E-BOOK

Hiring Winning Sales Teams

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Unprecedented growth everywhere

In this world of transformation, management wants nothing but fast and continuous growth. The catalyst for this growth is the Sales teams across organizations. There is a direct correlation between sales talent and business performance and is a great source of value creation for organizations.

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Pressures on the Sales and HR teams

Sales teams are faced by ever-increasing pressures of targets from one side and more knowledgeable buyers and longer, complex sales cycles on the other side. With these added pressures from the industry, markets, and stakeholders, the need for better sales talent is bigger than any other time. This is fundamentally transforming sales as a function for both B2B and B2C sales organizations.

An important component in ensuring that organizations can achieve growth is by hiring and developing winning sales teams. While it might look easy but many HR leaders are struggling to meet the expectations of the sales leaders.

HR leadership is often grappling with questions like:

- How can we create an ideal profile for our organization which is benchmarked against our organizational standards on the sales competencies?
- How can we be more efficient in our selection processes, minimizing the management burden, and reducing cost?
- How can we be sure we hire or promote people with the right potential for the sales role?

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The answer to these questions lies in a perfect understanding amongst the HR and Sales leadership to know what makes their top performers successful. The top performers are different not in terms of their skills or activities but also in terms of how they approach tasks, their motivation and how they work with other teams. In short, their competencies and traits define to a large extent the probability of becoming a top performer. These competencies must then be applied across the entire process from selection, orientation, on-boarding and regular training for higher sales productivity.

Sales being one of the oldest professions, there is a regular debate in terms of what competencies predict better sales performance. Also, there is human bias and inability of HR and sales leaders to effectively identify and evaluate the competencies and personality traits. Many leading sales organizations depend on competency assessment tools to help them assess the competencies suitable for the sales role in a fair and validated measure.

While there are multiple models to support the same, one of the most accepted models is the Herb Greenberg model of Sales Leadership and assessments based on this model offer crisp, objective and validated measures of must have sales competencies. This is a model which measures the behavioural competencies in a sales process and cognitive skills and is suitable for B2B sales or channel sales environment.

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The competencies to be assessed based on the model are:

1. **Empathy**
   Reflects the degree to which a person cares for others' feelings and relate effectively to them. High scorers are empathetic, compassionate, and understanding. Low scorers tend to be less concerned about others' feelings and emotions.

2. **Resilience**
   Evaluates the attitude of perseverance and conviction directed towards the achievement of goals despite pressure, rejections or adversity. High scorers are resilient and optimistic with a high level of self-acceptance. Low scorers struggle to bounce back from rejection and have difficulty in coping with challenges.

3. **Negotiation & Persuasion**
   Assesses the inner need to persuade others and seek personal satisfaction. High scorers tend to be good at negotiation and persuasion. Low scorers take time to gain trust and convince others.

4. **Service Motivation**
   Reflects the attitude to value and deliver high quality, professional, responsive and innovative service to the customer. High scorers are good at meeting customer expectations and deliver quality service. Low scorers do not bother about customer satisfaction.

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5. Assertiveness

Evaluates the ability to proactively spearhead and coordinate the execution of responsibilities in order to achieve desired outcome(s). High scorers are likely to communicate effectively and voice their opinion. Low scorers struggle in standing up for their viewpoint.

6. Risk-Taking

Reflects on the ability to take calculated risks and manage in an environment of uncertainty. High scorers are likely to exhibit high risk tolerance and identify the right opportunities. Low scorers are risk aversive and avoid uncertain situations.

7. Communication Skill

Assesses the ability to convey information and ideas and engage the audience appropriately. High scorers communicate clearly and respond appropriately to the audience. Low scorers struggle to engage the audience and adjust one's message to communicate appropriately.

8. Achievement Orientation

Evaluates the ability to generate business results by recognizing opportunities and acting efficiently. High scorers are focused and determined. Low scorers often loose interest and are not able to maintain their focus towards the goals.

9. Market Intelligence

Reflects on the understanding and awareness of the market trends and its dynamics and its impact on the business. High scorers are aware of market trends and their impact on the business. Low scorers are not interested in developing an understanding of market trends.

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10. Networking

Evaluates the ability to build and maintain effective and trusting relationships with those who can help in achieving work related goals. High scorers are good at building partnership and networks to achieve their goals. Low scorers struggle to build trust and network with others.

The ideal assessment should then offer a candidate report highlighting the job fitment index, strengths, area of concern, and competency graph with or without the benchmarks. Typical benefits of an assessment should include:

1. A perfect match between your unique requirements and talent supply.
2. Insights into candidates' strengths and weakness to prepare for the interview.
3. Capability to benchmark your existing sales teams and new hires with top performers.
4. A scientific and validated process which can be used for mass hiring as well as fresher to entry-level hiring.
5. A development plan for the candidate to improve his/her competence.

In summary, with the focus on continuous growth and ever-changing buyer landscape, there is no space for any risk with any sales position. The stakes are very high for HR and sales leaders. Sales Potential Assessments have emerged as an ideal partner to HR and Sales leaders to identify, nurture and grow the sales talent.

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