste time chasing weak leads (as Fred did with me) and miss out on sales.

If your team members don't take the time to find out why clients are buying, they'll lose credibility and negatively affect the reputation of your company.

If your team members don't respond appropriately to clients' reasons for buying, they'll miss opportunities for creating goodwill, developing long-lasting relationships, and earning repeat and referral business.

If your team members don't develop lasting relationships, they'll be doing busy work rather than helping clients with their buying decisions.

I'm sure you're seeing it. This sales mistake affects not only your team members' sales, but also the effort they put into earning their sales. If you help prevent this sales mistake, your team will be far more efficient at getting more sales.

Another Issue

If your team members don't discover why their clients buy relative to the product they are selling, they reduce their sales to a transaction. This brings your product down to the same level as your competitors'. Translation: The one differentiator between you and your competition is reduced to price. *Not a good position for your sales team.*

Your perpetrating team members are then put in the position of responding to more price objections. They will get caught in a price objection cycle. Your role as their sales coach is to help break this cycle so your team members can have conversations about what matters to clients, not dry transactional interactions. As you read further, you'll gain insights to help your team break this cycle.

The Forensic Evidence

The following forensic evidence includes some of the clues left behind when this sales mistake, forgetting why people buy, is committed. Use the forensic evidence as a guideline to help you in your sales mistake detection, prevention, and rehabilitation.

Sales Numbers and Statistics – The potential statistical evidence you would notice about the perpetrator of this sales mistake and his or her results.

- *Little to no repeat business.*
- *Little to no referral business.*
- *Price objections are higher than normal.*
- *Quote to sales ratio is lower.*

Observable Prospect/Client Behavior – The potential evidence of the perpetrator.

- *No loyalty to perpetrating team member.*
- *No complaints.*
- *Doesn't share much with team member.*
- *Treats the purchase as a transaction rather than a personal interaction.*
- *Negotiates on price for lack of other buying criteria.*

Observable Team Member Behavior – The potential evidence the perpetrator exhibits in general.

- *Treats sales as a mechanical transaction.*
- *Focuses on selling to more clients rather than helping current clients buy more.*
- *Gets more price objections than other team members.*
- *Honestly believes people are not buying because of price.*
- *Can be less animated than other team members when talking about the product.*

Observable Coaching Behavior – The potential evidence the perpetrator exhibits in coaching sessions with you.

- *Knows the product specs and data, but doesn't seem to be able to role-play with you.*
- *Complains about the economy and the price of your product(s).*
- *Is faster at coming up with features of product(s) than benefits.*

What to Watch and Listen for in Your Sales Coaching

Because people buy for their reasons—rather than your team's or company's reason—it's important your sales coaching sessions include an exploration of why clients buy. In most corporations, very little sales coaching time is spent on discovering this, which is ironic since it is the root of every sale.

Your role to prevent this sales mistake and rehabilitate your perpetrating team members will include your watching and listening to team members who:

1. Don't identify why clients buy.
2. Don't provide clients with what they need to buy your product.
3. Do not link clients' reasons for buying to your product.

Incorporating discussion on why clients buy into your coaching will help your team members be more effective and efficient salespeople. Integrate this exploration into your sales coaching for 30 days and watch the positive effect it will have on your team members' sales results and their efforts to make each sale.

Let's Agree

If you're like most sales managers, you're probably not surprised that when salespeople listen better, they're more successful. Just like listening makes you a better coach, listening makes your team members better salespeople.

The better team members listen, the better they understand their clients' reasons for buying; and the better they are at asking great sales questions, the more their clients will share what's important to them. So just like your questions are the lubricant to your sales coaching, your team members' sales questions are the lubricant to their sales. No discussion of sales would be complete without a focus on both sales questions and listening.

Just like your listening in the coaching world is measured by your listenees, your team members' listening is measured by their clients, their listenees.

When you're coaching, you may experience that your team members demonstrate great listening with you, but your evaluation of their listening doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if *you think* they are great listeners. What matters is what they demonstrate with their clients.

You'll know the quality of the listening your team members demonstrate with clients by the depth and quality of their answers to your sales coaching questions.

In your coaching, focus on asking great questions to determine which team members really understand why their clients buy, and what they can do to be more helpful. This means not only ensuring that your team members' sales conversations are centered around the client experience, but that your coaching sessions are as well. You'll find, by adapting this client experience focus, your sales coaching will be more productive and profitable for both you and your team members.

1. Identifying Why Clients Buy

As mentioned earlier, clients buy for *their* reasons. Salespeople often forget this, and can benefit from being reminded in their sales coaching sessions.

How do you know if your team members need a reminder of this principle? Watch their behavior and language. If they start to act in ways that demonstrate it's about acting *on* clients (e.g., twisting arms to get a close), you know they will need some reminder that clients buy for their reasons. This kind of manipulative behavior might have worked in the past, but in today's marketplace, it's considered unethical by many. It's a quick way for your team members to negatively affect your company's reputation with clients.

To get your team members better focused on helping clients, coach them to understand why clients buy. You'll find another principle very helpful in preventing this mistake: People buy on emotion justified by logic. Does your team act in a way that is consistent with this principle? If your team members are like most, they probably don't.

To coach your team members to demonstrate this principle consistently, let's look at it more closely by dividing it into its two components:

1. People buy on emotion.
2. Justified by logic.

This means the primary reason clients buy is on emotion, and then they back up their emotional decision with facts and information. Do your team members reflect this when they ask their sales questions?

Let's test the idea. This would mean clients often have emotions for wanting to buy that cause them to search for some logic to justify their emotional reasons to themselves and others.

Think back to one of your team members' recent sales. What was the client's emotional reason for buying? Ahhhh . . . what might be an emotion for buying, you ask? *Great question*.

Clients buy for a myriad of emotional reasons including:

- Impressing others
- Saving money
- Job security
- Looking like the office hero
- Keeping others safe
- Making more money
- Making them look good
- Avoiding looking bad
- Preventing problems
- Saving time
- Getting a promotion

These reasons for buying, put in the language of emotion, are clients' passions and pains. Their passions are what they're moving toward in the future, and their pains are what they're moving away from in the past. The same reason for buying can be expressed as either a passion or a pain. For example, a client concerned with money could express making more money as a passion, or reducing expenditures as a pain. This kind of distinction can prove to be helpful to salespeople when identifying clients' emotional reasons for buying.

Let's bring this down to a sales conversation. Your team member, who demonstrates this principle, would ask questions to better understand the effects of the client's problem. As your team member asks questions, the client goes into more detail about the problem, and becomes more aware and connected to the emotional reasons for needing your product. Your team member is not twisting the client's arm or slam-dunking a close, but rather helping the client become more aware of the impact of the problem. And in the process, your team member becomes more fully aware of the client's emotional reason for buying.

In action, this principle helps people on both sides of the sales equation. The client becomes more conscious of the reasons to buy, and your team member is ready to help with the buying decision. Using the language of sales, they're ready to close the sale.

Up until this point, your team member hasn't provided much content, but instead asked effective sales questions and listened well to provide the client with anything they need.

2. Determining What They Need to Buy Your Product

Once team members have clearly demonstrated an understanding of the client's emotional reasons for buying, the next job is to figure out what kind of logic will help the client justify the decision to buy. Often at this point in the sales conversation, the client has made the decision to buy. Your team member just needs to find the appropriate information (the logic) to help the client complete the deal.

Many times the client is already sold. Your team member just needs to provide the logic the client needs to justify her decision to buy. Your team's logic may include:

- Product features
- Reviews of the product
- Statistics about the product
- Comparison charts about the product
- Product demo
- Primary or secondary research

Determining what specific logic clients need is a fine art. If your team members say too much, they can get in the way of the sale. If they talk about stuff that isn't important to the client, they can lose the sale.

When you are coaching your team on how to handle this part of the sales conversation, help increase their awareness of clients' cues about their interests and concerns. It becomes a matching game of which nuggets of logic apply to which passions and pains.

For example, when I started to consider buying the ABC Software from Fred, my pain was the amount of time I was taking to service my current clients; my passion was a desire to reach more people. Fred could have demonstrated that he understood my reasons for buying if he had provided me with some information about the time I would save and the number of people his software would allow me to reach. If Fred had done this, he would only have had to send me one e-mail, saving him a lot of time and effort.

By matching clients' emotional motivations to the logical information they need to justify their reasons for buying, your team members can help more clients decide to buy, which will boost your company's sales.

3. Linking Clients' Reasons for Buying to Your Product

As you know, stories have the ability to engage people's emotions and they also make ideas more repeatable. Why do I mention this now? If stories engage emotion and clients buy on emotion, it makes sense that stories are an essential part of your team's sales conversations and your coaching sessions. If stories make ideas more repeatable, it makes sense that your team would use stories to link the logic clients use to justify their buying decisions. It means clients can repeat the logic your team members share in story form.

Are you getting the picture? Stories are not just an effective sales tool. They are an *essential* sales tool. Your team's client success stories are part of the fine art of how to link clients' reasons for buying to your product. Why is this a fine art? Because it should seem effortless from the client's experience, like a professional ballerina makes the dance seem effortless to the observer.

When your team members tell their client success stories, you want to ensure they use stories that connect with their clients. The point is not to use stories for the sake of using stories, but to use true client success stories that relate to the same emotional reasons and similar logic their current clients have. It's about using what past clients have learned to help solve current clients' problems.

Over the years I've come to develop a sales story formula that works well for both clients and salespeople.

PERI Sales Story Formula

My sales story formula has four parts:

1. Problem: Your team member explains the problem their client had (e.g., the client's emotional reasons for buying, including pains and passions).
2. Expertise: Your team member describes the aspects of your product that solved the client's problem.
3. Results: Your team member shares the results the client achieved (numbers and stats are often helpful).
4. In their words: Your team member repeats the words the clients have used upon achieving the desired results.

Typically you want each one to be only one sentence. To make the formula easy to remember, its acronym spells my first name, PERI.

Please note: Clients often buy for the *results* your product provides, not the product itself. Yet many salespeople make the mistake focusing only on selling *products*. In your sales coaching, help your team members clarify the differences between beneficial results and products, and master this distinction.

Let's see the PERI sales story formula in action. You'll recognize its sales power once it all comes together. Let's take it step by step:

- If Fred had identified why I wanted to buy, he would have discovered I was frustrated with the length of time I was spending trying to help my current clients. I wanted to help even more people.
- If Fred were to review what information he could provide to help me with my buying decision, he would have realized I would be very interested in the information of how much time his product saves and how many people the software can reach.
- If Fred was looking for a true client story that linked these together, he would be looking for an example of when his client had similar issues to me, and how he had helped successfully accomplish what she wanted. He would use a client story that included:
    - Frustration because of the considerable amount of time used to help clients (pain).
    - Desire to help more people (passion).
    - Ability to reach double or more people (logic).

Using these key points to trigger Fred's memory, he comes to realize he has several clients who match these criteria and chooses to select Mr. X's story.

Would you like me to share the story with you?

Here's what Fred might have shared with me, with my comments on key points of the story in italics:

> *My client was a consultant who spent a lot of time every week writing to clients when all he really wanted to do was help more people. [*The problem, including the pain and passion.*] I showed him how he could use the XYZ part of the software in the same time each week to help both his clients and his prospects. [*Expertise.*] Within one month of using the software, he doubled the numbers of people he was helping and reduced the time he was taking to do it sixfold . . . he brought it down to 30 minutes per week. [*Results, including logic and numbers.*] He sent me an e-mail that read, "Thanks for giving me my sanity back." [*In the client's words.*]*

Would this story have engaged me and peaked my interest in knowing more? *You bet.*

One More Piece

There's one more piece to this. Before your team members go ahead and tell client stories, you'll want to ensure your team members have *engaged* their clients in wanting to hear their stories.

Encourage your team members to ask their clients if they would like to hear what another client did or experienced. By ensuring your team members use questions to engage clients in storytelling, you increase the likelihood clients will want to hear them. And the more clients want to hear the stories, the more engaged they will be in the content of the stories (their emotional reasons for buying, and the logic to justify their decisions). *You get the picture.*

Actually if you read back several paragraphs, you'll notice I used this kind of question before I shared Fred's story with you.

A Word of Caution

When you are coaching your team members to use their true client success stories in their sales conversations, ensure you also coach them on *when* to use them.

Too often salespeople use stories earlier in their conversations than is actually beneficial to clients. As a result, your team members can appear too eager to make the sale.

Encourage your team members first to discover each client's emotional reasons for buying and then to identify what is the best logic to provide. By making sure they do these two things first, you ensure they are not premature in sharing their stories.

What This Means to Your Sales Coaching

Your sales coaching questions can help your team members become more aware of how to prevent the mistake of forgetting why people buy. Asking your questions puts you in the position to listen to what is really going on for your team members so you can help them more fully engage their clients in buying your product.

Here are some sample sales coaching questions you could use to prevent Sales Mistake #2.

Sales Coaching Questions for Sales Mistake #2

"Tell me a little bit about the problem your client was having. What did she say about it?"

"Who does the problem affect?"

"How does it affect her?"

"What were her biggest pains?"

"What was the passion/vision she shared?"

"What element of our product can help her with her pains?"

"How can our product help her with her passion?"

"What clients have you had who have had a similar problem?"

"Tell me about that client. How did you help him?"

"What were his pains and passions?"

"Without using the client's name, what could you tell your current prospect about how you and our product helped?"

"How could you relate her emotional reason for buying to the results your previous client got?"

"Can you put it all together now in a story? Pretend I'm the client . . . tell it to me the way you would tell her."

"At what point in your conversation could you have used this story?"

"In the last week, which client could you have used this story with?"

"Can you think of another client who has had a similar set of pains and passions who you helped successfully?"

"How about you put those together in a story?" (Assuming your team member has now developed two true client stories.)

"Which of the two stories do you think is better to put into your sales repertoire for future sales conversations?"

"How about you put it to use over the next week or so and we plan to connect in seven days? What time would work for you and me to have an update on the Monday of that week?"

Why-People-Buy Preparation

Your team members' effective sales preparation can help them remember why people buy. Use this chart to help your team members better connect with their clients' reasons and logic for buying. You can receive a printable version of it at www.CoachingandSalesInstitute.com.

You'll need one page for each problem client's experience.

The Problem ____

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6
List the products you offer that solve this problem (one per line).	What questions could you ask to discover if this product is the best solution for a client with this problem?	What would be a client's emotional reasons for buying this product?	What questions could you ask to discover and confirm a client's emotional reasons for buying?	What are the facts or logic that would cause a client to justify buying this product?	Which client of yours has had a similar reason for buying and used a similar logic to justify their decision to buy your product?

You can use this exercise in a sales meeting and then follow up with getting your team members to share client success stories in a more meaningful and helpful way. It's a great springboard to get your team members recognizing what a great resource their true client stories can be.

As you know, when preventing your team from committing this sales mistake, focus on these three key steps:

1. Identify why clients buy.
2. Determine what they need to buy your product.
3. Link clients' reasons for buying to your product.

This will help rehabilitate your perpetrating team members so they will sell more effectively and efficiently. Plus, if you coach them well and they really demonstrate they understand the two sales principles (clients buy for their reasons and people buy on emotion justified by logic), they will get more repeat and referral business.

Action Items from This Chapter

1. Remind your team members that clients buy for their own reasons.
2. Help your team members better understand clients' reasons for buying.
3. Leverage the negative impact of this sales mistake (more price objections) as motivation for your team.
4. Use the client experience as your measure of success in your sales coaching.
5. Get your team to understand the principle that people buy on emotion justified by logic.
6. Encourage your team members to listen for clients' pains and passions.
7. Dedicate some of your team's coaching time to matching clients' buying reasons to the best logic.
8. Have your team develop their client success stories.
9. Practice timing so team members know when to share their stories in their sales conversations.
10. Use your sales meetings as an opportunity to develop client success stories.

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