

O N S A L E S

MANAGE TO WIN



Strong leadership means making sacrifices, warns **Shane Decker**.

[KNOW ANYONE who is a better salesperson than you? If you're a sales manager, your answer should be: "Yes, and they're working for me." Too many sales

buy from you. When you close them and wow them, they'll not only come back, but they'll brag about you to all their friends.

managers hire salespeople who are weaker than they are. Why? Insecurity — they want to look better to the boss, and they do, by comparison. Problem is, sales suffer and the store suffers as a result of this kind of "growth killer" mentality. You have to hold yourself accountable to your store's goals — not to your own ego.

\$500,000 a year, except one, who's writing \$200,000, that person is keeping everyone from meeting their goals. It costs you in profits, in closing, and yes, in customers. Quit keeping weak people!

4. YOURSELF

If there is ever a problem on the sales floor, look at yourself first. Where are you failing them? Figure it out, then step it up.

2. YOUR STORE OWNER

You're paid the big bucks for a reason — to make sure things are run on the sales floor as if the owner himself were there. You represent his integrity; you handle his inventory and money; you deliver the experience he is promising to customers.

Train yourself. Hold yourself accountable to being fair but firm. And be a motivator. Stay motivated in order to motivate your team.

To be a strong sales manager, you must be accountable to the following people, in this order:

Don't practice reactionary management. Be proactive, to keep crises from happening in the first place. And never be the one creating an attitude problem — lead by example.

1. YOUR SALES TEAM

Please tell me you've never done this: On a new salesperson's first day of work, you put him on the sales floor with everyone else. A customer walks in to spend \$10,000 and has no idea that the salesperson is brand new. The customer leaves thinking, "What an idiot!" That customer's perception of your entire store has been affected negatively.

The store owner should never have to worry about the sales floor with you in charge. That means you're responsible for handling conflict, whether among employees or with customers. You should also be active with customer follow-up and proactive selling — that's what leads to customer loyalty (and owners doing cartwheels because they're so happy with their sales manager!).

You need customers. But always remember: they don't need you.

Work on your delegating skills. If you're a doer, you work for everyone else. If you're a delegator, they work for you, AND more gets done!

As sales manager, it's your job to make sure everyone is well trained in salesmanship, product knowledge, gemological knowledge and store procedures. Don't let new salespeople practice and experiment on your customers. Too often, stores let people go for lack of performance, when in truth it's the manager's fault for not giving them the tools they needed to be successful. New salespeople should be in training from one to three months before selling on their own.

3. YOUR CUSTOMERS

Customers are the lifeblood of your store — you need them, desperately. But always remember: They don't need you.

Promote others, not yourself. Don't exploit your team members' weaknesses, just their strengths.

Another problem: Many managers wait too long to fire underperformers. Your golden rule should be hire slow, fire fast. If all your salespeople are writing

Be sure every customer is treated, smiled at and sold as they're supposed to be. You want to be so awesome that you professionally steal other jewelers' customers. Make them want to

Awesome leaders are good at giving people reassurance and recognition.

You will sacrifice a lot to be a good leader. But guess what? That's your job. And the bottom line is this: when you hold yourself accountable to your team, your owner, your customers and yourself, you'll find that you can accomplish more for your store — and for yourself — than you ever thought possible.

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