

SALES INCENTIVES

How important is it for a company to get sales? How important is it to motivate your sales force to go beyond the call of duty and give your company real growth at the end of every year.

The answer to both questions is that it is extremely important for any company.

The main reason why it's so hard for most companies to achieve either or both is the breakdown of reaching the sales person on their level and finding how the demands of the companies budgets can be met by the sales person/team where there is a win win situation.

The companies I have represented over the years I have met all different types of people in sales positions, from unbelievably self driven, self motivated professionals to conversationalists who are lovely people but are doing the company harm having them in sales positions where they're clearly not performing.

Sales incentives have a huge bearing on a sales person/sales team - my belief is a true sales person knows that they are expected to sell in a sales position, as simple to understand as it may seem. They also know the company would ideally like to rampant sales coming through the door and there is no such thing ever as enough sales being made. Which in turn means a sales persons job is never done there is always something more for a sales person/sales team could do to ensure more sales.

This is where things usually go pear shaped for companies, if you've secured the services of true sales professionals they'll do everything physically possible to get that extra sale through the company before the end of the month if the mix is right.

When I talk about the mix I'm meaning financial rewards for sales people who are truly ambitious. Hard cold cash. The companies I have represented there was nothing more that got me motivated to sell, no coffee breaks, long chats with other staff, sitting in the office if I was doing that I knew my income I was used to living on and monthly commitments I had to make were going to be compromised.

I used to hear other sales people in the office say cash doesn't get me going or the targets are too unrealistic or someones area is far better than theirs so it was easier for them to achieve. Occasionally this could be true but 90% of the time it was just a smoke screen the person was putting up because they just couldn't be bothered. In this case the company is better off without the employee, if extra cash doesn't get someone humming in sales they're better off in a storemans position.

"Achieving starts with Believing"

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The other 50% of the equation to making sure sales incentives get sales people motivated is the employer. Lets face facts there is no degree that you can show an employer when being employed in a sales position, there's references which the employer can say yeah yeah that's what you did for them but will you do the same for us? or our product is completely different to what you have ever sold and who's to say you're going to go to the heights of success you did with the other company? Which leads to the employer having a starting salary which an average sales person should be able to cover in sales brought through the door and a commission structure on top of that to see how good you really are.

The commission structure and I can't over emphasise this enough should be a commission structure that the company is more than willing to part with if high sales are met. Countless times I have encountered that when you consistently out perform the set down budgets which the company initially put in place, the employer thinks it's too easy and starts changing co-efficients of the budget to make it harder to achieve for the sales person. I was with one company who would've changed the budgets and incentives for sales 6 times in 2 years. The result was a demoralised and confused sales team and top performers becoming resentful and leaving the organisation. The management letting the performers go because they believed they could replicate the production with another sales person, which never happened the company was down a key person and carrying unproductive sales staff or in some cases splitting the work of one between three.

To sum up true sales performers prefer cash as incentives, judging that the incentives are realistic and achievable and companies need to set incentives which they know when achieved they are prospering as well as the sales person.

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