



Sales supervision and team development

Like a winning football team, your sales team needs to perform ... together

THE general economy continues to recover in 2010, albeit at a slow pace. However, there is a strong market for most of “Big Ag” that we see in dealer clients of Currie Management Consultants, Inc. As this economic recovery continues, your sales department must be poised and ready to capture current opportunities and increase your dealership’s ability to gain new customers and increase market share. To ensure that your players are prepared for this more challenging game, two critical functions of the sales department must be addressed: Sales supervision and team development.

But first, let’s define these terms.

Sales supervision is the directing or overseeing of performance. As mentioned in last month’s Business Matters column on sales management, some of the critical behaviors of successful sales managers include focusing on specific, integrated tasks, such as replacing weak performers, planning effective coverage, coaching for success, and allocating existing and conquest accounts. These are activities that require the skills of an accomplished supervisor.

Team development involves the expansion and progression of a group of individuals who are united by a common purpose. The individual members of such a team are not always equal, yet each participant brings to the team their own unique skills and qualities which contribute to the success of the team, or the company, as a whole.

Maximize the interplay between sales supervision and team development

A strategy must be developed within your dealership to encourage mutually beneficial interactivity between sales supervision and team development to improve your dealership’s sales performance.

Many parallels can be established between the organizational structure of your sales department and a football team.

Every successful football team has a well-defined and qualified staff of coaches, each of whom specializes in a particular aspect of the game. Likewise in your dealership, the “head coach” of your company (usually the dealer principal) is typically the person who develops and communicates the strategy of the enterprise as a whole to the team.

This leader is responsible for the design and execution of the big picture. To move the vision forward, your head coach must be supported by capable and committed coordinators (think offensive, defensive and special teams coordinators). These coordinators develop the specific tactics which will lead to success in achieving the head coach’s vision. Additionally, these coordinators are invaluable in the proper execution of the dealer principal’s strategy and they usually carry the job titles associated with executive management.

These executive managers, in turn, are faced with the task of putting into place position coaches who will ensure that day-to-day tasks, such as training and coaching, occur consistently as planned. Your managers and supervisors (including sales managers) are the position coaches for your dealership. Effective supervisors and managers hold players accountable, are always on their game and provide constant direction and feedback to the players. Thus such managers and supervisors are critical to the development of your integrated team.

Effective sales supervision must be a 100 percent field oriented, developmental effort for your dealership and *not* an office bound, administrative task. Sales supervision must be game- and player-focused, with sales leadership constantly, actively interacting with team players. Position coaches work the players, coordinators work the position coaches and head coaches work the coordinators. Yet in many dealerships this process is confused or inconsistent.

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Who are your players?

By now you have likely deduced who the “players” are in your sales department. They are your sales representatives *and* inside sales people. These are the employees who wear the “game face” and represent the front line of your company, because they “live” at the sharp end of business interactions with your current and potential customers.

To ensure peak sales performance, your sales managers need to be “on the field” as active position coaches at all times. They must be “in the game” on all levels. Additionally, it’s imperative that your sales managers are fully engaged with each sales rep, and they must be in on **every** deal. There is no watching from the stands for these coaches.

So put on your game face, get out on the sales field and walk away with the win. ■

BOB CURRIE is the president of Currie Management Consultants. His firm works with dealers and manufacturers of industrial products to streamline operations, improve performance and create success and is active in dealer consolidations, mergers and divestitures. Visit www.curriemanagement.com to learn more.