

Creating
Dramatic Sales
Improvement
Using 'The
Neuroscience
Of Management
Mind Hacking'
To Think and
See Things
Differently



Applying the 60% - 40% Rule To Make An Impact

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Which Rule Works Best?

80% - 20%

60% - 40%

Here's to the quiet ones, the often-ignored ones who can make a significant difference to business performance and profits!

Think Different



The 80-20% rule is outdated...

The single biggest untapped competitive advantage that business leaders are missing now is applying the 60%- 40% rule!

Think different.

I've adapted the quote attributed to Steve Jobs 'Here's to the Crazy Ones' to reflect the often untapped potential that the masses of so-called 'average' performers or customers possess.

This untapped potential delivered over £5m in additional business from just two initiatives!

"Here's to the quiet ones, the often forgotten ones, the 60% in the middle who usually get less attention and development from managers. They're not misfits or rebels or troublemakers but round pegs in the round holes that quietly get on with doing their job and offering stable productivity to businesses.

They're fond of rules because it gives them structure, predictability and certainty. Business leaders or managers can look down on them or even vilify them but they will still do what they need to in spite of such an attitude from above.

About the only thing leaders and managers shouldn't do, is ignore them! Why, because they are the backbone to the company that will deliver no matter what.

They're the conscientious ones producing average results but not because they are average people. They possess much more capability and untapped potential but are simply uninspired, under-valued or under-developed by their managers. If given proper attention however, they can improve and collectively lift the company higher or push it faster forward.

And while some may see these individuals as the average ones, the geniuses see the potential for awesome collective impact. Those leaders or managers who are courageous enough to stop, think and really notice these people, develop their talents and inspire them, are the ones who will embrace and utilise the combined power of the quiet ones."

Business leaders and for that matter, all lines of management spend most of their time trying to move or get rid of the bottom 20% of performers and keep the top 20% of performers happy, who incidentally tend to be the ones who move on.

The remaining 60%, i.e. the middle 60% that cause little or no disruption and quietly get on with their jobs are the ones who get ignored, just like they were at school or college. Average behaviour has been conditioned into them but they don't have to stay that way and with the right focus from managers, they have the potential to make the most difference to a businesses culture, climate and financial health (profitability) if only it was recognised and developed.

Take the example of a change manager tasked with the responsibility of improving performance of a global communications field sales force where sales were drifting 12% off of a £47m target early in the annual sales cycle and the trajectory was going down.

The senior management team was worried, not least because reputation and bonuses were at risk and after trying various ideas without success, were at a loss to know what they could do to turn the situation around.

After detailed but rapid diagnosis however, the change manager created and led a management development program that included management psychology training and coaching for 26 sales managers and also, buyer style awareness training for the field sales force of 160.

The management development program was interactive and included classroom sessions, workshops, reading study, online course completion, 360° feed-forward work and one-to-one coaching. It lasted 3 months and during this time, sales improved by 9%, which was equivalent to more than £4m in annual revenues, virtually all of which hit the bottom line because fixed costs were already accounted for.

There were no other initiatives or incentives in place at the time and sales results for the same period in previous years were reviewed to see if there were any noticeable trends, there weren't.

Anecdotal feedback was captured and all sales management reporting was analysed to ensure evidence of results was robust, it was and during this process, a surprising find for the senior management team was uncovered, namely:

They had expected across the board improvements but the results showed that the top 20% of performers (managers and salespeople) were maxed out already, the bottom 20% of performers were there for a reason and it proved very difficult to change this but the middle group of 60% held the key to the lock when it came to lifting overall performance. Namely:

- Sales results for the top 20% of sales managers and field sales people barely moved the needle!
- The same was the case for the bottom 20%, no noticeable change in performance!
- The improvements came almost entirely from the middle 60%!

Not every single manager or field sales executive in the 60% improved of course, it would be a bit naive to think this could happen but plenty of real gems were found and these collectively made all the difference.

The interesting thing about this is that, during another initiative with a different sales channel in the same organisation, the 60% rule made all the difference again, not with the sales team this time but with the customers.

Challenged with significant market changes because of online threats, the national print advertising sales team was tasked with a stretch target of £11m in revenue against an official target of £10m. This extra £1m was needed to help make up a deficit in another sales channel due to headcount restrictions and a hiring freeze.

The national sales team took a 'Slow Down To Speed Up' approach and created strategic account plans for every single key customer to try and maximise opportunities with these customers because new ones were getting harder and harder to win, i.e. what businesses in their right minds would want to invest heavily in a fast declining market?

At the end of the year, the team achieved £11.1m and when the final results were analysed, virtually all the extra £1.1m came from the middle 60% of customers and not the top or bottom 20%. It seems the principle runs true regardless, as the top 20% are there for a reason and often already maxing out, whilst the bottom 20% of spending customers were tight on opportunity anyway.

For any managers or leaders for that matter, that think the 60% in the middle (sales or customers) are not worth giving attention to or developed, think again, they actually hold a lot of potential to lift results.

We all love the top performers and get frustrated with the bottom performers but isn't it often the case, that in these two groups, we see the most leavers. So, the middle 60% could well be considered as the backbone of a company, the predictable performers or customers who can step up if and when the organisation requires it, develops them by giving them the attention they deserve and most of all, sincerely appreciates and values them.

Here's To The Quiet Ones, the 60% Who Can Make A Significant Difference!

Best Regards

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Reece is an award winning professional sales, management and business change strategist who now spends his time advising leaders and teaching managers how to create awesome sales results and inspiring workplaces through the Neuroscience of Mind Hacking & Mindful Leadership.