



Be Direct
By Mike Stewart, CSP

Last night I had dinner with a new Client who is from Europe and has been a sales manager in the USA for just a few months.

We were discussing how the differences in our respective cultures affect managerial results, when she said, "In Europe I could be much more direct in telling people what I expected. People in the US are more laid back and I'm afraid to be too demanding."

Bingo! That really hit a hot button with me.

Although I could understand her insecurity, this is not a "cultural" issue nearly as much as it is a management leadership issue, and an individual personal performance issue.

Many 'Born in the USA' sales managers have asked me, "Why is it that when I ask my salespeople to do something, they don't do it? Sometimes they tell me they will, but then they don't"

I think there are three reasons for this failure of salespeople to perform to management's levels of expectation. They are:

1. People really don't know what's expected of them,
2. There is no accountability, and
3. There are no consequences for failure.



Verify Your Expectations Without A Doubt

Most managers I have had experience with just seem to assume that their salespeople know what's expected. Unfortunately, this is not true in far too many cases.

I have demonstrated this to the chagrin of quite a few managers by calling their salespeople on their cell phones and asking them what management expected of them. All too often, their answers were disappointing at best. At worst,

their answers indicated they didn't have a clue what was expected of them.

If you want to be sure your salespeople know what is expected of them, have them write you and describe in detail what is expected. If their response is not correct, have them do it again, and again, until they get it right. Then, when it is in their writing, there can be no question.

**"The absence of alternatives
clears the mind marvelously."
– Henry Kissinger**

As A High-Performance Salesperson:
Provide your manager with a written description of the behaviors and activities you believe are expected of you, and get their sign off.



Be Demanding and Hold Your People Accountable

As a manager, you must measure performance to insure that your people are behaving as you expect and performing the tasks they have been assigned.

**"You must inspect what you expect."
- Unknown**

As with all performance issues, you must provide positive feedback to affirm and reinforce desirable behaviors.

It is critical that you provide immediate feedback and let people know when they are falling short of expectations. That is the only way you can insure that they have the message, and be held accountable.

As A High-Performance Salesperson:
Provide your manager with a list of your activities and accomplishments at least once a month.



You Must Impose Consequences For Failures to Perform

I am frankly disappointed at the number of managers who make excuses for their salespeople when they fail to perform up to expectations. Salespeople don't need this help! They can make up more than enough excuses on their own!

The manager's job is to provide discipline and penalties where appropriate in order to change the behaviors and activities of below-standard performers.

**"I've found that I get more with a kind word
and a gun than I get with just a kind word."
– John Dillinger**

As A High-Performance Salesperson

Point out to your manager that you are doing what is expected - and more! - and be sure that you receive credit for your accomplishments



I don't make this stuff up! This is exactly what top sales managers and high-performance salespeople do, as some have affirmed:

A National Sales Manager located here in Georgia said to me, "Things have changed. If they don't do it, they don't stay."

A Regional Sales Manager in Arizona told me, "(Not meeting the standards) is not an issue. It is expected and they do it. Those who wouldn't left a long time ago."

"Make your mark. Don't be afraid to bring forth your talent and business acumen. Be yourself and be strong".
- A top sales producer in a speech. He is now a manager.

Another top producer who is now a manager said to his peers, "Every passing moment is an opportunity to turn it all around."

The question that you might consider asking yourself is not, as my European Client was concerned, "Am I going to offend my salespeople?",
Instead, you might ask,
"How offended am I that they aren't doing their jobs?"

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