
CHAPTER

1

**The Work of
a Sales Boss**

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A Sales Boss's job is to deliver revenue that sufficiently and meaningfully exceeds the cost of delivering that revenue. If you want to be a Sales Boss, you must learn the art of getting the best results through other people. Sometimes these people will be directly on your team, but in many cases they will exist in other areas of the company, such as marketing, customer service, finance, and product development. Your success hinges on the ability to control and influence all of these spheres, as all of them impact the results of the sales team. A Sales Boss will never say, "That's not my job." Sales Bosses always ask themselves: "How do I influence this area that is impacting my team?"

Arguably, no other job is more critical in the success of a company than that of the Sales Boss. When a company is smaller, the salesperson is of central critical importance, but as a company grows, the importance of the individual salesperson diminishes and having a skilled manager in the role of Sales Boss becomes central and of critical importance.

In any business, nothing happens until somebody sells something. Nobody pays his or her mortgage, no kids get sent to college, and no retirements are funded until the salesperson is able to close business and get revenue coming in the door. In a company with a sales manager, the hiring, training, and success of the salespeople lie directly at the feet of the manager. The importance and significance of this role can be illustrated by a recent study that shows that 95 percent of the CEOs in mid-size companies have at some point in their careers filled the role of sales manager. Clearly, this job matters. The hopes and dreams of the entire company depend on the Sales Boss doing the job well.

In this book, we'll start by looking at some key truths that apply to managing people. It will be critical that you dedicate yourself to becoming a student of human nature, because no sales forecast, plan, or report will ever actually result in something being sold. Selling is done by people, and people are messy. I remember an early business mentor telling me: "Business would be easy if it wasn't for the people."

Next, we will walk through the process of building a world-class sales organization: what to do in your first 30 days on the job, how to write a sales job advertisement, best practices for interviewing, and how to select superstar salespeople. We'll discuss the specifics of coaching and mentoring your team as well as how to think about systems, reports, compensation, and the other moving pieces you'll need to master in the role of Sales Boss. We will largely focus on the team directly under your control, the sales team, but the best sales leader will always remember the need to have influence throughout the company. Remember that if it needs fixing, you must find a way to fix it, even if it falls outside the official boundaries of your team. This book will prove invaluable to someone who wants to improve as a manager of the sales team, but will also serve the head of the company who wants to evaluate the performance of the company's sales manager or who might want to add a sales management position to the company.

If you are looking for a quick checklist to evaluate how great you are as a Sales Boss or you need to evaluate the manager of your sales team, then understand that you might be oversimplifying what it takes. Read through the pages of this book and spend thoughtful and honest time asking yourself whether the portions related to being a Sales Boss describe the person you are or the person you currently have in the role. We have included a Sales Boss Scorecard on page 243 that you can use both to preview and later review each of the areas that are included in being a Sales Boss.

While I recommend reading the entire book for a full overview on all of the key components to being a great Sales Boss, you might also choose to move directly to the chapters on topics that you know you currently need help with as you build your team. Realize though that best results come from an application of all of the concepts presented in this book working in concert together. This is the secret. Why should you heed the advice in this book? Primarily, because it works. I've built, operated, and sold a number of companies that all depended on the ability to sell and build a sales team. I've "eaten my own dog food," to borrow a phrase. I've kept a sales journal and recorded my personal sales metrics daily for the last 20 years.

I am writing this book after having worked directly with sales teams as a sales consultant for the last 15 years, working with some of the top brands in each niche. I have personally observed over 2,500 individual sales calls and participated in the coaching and training of these salespeople. I've attended many hundreds of sales meetings and observed the skills and abilities of the managers running these meetings and also helped them develop their coaching and management skills.

I can tell you that I have seen some of the best coaching and selling in the world, and I've also had a front-row seat to some of the worst. I'll be able to give you real-world examples of both and share the impact that each has on the performance of a team. This knowledge doesn't come from academia. It comes from having been involved on the front lines of management.

While working with my clients, I have had the opportunity to look behind the curtain at these companies and see how they utilize their customer relationship management (CRM) systems, how they develop their sales funnels and marketing, and how they approach the hiring, training, and on-boarding of new salespeople. I've seen how companies struggle to implement tracking systems and get the team to use them, and then how the

team reacts to various tactics to get them to utilize a system. I'll share these insights.

Outside of the business arena and prior to my work with sales teams, I was deeply involved in a religious cult, being raised inside the group from birth and breaking free from its control as a young adult. I won't go into the details, as that would be another book entirely!

So why do I mention this detail of my life here? Despite all of the wrongs of the cult, it did give me an insight into how people's beliefs about themselves and their environment can be shaped. I was able to witness the power of belief in the daily actions of people. I learned how to overcome and change deeply held habits—not only my own, but also those of the people in my group. The cult was a gigantic laboratory of human nature. I learned a lot about motivation tools outside of money or the threat of unemployment, as the entire group, including the leadership team, were volunteers who chose to be involved.

I spent over 10,000 hours voluntarily knocking on people's doors and giving them the cult's sales pitch. I also recruited, trained, and mentored many others to do the same. I spent many thousands more hours in one-on-one coaching sessions.

In many ways, building these “religious sales teams” and managing their activity was much harder than building a team for a company. I wasn't paid, and neither did I have any money to offer converts. To join the Cult Team, you'd be an unpaid volunteer, give up many of your family and friends, and live as an outsider! This was not an easy sell, but I admit I had a pretty good conversion rate! Many of the lessons I learned as I witnessed human nature have shaped the insights I have utilized in helping companies find, train, coach, and mentor a top-performing sales team. While I rejected the teachings of the cult, I believe this experience has given me some unique insights into what it takes

to create a winning sales team or to turn an underperforming one around.

In this book, I will describe all of the key areas that a Sales Boss should be focused on in performing at the highest level and building the best team. First and foremost, if you want to have a superstar sales team that wins consistently and demolishes the competition, then YOU as the sales manager must be a superstar. No superstar works for an average boss for long. Are you a little fluffy? Or are you game-ready? We'll look at mindsets and specific actions that must be taken consistently for top results.

As you read, mark up the pages identifying the ideas that you can apply. When you read something familiar, the question should not be "Have I heard this before?" It should be "How good have I been at applying this?" When you read something new or something that you might initially disagree with, ask yourself: "What would this mean to my results if it were indeed true?" You might also ask: "What makes me disagree with this statement?" Perhaps you'll discover that it is some past experience with a previous manager or your personality preference that is causing you to dismiss the suggestion.

I would recommend that before you dismiss an idea or thought I've presented here you fully understand the "why" behind your dismissal. I know that not all of the thoughts I've presented here will serve every manager in every type of company in every situation. I do know, however, that what I will describe works when skillfully applied. I won't have accomplished my goal unless something in these pages makes you uncomfortable or makes you acknowledge that you could be better than you are today as a leader of your team. I believe that real change only happens with a bit of discomfort. In some instances, I will give you actual wording and phrasing so that you can visualize yourself having effective conversations with the people on your

team. Adapt the phrasing to suit your personality, but first make sure you understand the impact the words are intended to have as you craft your unique style.

As you take on the role of the Sales Boss, you will be leading the sales team, but remember which team you are on. You are a member of the management team. You can't just be "one of the guys" on the sales team. A good relationship with every department head and other managers will be essential to achieving the best results. Because tools utilized in the field of sales change rapidly and to offer you additional resources, we've created a place for you to download these tools. Please take a moment to register at www.jonathanwhistman.com/thesalesboss.

Let's get started.