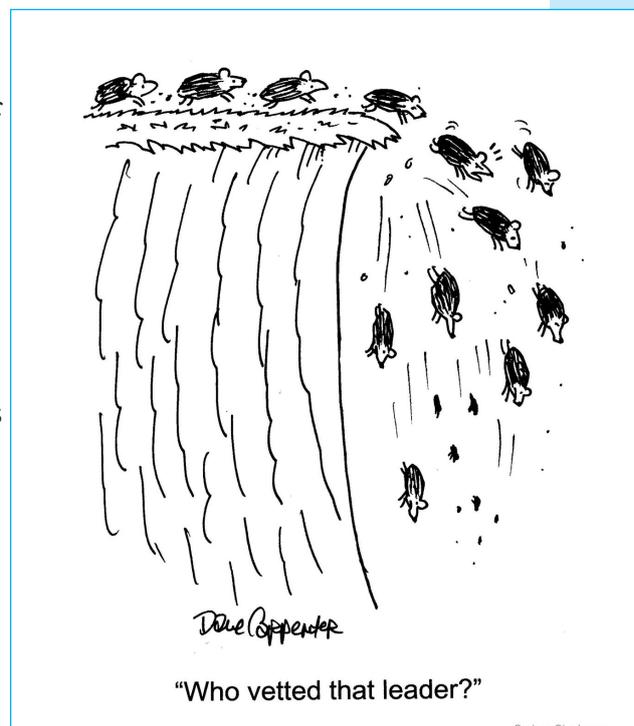


Understanding Your Company's Sales Roles. Part Three

This is the third and final *Directional Selling* manager's note covering the understanding of sales roles. Why is this important? If you are responsible for the hiring of sales executives, it is essential that you fully understand both sales engagement techniques and the key attributes required for each supporting role. Without such knowledge, you are more likely to hire misfits for roles as well as struggle with their downstream management.

In part one we reviewed four common sales engagement techniques: *Solution Selling*, *Strategic Selling*, *Transaction Selling* and *Application Selling*. Then, in part two, we moved up the ladder to cover *Account Sales Management* roles, including *Key Account Manager* and *Enterprise Channel Manager*.

For this final document on sales roles, we will unravel the attributes required when hiring a Sales Manager and/or Sales Leader (Director level). The higher up the corporate ladder you go, the greater the risk of mis-hiring. At this level, a clear understanding of role attributes and pre-hire assessments is essential.



The Sales Manager

The role of *Sales Manager* is pivotal to business success, yet is typically one of the least understood roles within an organisation's sales structure. Essentially a management rather than a 'super-salesperson' role, the *Sales Manager* is responsible for critical decisions regarding hiring, developing, coaching and controlling the focus, direction and performance of the sales team, while also engaging with other strategic areas of the business.

Undoubtedly, many *Sales Managers* are in roles for which they are ill-prepared today.

Ever-increasing customer expectation of, and the resulting need for, constant change in operating approaches and engagement strategies within sales organisations mean *Sales Managers* perform a crucial role. Sitting within the overall Sales Management career stream, the *Sales Manager* typically also provides input to, and support for, Strategy & Planning, Performance Management, Quality Improvement, Change Management and Corporate Governance.

To be successful, a *Sales Manager* requires the capabilities to work effectively in three different and distinct 'functions' within the scope of the role. These include the following abilities:

Selling Management, which comprises –

- Opportunity Planning
- Territory Planning
- Quota Management
- Customer Engagement Planning and Process
- Pipeline Management
- Forecasting

Business Management, which comprises –

- Business Acumen
- Organisational Awareness
- Relationship Management
- Financial Management
- Resource Planning

People Management, which comprises –

- Recruiting
- Hiring
- On-boarding
- Training
- Coaching
- Retention
- Leadership

The Sales Leader (Director level)

Sales Leaders are responsible for agreeing and delivering the revenue targets for their organisation. This involves a deep understanding of the evolving marketplace and the need to anticipate and prepare for trends, requiring *Sales Leaders* to have a clear vision of where their sales organisation is heading and how it should be responding to market conditions.

They must not only recognise the importance of having the right people in the right roles within their organisation, but also be able to develop their vision and attain their goals by getting the best out of their colleagues.

This means that *Sales Leaders* must have consummate communication and people skills.

While remaining focused on their vision and specific goals, *Sales Leaders* must also be

flexible and welcome change. They need to understand the importance of timely action, confronting issues as they arise. Effective *Sales Leaders* must enjoy challenge and be prepared to take risks and encourage others to do likewise: if they fail, they treat the exercise as a learning experience.

Core abilities must include:

Vision, strategy and direction

- Anticipate trends and prepare for them by developing a clear vision of what they are working towards.
- Develop and implement a strategy to drive this vision.
- Focus on the future and have the flexibility to welcome change.
- Surround themselves with excellent people and not be threatened by competence.
- Confront issues as they arise and not procrastinate.
- Enjoy a challenge and not be afraid to take risks.
- Do what they expect of others – they are prepared to walk the talk.
- Behave consistently by sticking to their principles and values at all times

Communicating the vision and motivating the team

- Communicate their vision to their teams in such a way that it is both believable and achievable.
- Listen to and engage with team members.
- Be quick to give credit to those who have earned it.
- Treat staff as individuals by giving closer attention to those who need it and lots of space to those who deserve it.

Achieving the business objectives

- Set clear and achievable goals for their teams.
- Involve people in finding new ways to achieve agreed goals.
- Encourage and reward co-operation within and between teams.
- Focus on getting things done by avoiding political infighting, gossip and backstabbing and encourage those around them to do the same.
- Encourage others to take qualified risks where necessary.
- Do not betray trust and treat confidential information professionally.
- Check that sales objectives are aligned to business strategy and reconfigure as necessary.