

Articles for Managers

A Lesson For Managers From The World Of Sales

by Ian Cook



Ian Cook, trainer, consultant, keynote speaker and Principal of Fulcrum Associates Inc., helps managers and supervisors get more from their people and teams through modern leadership approaches. Contact Ian to discuss the ideas in this article or to find out about related training programs, facilitation and coaching services, and keynote presentations for your organization.

By far the single biggest concern I hear from managers I work with is, **“How can I get my people to do more?”** Their number one challenge is how to ensure their employees are motivated. For the answer to this question we turn to the sales professional.

Superior salespeople do many things well but one thing stands out. *They get into the head of their prospect/customer!* They start where their customer is—cognitively, emotionally, even physically. How do they do this? By becoming curious—asking questions and listening intently—about their customer’s:

- hopes & dreams (what they want)
- fears and concerns (what they don’t want)

Our sales star now determines whether his or her product/service provides a solution for the customer, or whether to refer him/her elsewhere. If it does, they proceed to link their solution to the customer’s indicated need(s).

Your employees are like your customers.

They want things from their work. Let’s call these “benefits.” Examples are money, recognition, opportunity to learn and advance, balance, and challenge. Avoiding what they don’t want is also a benefit to them. For example, a pay cut, being downsized, boredom, stalling in their career.

You are like the salesperson.

You are often, though not always, in a position to satisfy their needs. In return, you require their performance contribution.

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Sales coach Tom Stoyan calls selling “helping your customer make a buying decision.” Managers, encourage your people to articulate what they want from their work. Many are not sure. You may have to facilitate their thinking process: “What do you want?” “Uh, I dunno. More money, I guess.” “OK, money. And what else?”

Know that most people will be motivated to perform once they perceive a clear link between their effort and the outcomes they truly value. This is when you make your “sale!

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