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Managing Knowledge in Your Sales Force

When we raise the question of knowledge management and systems in our conversations with sales managers, they immediately look at the financial reporting within the company. They can run a plethora of reports on customers by product, turnover and margin that can be extrapolated to regions and a myriad of other segmentation data. Companies have rushed to deploy systems for distributing information and documents of all kinds to their sales people. However, the content within this CRM software is often lacking any real information or value.

Fighting the Information Glut

On the other hand, those working today in nearly all functions within business organizations suffer from severe information overload. Sales people are perhaps the most overloaded of all. Dozens or hundreds of documents are intended to provide sales people with the knowledge they need to compete. However, what is missing is a scheme for consistently and comprehensively labeling, analyzing, and structuring all the types of knowledge needed for sales. The result is a scarcity of knowledge in an abundance of information.

Knowledge is Power

The introduction of powerful and consistent knowledge architecture often collides with the selfish interests of sales people. For the sales force, much of the knowledge is held as tacit knowledge in the minds, know how, and sales skills of the employees. To them, knowledge is their most powerful asset, a sharp weapon used to fight in- house and outside competition. Moreover, it serves a key argument in compensation deals.

There is a high degree of risk associated with operating a company whose knowledge of customers and suppliers is retained only in the heads of individuals.

Collaboration and knowledge sharing between representatives need to be supported in order to mitigate issues and shortfalls of information that may arise when members of the sales force leave the territory to pursue other avenues and opportunities. To succeed in the implementation of a knowledge-based, transparent organization, outside experts can help your management to brake down individual and organizational barriers and diffuse negative comments among sales reps.

Transparency and Leadership

The main purpose of knowledge management is to inform sales people before they go to a customer so that they possess a high level of credibility. They are provided with knowledge on how to identify and cultivate opportunities for specific products and how to enhance their communication with the customer. A system that achieves these points

leads to the establishment of a transparent standard of performance across the team that manages the experience of the customer.

It is the responsibility of the senior management to embark on the process of developing a coherent and transparent knowledge architecture. Senior executives must be involved to demonstrate their own commitment and seriousness to fully support the new rules and standards for transparency and knowledge sharing. Senior management has to define clear goals that can be objectively measured and tracked against current progress.

Your Benefit

The implementation of thorough systems and processes in an organization helps sales reps to understand what is required and to respect the boundaries they need to work within. They receive the right guidance and direction to conduct their sales activities.

Experienced coaches can help your management provide a thoughtful strategy for knowledge management that fits the work culture and environment of your organization. These experts will support your company to become smarter in its selling function, consequently leading to maximum growth achievements.

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