

## **MFB News – January 2009**

### **The Keys to Sales Success: Team Spirit and Cross-functional Collaboration**

Selling is about building relationships, whether with the prospect or your own internal team. This involves the alignment and collaboration of inside sales and field reps to create a strong and focused sales team.

When sales and operations activities are not aligned and integrated, small problems can quickly escalate into large issues, which can adversely impact the company's performance. As each part of the company jockeys to satisfy its own priorities, valuable time and resources are wasted, ultimately leading to poor customer service. The consequences of poor sales collaboration are substantial. They adversely impact the company's bottom line while fostering a reactive culture of undisciplined business processes and unnecessary waste.

#### **Building Successful Sales Teams**

In organizations, communication and trust are part of a relationship just as they are in our personal lives. Your reps, and yes the burden usually falls on the shoulders of the inside rep, need to understand their field partners vision for that role and either live up to it or evolve it. To create a strong team spirit the sales management must demonstrate leadership by deploying a clear and focused strategy that meets the internal needs of the sales team while also responding to the challenges of the customer. Sharing responsibility for how work will be done and acknowledging people's contributions enable salespeople to feel and act like strong players in a successful football team.

#### **The Road to Success: Internal Collaboration and Alignment**

Successful companies create a culture that builds cross-functional cooperation and alignment. The majority of knowledge sharing and innovation within organizations occurs through people interacting with people - especially within groups or teams that cross conventional organizational boundaries. This internal collaboration translates to an organization that understands and is more focused on the needs of the customers.

Because the sales organization functions as customer-relationship specialists, the sales manager must have a special interest in promoting internal collaboration.

Moreover, sales manager play a critical role by acting as a model of expected behavior, establishing a tone of cooperation and teamwork, and providing a level of support that enables salespeople to accomplish their goals. Often, simply talking to salespeople enables a manager to acquire a high level of knowledge of people's needs and concerns.

**Your Benefit**

In a team selling model, it is crucial that communication and collaboration are taught as sales skills. Experienced coaches can help your management to form a powerful and united sales force. In role plays and individual coaching these experts are able to identify and address existing tensions and misunderstandings between your inside sales reps and their field colleagues. Together with your management these coaches can provide solutions that will help your company release the power of internal collaboration and alignment to achieve exceptional growth and customer satisfaction.

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