



ADAPT & THRIVE

**HOW SALES LEADERS CAN PREPARE
TO WIN IN A 2025 WORLD**

BY RYAN ESTIS & DON MACPHERSON



RYANESTIS

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WELCOME TO THE FUTURE OF SELLING

We compete in a marketplace that's incredibly transparent. Sophisticated customers have unprecedented access to information on margin and price.

It's often the case that products, solutions or services seemingly offer no compelling differentiation. More people inside a customer organization are influencing the buying decision, often with very different agendas. Simply put, customer expectations are skyrocketing.

In this environment, mediocre salespeople quickly lose their grip and miss their targets. In fact,



**57 PERCENT OF SALESPEOPLE
ARE PROJECTED TO MISS
THEIR TARGET EACH YEAR.**

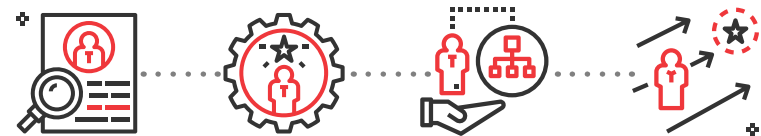
Additionally, Forrester forecasts that 1 million B2B salespeople in the U.S. will lose their jobs to self-service e-commerce by 2020.¹

And yet, great salespeople are more relevant and valuable than ever before. This new breed of consultative sales leader positions herself as a source of deep insight into her customers' problems, offers additional value in every interaction and helps her customers think differently about the future. She's an expert about her products and her competition, and understands her customer intimately. She wins on value and refuses to compete on price.

However, it's not enough for individual salespeople to evolve. The entire function inside the organization has to transcend to win in this era of transformation. This is an era where highly skilled sales leadership is required.

Enter the **Future Maker**.

FutureMaking is what's required to lead a winning sales organization, and this ebook will help you get there. For the past 20 years we've been studying the intersection of sales and engagement, looking for insight into



recruiting, hiring, managing and developing

the kind of sales talent that will succeed in the new global economy. We also interviewed leaders who are running best-in-class sales organizations to find out what they're doing differently to empower their sales teams to compete and win well into the future.

HERE'S WHAT WE LEARNED.

¹ Forrester, "Death of a (B2B) Salesman: Two Years Later."
<https://www.forrester.com/report/Death+Of+A+B2B+Salesman+Two+Years+Later/-/E-RES126861#>

FUTURE MAKER

(noun) \ˈfyü-chər ˈmā-kər\

A leader responsible for making the future happen and inspiring others to do the same.





THE DNA OF A TOP PRODUCER

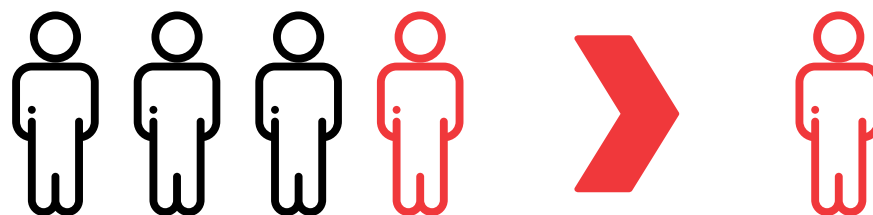
57%

OF SALES REPS EXPECTED TO
MISS THEIR QUOTAS IN 2018.²

² "The State of Sales," Salesforce research, May 2018.
<http://www.salesforce.com/blog/2018/05/sales-future-trends-research.html>

THIS NUMBER ISN'T SURPRISING

given that executive buyers say only 20 percent of the salespeople they encounter are effectively prepared to create value during a sales call. Also, only –



1 in 4 sellers earn an invitation back for a second meeting.

Rather than despair at those odds, let's focus on the opportunity and what differentiates the producers that are winning the deals.

**WE'VE FOUND THAT THEY TEND TO
HAVE FIVE KEY TRAITS IN COMMON**

1

ALWAYS IN THE LEARNING LANE

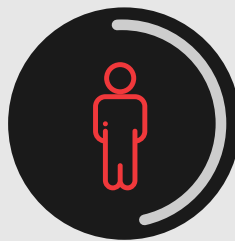
Today's best salespeople are committed to continuous reinvention. They obsess about learning and focus on self-improvement.

In our research, we found that the majority of salespeople consider themselves to be creative —



64% OF SALESPEOPLE
IDENTIFY AS “CREATIVE”

vs.



44% OF NONSALES
EMPLOYEES SAY
THE SAME

The top performer of the future is curious, is willing to conduct experiments and is adept enough to create new solutions to customers' problems — often getting it done by ignoring traditional lines between departments and working in close collaboration with colleagues from other functions, including engineering, marketing, accounting and customer service.

But the learning lane isn't a one-way road. For top salespeople, the ability to teach is just as important as an eagerness to learn. Aaron Bangsund, senior director of sales at Multispeciality Physician Partners, compares the salesperson's role to that of an educator.

“You certainly have to relate to people, but you also have to carry that information, present it very well and then make sure that they learned from it and made a decision with it.”



2

AN INSTINCT FOR COLLABORATION

Today's top producer thinks about more than making his own numbers; he also thinks about helping other people succeed.



Twenty years ago the best salespeople were 'I' focused. Now they're 'we' focused. At regional meetings, they're leading breakout sessions. They're doing extra research and bringing it to the staff people to help everyone else."

- Gerry Burke, Vanguard Senior Manager

Former Yahoo chief solutions officer and best-selling author Tim Sanders calls this new model "dealstorming," and he stresses that the "lone wolf" creative genius is a myth. To generate the new ideas and creative solutions needed to succeed in today's sales environment, salespeople need the benefit of teamwork and collaboration. He uses a navigational analogy: **When the salesperson is working alone, they're looking through a telescope and can clearly see the North Star (their primary buyer). But without bringing other people in, the seller can't see the other stars that make up a bigger constellation of influence around the North Star.** Salespeople need other people's perspectives to see that big picture and understand the full buying team.

The traditional sales team worked much like a golf team, Sanders says. "Individuals competed on their own, and sometimes they'd share notes or techniques. A deal team works more like a football team. Different people with different skills, backgrounds and experiences all work together to solve challenges. The team needs everyone working together to succeed."



3

GETTING CLOSER TO THE CUSTOMER

The best sales professionals know their customers are overwhelmed and time-poor, and that they expect value to be delivered, consistently.

They are fanatical about preparation because they understand that customer expectations have changed. The opportunity to advance the relationship is dependent on meeting customers where they are.

They're constantly looking for ways to get closer to their customer. There's no better example of this than the hospitality industry, where customer satisfaction is so openly part of the product being delivered. That's why when Crowne Plaza Hotels began a top-down reimagination of its hospitality experience, it turned

directly to its customer: the business traveler. Monte Jump, director of food and beverage service at Crowne Plaza's parent company, InterContinental Hotels Group, was surprised by the research.

Jump notes that part of the reason for this is the changing nature of our approach to work itself. **"The modern business traveler doesn't just work 9 to 5. Work and life are blended together and scattered together."** These insights led to a refreshed design of the hotel spaces, in both individual rooms and common areas.

Crowne Plaza's new WorkLife guest room is a modern take on the hotel room with multiple areas for work and leisure — and the various charging ports we need for both. "It's all about trying to fulfill the needs of the modern business traveler," Jump shared.

This shift in mindset extends to every aspect of the customer experience, as reflected in Crowne Plaza's renewed service commitment, which it calls "Dare To Connect." The brand is bringing humanity back to business travel, and the chain's guests have welcomed it enthusiastically.

We went into this thinking that a business traveler, they just want speed and efficiency – but the reality was much different. Business travelers, who typically travel alone, were actually seeking more human interaction."

- Monte Jump, InterContinental Hotel Group
director food and beverage services

4 RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY



GROWTH

usually requires change.

Real change often requires



consistent effort.

IT'S A PROCESS.

That's why meaningful
change can be so hard.

Setbacks are part of the journey for even the best salespeople. We won't always get it right, and setbacks and slumps are simply part of a long sales career. **Overcoming resistance is the job.**

That's why Julie Faupel, a founding principal of Jackson Hole Real Estate Associates, places a high value on resilience when hiring new members for her team. As a sales professional, you're going to encounter numerous challenges every day, whether it's technology, budget constraints or time constraints, she says. **"You have to just keep going at it and figuring out a way to be resilient, to be positive and, ultimately, problem-solve your way to yes."**

And the real test comes when business is ... bad. "To me, the defining factor of somebody that is successful in sales is how you react during the downturns," says Faupel, whose firm is the largest real estate company in the Teton Region and was a 2011 and 2014 recipient of Christie's International Real Estate's Global Affiliate of the Year awards. "When things are great then that's really easy. When you encounter adversity, that's when you really learn a lot about yourself and your business model. You learn a lot about your colleagues and your competition."

THE BEST SALESPEOPLE UNDERSTAND THAT FAILURE ISN'T FINAL. IT'S NOT ABOUT THE SETBACKS OR CIRCUMSTANCES YOU CANNOT CONTROL. IT'S ABOUT HOW YOU RESPOND OVER TIME. THAT'S THE MINDSET THAT HELPS CREATE SEPARATION AND ULTIMATELY DRIVES SUCCESS.



5

EMBRACING THE SPEED OF CHANGE

The lightning-fast escalation in customer expectations³ has left many organizations flat-footed and playing catch-up.

Top performers do more than just wait for change and react to it. They anticipate and embrace the opportunity to stay one step ahead of the competition. It pays to see change through the lens of opportunity.

Tom Pfeifer, U.S. head of sales and customer support at Thomson Reuters, says he looks for people who have thrived through previous transformation events when he's hiring for sales roles. "And they don't have to be the person who has led it," he notes. "As a matter of fact, **I've found that the people that have experienced those transformations at either a frontline or managerial level often have the most helpful perspective because they served as key nexus points for the change.**"

The best salespeople understand that failure isn't final. It's not about the setbacks or circumstances you cannot control. It's about how you respond over time. That's the mindset that helps create separation and ultimately drives success.



³ "Experience Is Everything. Get It Right." PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2018.
<http://www.pwc.com/us/en/services/consulting/library/consumer-intelligence-series/future-of-customer-experience.html>

PREPARE TO WIN

If you're feeling pressure of price-driven sales conversations every day, stop the cycle. Step back and consider your approach to the sales process.

- How are you preparing?
- How can you elevate the conversation to focus on value the customer cares about?
- How can you deliver the customization and personalization your customers expect?
- How can you help customers solve big problems or accelerate opportunities?
- How can you give more than the competition?
- How can you make it easier for customers to buy?

**GET SPECIFIC ABOUT THE VALUE YOU BRING TO THE MARKETPLACE.
ARTICULATE THAT COMPELLING DIFFERENTIATION CONSISTENTLY.**





COACHING THE 2025 SALES TEAM

**IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO ATTRACT
TOP PERFORMERS. YOU HAVE
TO PULL THEM TOGETHER INTO
THE KINDS OF HEALTHY TEAMS
WHERE THEY CAN THRIVE.**



Part of the reason for this is generational. As customers have changed, so has the workforce. Millennials — those born between 1980 and 1997 — prioritize training and development at work. They are already the largest generation in the U.S. labor force, and they are expected to make up half of the global workforce by 2020.

**CREATING A UNIFIED, COLLABORATIVE
CULTURE IS ONE OF THE BEST RETENTION
TOOLS A SALES LEADER HAS.**

But the need for teamwork is also critical for dealing with customers. Eighty-four percent of customers say a more personalized, customized approach is a key factor in winning their business. As customers will be interacting with various departments throughout an organization, teamwork is more important than ever.

**HERE ARE THREE WAYS SMART LEADERS
SET THEIR TEAMS UP FOR SUCCESS**



CREATE FREQUENT OPPORTUNITIES **FOR LEARNING**

While the best salespeople drive their own development, sales leaders must meet them halfway.



SMART ORGANIZATIONS RECOGNIZE THAT GIVING PEOPLE TIME TO LEARN IS A STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE. THEY'RE INVESTING IN IT AGGRESSIVELY.

Our research found that companies with high-performing sales teams are twice as likely to provide ongoing training compared with the low-performers. Top producers want to sell for a company that makes the investment in making sure they are prepared to win.

This is an opportunity to think creatively about how to best engage with your employees, by focusing on different styles, perspectives and techniques to help people find their own voice and a process that works for them.

When Ryan Tanke, senior vice president and chief revenue officer for the NBA's Minnesota Timberwolves and the WNBA's Minnesota Lynx, wanted to build his team's skills, he incorporated improv training at a local comedy theater. The team invests in a number of training opportunities throughout the year, but this one was specifically designed to teach employees techniques to prepare them for those challenging, unscripted moments with customers. By utilizing these unconventional tools, employees are pulled out of their comfort zones, creating a unique learning experience.

The best sales leaders invest in preparing people for what is next in work and life.

TRAINING PAYS OFF

Salespeople who receive the training they need to do their job well are **10 times more likely to be fully engaged.**

27%

SALESPEOPLE SAID THEY HADN'T RECEIVED ANY KIND OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN THE PAST **12 MONTHS.**

30%

SALESPEOPLE SAID THEY HADN'T BEEN TO A COMPANY-SPONSORED TRAINING IN THE PAST **12 MONTHS.**





2

ENCOURAGE A HEALTHY BALANCE OF COLLABORATION & COMPETITION

Collaboration is not just a buzzword. Customers value and seek out collaborative organizations.



RESEARCH FROM SALESFORCE FOUND THAT 70 PERCENT OF CUSTOMERS VALUE WHAT ARE KNOWN AS “CONNECTED PROCESSES, WHICH INCLUDE SEAMLESS HANDOFFS OR CONTEXTUALIZED ENGAGEMENT BASED ON EARLIER INTERACTIONS.”⁴

Meeting those expectations will require more collaboration than many sales organizations have traditionally practiced, particularly in commission-based environments.

When founding her company, Faupel says she sought to avoid what she calls the “every-man-for-himself environment” typically found in real estate organizations. But she knew that creating a more collaborative culture would be particularly tricky for a real estate company, where salespeople are openly competing with each other for commissions.

Her solution was to create situations that encourage personal interaction to foster real relationships. She holds regular lunch meetings and a weekly catered breakfast at one of her company’s premier listings, and agents are encouraged to share their experiences and work through problems together. “Sharing experiences,” Faupel says, “is really valuable.”

None of this means that people always have to “get along.” Being radically candid and inviting healthy conflict into conversations about business performance are critical to being an effective leader.

⁴ Salesforce, “State of the Connected Customer.”
<https://www.salesforce.com/form/pdf/state-of-the-connected-customer-2nd-edition/?d=cta-body-promo-9&nc=7010M00000005to>

3

DESIGN A SYSTEM OF MEANINGFUL REWARDS & RECOGNITION

A focus on profits alone isn't enough to sustain long-term growth. Instead, the sales leaders of the future will run their business based on two important goals:



THEY ASPIRE TO ENRICH THE LIVES OF THEIR EMPLOYEES AND THE CUSTOMERS THEY SERVE.



THEY WANT TO IMPACT THEIR COMMUNITIES IN A MEANINGFUL WAY AND ULTIMATELY LEAVE A LEGACY.

When people know that the organization is invested in them personally, they are far more likely to commit and contribute their full potential. It's worth considering how often people are receiving feedback and recognition for their contributions, especially in remote sales organizations.

Bullhorn CEO Art Papas has looked for creative ways to reward salespeople through both compensation and public recognition. "At Bullhorn we reward hitting financial goals with compensation. But we focus all of our recognition on things that aren't quantifiable." For example, every month, he asks sales managers for stories about how their employees have succeeded. Then he shares those stories at a company-wide "town hall" meeting. "We put an individual employee's picture on the screen in front of the whole company and share how they built a relationship with a customer," Papas says. **"We're looking for opportunities to create moments of memorable praise."**

3

DESIGN A SYSTEM OF MEANINGFUL REWARDS & RECOGNITION (CONT'D)

Papas teaches sales leaders how to create those moments during a leadership training program. During the training, he will single out a new leader in the room, put them on a slide and talk about them in front of the group for five minutes. The impact is clear and immediate. “That person feels special — they’re thinking, ‘I didn’t even think you knew who I was.’ And everyone else is thinking ‘I wish he would recognize me like that.’ That’s a lot more powerful than just sending an email about someone’s accomplishment. By creating those moments of memorable praise, we’re cementing the behavior we want people to exhibit.”

Of course, there’s more to recognition than just awards. Ethan Casson, CEO of the Minnesota Timberwolves, places a particular importance on one-on-one personal connections. “I aim to have a strong awareness of who our team members are — not just as professionals but as people — the types of things that are important to them in their careers and equally important to them on a personal level, whether that’s inside their families or inside their communities.”

Knowing your employees both professionally and personally helps create a sense of unity in an organization, and it helps Casson and his employees engage with each other. “I find that balance between those two really gets the most out of the type of environment that we’re all trying to build, which is an environment made up of collaboration and trust,” he says.



By creating those moments of memorable praise, we’re cementing the behavior we want people to exhibit.”

- Art Papas, Bullhorn CEO

THE MONEY MATTERS

When salespeople are compensated based on their performance through commissions or bonuses, **they are much more engaged.**

Salespeople fully or moderately engaged

63%

COMMISSIONED-BASED
SALESPEOPLE

VS

43%

NON-COMMISSIONED
SALESPEOPLE





LEADING A FUTURE-PROOF SALES ORGANIZATION



PAST PERFORMANCE IS NO
LONGER A GOOD INDICATION
OF **FUTURE SUCCESS.**

Twenty years ago it was enough for most businesses to just “follow the playbook,” abiding by a set formula to achieve reliable growth. Now the pace of business is much faster, and the new economy is chewing up and spitting out the former winners in the old economy. According to an Innosight analysis, corporations in the S&P 500 Index in 1965 stayed there for an average of 33 years. By 1990, average tenure in the S&P 500 had narrowed to 20 years; by 2026 this period is forecast to shrink to 14 years. **At the current churn rate, Innosight says, about half of today’s S&P 500 firms will be replaced in the next decade as we enter “a period of heightened volatility for leading companies across a range of industries, with the next ten years shaping up to be the most potentially turbulent in modern history.”⁵**

To make the future happen, leaders of successful organizations must have their feet in two worlds: They must have the drive to execute and perform given the current marketplace reality while simultaneously having the discipline to reinvent their approach to the business. This mandates courage, constant inspection, a hunger for innovation, having the guts to conduct real experiments and a high tolerance for failure. Success in the new economy is iterative, and you must be willing to adapt to thrive.

**HERE ARE THREE WAYS TO
STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE.**

⁵ Innosight, “Corporate Longevity: Turbulence Ahead for Large Organizations.”
<http://www.innosight.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Corporate-Longevity-2016-Final.pdf>



1

EMBRACE THE POWER OF **DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

Over the past 10 years, two large developments — social media and mobility — have created a tectonic shift in the technological landscape. The way we connect and communicate has been completely transformed, upending the way customers decide.

BUT OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS, A WAVE OF TECHNOLOGIES, KNOWN COLLECTIVELY AS THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, WILL ALTER THE LANDSCAPE EVEN FURTHER. THESE INCLUDE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, ROBOTICS, WEARABLES, THE INTERNET OF THINGS, 3D PRINTING AND VIRTUAL REALITY/ AUGMENTED REALITY.

For example, the increasing ubiquity of mobile Internet, combined with the coming of age of the Internet of Things, promises to transform the daily routine of many frontline sales teams across all industries, requiring a much higher level of technology literacy than in the past, the World Economic Forum says.⁶

Planning for success in this environment requires a realistic look at the future, especially the technology that's powering change and blurring the lines between sales, marketing and customer experience in B2B and B2C sales. **Organizations' success will depend on attracting and retaining people who can harness these new technologies to find ways to connect more deeply and efficiently with their customers.**

⁶ World Economic Forum, "The Future of Jobs" report.
http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs.pdf



1

EMBRACE THE POWER OF **DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION** (CONT'D)

This is visible in small companies and large organizations. A few years ago, the sales staff of the NBA's Sacramento Kings set out to reinvent how they sold to reflect customers' evolving expectations.

They started looking for tools and technology to drive a "Sales 3.0." initiative. They were looking for new ways to be:



SOCIAL: HELPING SELLERS TELL A STORY AND AMPLIFY IT THROUGH SOCIAL CONVERSATION.



ACCELERATED: WORKING FASTER AND MORE EFFICIENTLY.



COLLABORATIVE: FOSTERING A TEAM SELLING ENVIRONMENT AND HELPING REPS SHARE IDEAS WITH EACH OTHER.

Phil Horn, senior vice president of sales and service for the Kings, says the team's salespeople have become "micro-marketers."

They use **email marketing, smarter dialing, social selling and content sharing** to anticipate what customers are looking for and who's most likely to buy. After a year of training, testing and celebrating the wins, "Sales 3.0" became the culture.

This emphasis on anticipating a consumer's needs, says Thomson Reuters' Pfeifer, is a trend that will only continue to accelerate. **Customers now expect to have more customized and personalized experiences. "They want immediacy, they want real time, they want it on their terms."**

To meet those expectations, Casson and the Timberwolves have invested heavily in business intelligence, using data to enhance the customer experience at every touchpoint. "The digital value proposition is no different than the customer value proposition," Casson says. "It's applying that data to push and drive engagement, revenue and adoption."



2

BREAK DOWN SILOS

Company leaders have an opportunity to improve the relationship with customers by spearheading more internal collaboration.

Specifically, marketing and sales leaders can collaborate to drive growth in a marketplace where customer expectations continue to evolve at warp speed. Tim Minahan, chief marketing officer at Citrix, has made it a priority to increase collaboration between marketing and sales. He sees data as the answer to a lot of the historical disagreement and miscommunication between the two groups.

Data can really eliminate a bunch of the he-said, she-said friction that has muddled sales and marketing relationships. Data cuts through all that emotional bias and drives the right course of action."

- Tim Minahan, Citrix chief marketing officer

Minahan and his team have used real customer data to create what he calls "single points of truth" that guide decisions. "It's like peeling back the layers of an onion. Once you begin to base your decisions on data, you can move the big boulders and find the small things you never knew existed," he says. "When you have full

transparency into the data, you can get a common vision. And if there are issues, we can see them and come up with a collective plan to improve on them before they become problems."

Smart sellers aren't afraid to collaborate in an effort to generate ideas, because they know the only priority is the customer. Sharing information and generating out-of-the-box input across department lines can help unlock creative, high-impact solutions for the buyer.

When it starts from the top, we see collaboration also lead to greater propensity for encouraged, engaged employees. The Timberwolves' Tanke says he models that by making collaboration a cornerstone of his management style. He takes an integrated approach to sales and marketing. Tanke calls it the "overall ecosystem" of PR, marketing and sales, where everyone knows the role they play but they also work together to deliver a fan experience that puts the Timberwolves in the best position to succeed. This integrated approach brings everyone — direct reports, salespeople and leaders — together to advance their shared goals and objectives.

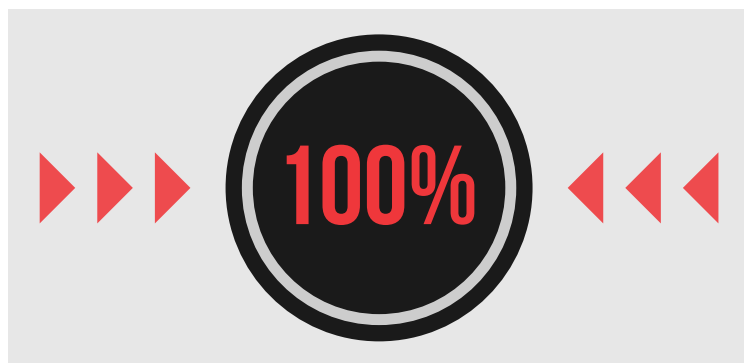


3

BUILD CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE

Only **23 percent** of disengaged salespeople have confidence in senior management, according to our research.

Compare that with the 97 percent of engaged salespeople who express that confidence.



WE EVEN SEE THAT 100 PERCENT — YES, 100 PERCENT — OF FULLY ENGAGED SALESPEOPLE BELIEVE THEIR COMPANY IS HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

That's some of the best data we've come across to inspire leaders to take time to engage with their teams and share the data, targets and reasoning behind company decisions.

Selling is a game of confidence, and belief in the future is paramount to influencing culture and engaging producers in their company. What has changed is that, in order to believe in the future of the organization, people don't look just to their manager anymore. They look to the executive team, and typically to the CEO.

This feeling of engagement and this belief must come from leadership's treatment of people and customers, and this treatment must be apparent to everyone inside and outside of the company. This is even more the case for large organizations that are geographically diverse.

The bigger your organization, the more trouble you may have building this connection.



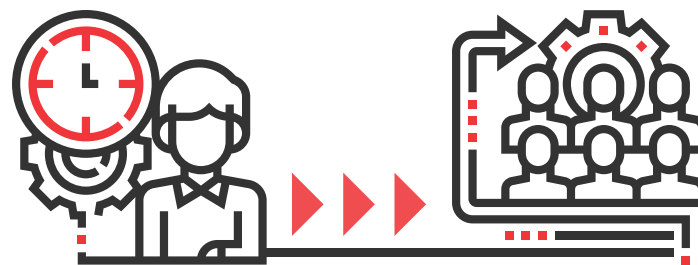
3

BUILD CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE (CONT'D)

In our research, **64 percent** of salespeople at large organizations are disengaged or underengaged.

They're also much less likely to say they get the recognition they deserve, and they're less optimistic that they'll be promoted. And salespeople at large organizations are much less likely to say their work gives them a feeling of personal accomplishment, and they're less likely to be satisfied with their pay.

One thing leaders in large organizations can do is take the initiative to include employees in organizational decisions. After recognizing that the Timberwolves needed to provide a better work-life balance for employees, Casson personally led a meeting with all of his organization's parents. Together they brainstormed programs and policies that would better serve their family needs, including game-night day care, sleepovers on the Target Center floor and a program that provides school supplies and team-branded backpacks to the employees' children.



For Casson, moments like these are key to what he calls his **"pull/push" approach to management**. "The push is we're going to work harder," he explains. But the pull is just as important. The key to it is ensuring that his employees are also being satisfied on a personal level. "We're pulling you back into a place that cares for you, looks out for you." With this balance in place, he is able to create a human-centered approach to strive for greater performance and accountability.

THE 8 CORE DRIVERS OF SALES EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

1

I have confidence in my organization's senior management.

2

Employees at my organization have good career-advancement opportunities.

3

I have confidence in the future of my organization.

4

Our values guide how people at my organization actually behave.

5

My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.

6

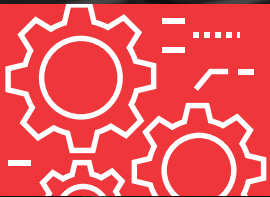
My organization treats employees well.

7

Senior management shows a sincere interest in employee well-being.

8

In my work group, we work well together as a team.



TAKE ACTION NOW

THE FUTURE IS GOING TO HAPPEN
WHETHER YOU'RE READY OR NOT.

THE QUESTION IS HOW ARE YOU
GOING TO RESPOND?

LEADERS ANTICIPATE.
AMATEURS REACT.

It's time to take aggressive action to advance the organization. The key to success is to disrupt your own business before the marketplace does it for you.

Building a 2025-ready sales organization is going to require some big changes. If you're not sure where to start, take a step back and develop an action plan. What could you take action on right away to create momentum and move your team toward success?

Go first. Before you ask your team to commit to performance goals, tell them what they can expect from you. Get specific! Tell them what you'll do to help them meet their goals. Set high expectations for yourself and deliver on your promises consistently.

Get close to the customer. If your goal is to sell the way customers want to buy, you need to understand your customer. Leverage customer feedback and data. Conduct focus groups and meetings with prospective buyers in your target demographic. Be open to surprises that challenge the status quo and build the next iteration of your go-to-market strategy in partnership with your best customers.

Arm your team with the right tech. Invest in AI-powered tools that help your team to collaborate and forge deeper connections with each other and their prospects and customers.

Schedule "white space." Leading change requires time to think. If you're like most leaders, you're overscheduled and time poor. Find ways to change that by scheduling "white space" — time to reflect, to look for inspiration outside your business and to problem solve. What you schedule gets done. Audit your calendar and schedule the time to work on the future of the business.



TAKE ACTION NOW (CONT'D)

Promote continuous learning. Build a culture of continuing education. Assign teaching topics that challenge reps to stretch and grow. Share case studies from outside the organization. Champion mentoring and encourage self-development.

Recognize success. Start every sales meeting with recognition about what's going right. Emphasize the behavior and practices that drive results. You'll get attention and effort based on what you inspect and share openly with the team. Celebrate together and reinforce the impact you are having on both customers and the business.

Leverage the power of storytelling. Include customer case studies in every sales meeting. Focus on customer outcomes, and reinforce your compelling value proposition and your opportunity to create customer success. Find ways to share customer testimonials (through customer panels, Q&As or recorded customer interviews). Elevate belief and commitment by encouraging everyone to own these success stories.

Let collaboration rule. Define collaboration for others. Talk about when it's important and why. Invite participation from other functions in the organization, and demonstrate why collaboration is a critical next-level sales competency. Focus on team goals and team success.

Brand the customer experience. Process discipline drives results. Every touchpoint with a customer

represents an opportunity to add value and advance a relationship. Auditing and subsequently elevating every touchpoint with a customer for maximum impact is critical to ensure a consistent approach to the marketplace. Build the road map for sales success.

Check in. Provide feedback and have future-directed conversations every 30 days with sales staff. Annual performance reviews are dead. Today's top producer requires a more consistent feedback loop, and expects the opportunity to contribute thinking and feedback to help the business improve. Leaders are listeners. Master the art of effective, two-way communication.

Drive performance. Maintain an obsessive focus on performance targets and customer outcomes. Constantly recruit and develop the best sales talent. Remove barriers and provide the resources and coaching that reps need to compete and win. Create an environment of clearly defined expectations and accountability. Continue to adapt and make forward progress as market conditions and customers evolve.

As leaders, we have the opportunity to change lives, shape careers and help others realize their full potential.

LEADERSHIP ISN'T A JOB — IT'S A RESPONSIBILITY. AND LEADERS WHO TAKE THAT RESPONSIBILITY SERIOUSLY CAN MAKE A MAJOR IMPACT ON THE CUSTOMERS THEY SERVE AND LIVES OF THE PEOPLE THEY LEAD.



RYAN ESTIS

Ryan has been recognized as one of “the best keynote speakers seen or heard” by Meetings & Conventions magazine. The former chief strategy officer for the McCann Worldgroup advertising agency, he now runs his own research and learning organization, delivering 75 live events annually on leading change, improving sales performance and preparing for the future of work. His writing has been featured in Forbes, Inc., Fast Company and Entrepreneur Magazines and his client roster includes category leading brands like Mayo Clinic, Ernst & Young, MasterCard, IBM, AT&T, CVS and the National Basketball Association.

Contact: www.ryanestis.com



DON MACPHERSON

Don MacPherson is CEO, polymath-in-training, and host of 12 Geniuses - a podcast for curious and voracious learners. Don interviews exceptional people about trends and technologies changing the way we live and work. A five-time entrepreneur, Don has spent 25 years studying the employee experience, the attributes of great leadership, and how healthy organizational cultures are created and sustained. An avid traveler and volunteer, Don has visited 70+ countries and been a Big Brother mentor for more than 20 years.

Contact: www.12Geniuses.com



RYANESTIS



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