

# Contribution Sales Management

By Kirk McDow

## Opening

Who is this book for? This book is for anyone who is accountable for a sales team - you might be the CEO of the company, you might be the sales manager, you might be the VP of sales, or you might just own your own business and have a sales force. Your sales force could be aiming at consumers - as in business to consumer or business to business. But really, this is about managing people who are responsible for selling or sales management; this is a resource for that person who is accountable for the sales team. I have a book called [Contribution Selling](#) which really talks to the salesperson or the individual looking to sell directly to individuals, but this is different, because the person accountable for the sales team has a very different function than the person or persons who are accountable for sales.

This book basically assumes that your job is to empower your teams, and to produce the results you'd like to have from your sales team. This book is designed to be a HUGE resource for you with regard to how to empower your team to have the best experience possible *and* the best results possible *and* to have an ardent desire to be loyal to you and to the cause specifically - the company or the cause or whatever it is, with the outcome that they'll be really driven to produce results for you. So I'm going to talk to you about how to have your team be successful, how to have your team really enjoy the work that they do and be proud of what they do.

There are going to be some things for you to *do* as the business owner - some *actions* to take. You might be CEO, you might be a VP of sales, you might be a sales manager, you might be an entrepreneur, but I'm going to refer to that general category as the *business owner*. I'm assuming that, as the business owner, your commitment to having sales is really powerful: you want the appropriate number of sales to make everybody happy and healthy and to keep your business running, and to allow you to do what you love. In this book, we'll talk about how to do all that in a way that really works for the team and for you and for your customers and for the results you're committed to.

But we're going to come from an angle you might not expect. The purpose of the book is literally *transformation*. What do I mean by that? I mean having something be available to you that was not available before - a whole new experience, a whole new access to results, a whole new access to whatever you need to be uber effective with your team and with your company and with your results. And if you will apply yourself to this book - that's designed to be an hour or so to read - if you're *willing to really apply yourself* to this book, you're going to leave with a whole new access to a set of capacities, a whole new ability, a whole new view, a whole new desire to be successful and to have your team be world class, as in extraordinary both in its results and its character. So *that's* the purpose of the book.

The context of the book is how to *grow giants* - growing *giant* sales people that come in from different backgrounds, personalities and experiences. If you will care for growing your giants, you'll be ready to unleash your salesforce on the world. So literally we're going to be growing your people...and you!

## **Transformation**

Lets say a few words about transformation...

Its critical because I'm intending to have a transformation take place where you are...

In other words I stand for you having a new view, or a new future, a new possibility with regard to selling, leadership and management and you accountability as the sales leader...

To make the point, let's say that you think that selling is manipulative or maybe a little slimy. Plus you think that manageming people is difficult, and they should already know what to do and should be doing it already. Plus you think that you will not be very good at being a leader or a sales person...

If all or any of this is true, you can begin to see how all or some of this is going to pull for a certain kind of experience and results. Namely, you will be very likely to feel slimy, act weird with customers and the people who report to you as well as producing low results...

With new views on board you will on track to start practicing and ever mastering new actions speaking and thinking... You will begin to be awesome with your clients, inspiring to the people who report to you and an upward swing in your results. This could be the beginning of an upward spiral, great experience followed by great results, followed by a greater experience, etc...

How you keep and expend your transformation is by practice AND sharing!

When you practice you get stronger, not much more to say about that.

When you share, your new view becomes stronger for you and even becomes possible for the others in your life. Wouldn't it be great to have a breakthrough in selling and business and then share that breakthrough in such a way that your sales people get to have the same awesome results and breakthrough. If they are your salespeople as well... Great for you, great for them and great for your business.

It's 2018. I'm 55 years old. I was born in 1963. I started my sales career in the eighties. I had no background in sales. I started in the copier business in New Orleans. I have a lot of stories that might perhaps sound surprising and provocative and especially around what it was like getting off the ground, for example I had about a year of failure. But I had an ardent desire - I just would not give up. And then I quickly realized that training was going to be critical and key to my success. So I started training - I read everything I could get my hands on back in those days. It was cassette tapes from all the big trainers at the time: Denis Waitley, Zig Ziglar, Tom Hopkins, and Roger Dawson. So I moved through years of training - literally countless hours of training.

But what I noticed was that all the training that I was doing was essentially ever and ever more subtle forms of manipulation. If you really look at whatever sales training that you've been a part of or whatever conversations you have had with salespeople about sales, I think you'll notice that the preponderance of the training and tips and advice and comments comes from the unacknowledged assumption in the background that manipulation in sales is a good thing and you should be good at it. "You have to be good at being manipulative, whether that's covert, like being charming, or overt, like being pushy or forceful." I noticed it is all ever and ever more subtle forms of manipulation. At the same time, I began to see something other than this was possible, something along the lines of actually being the real deal: being a contribution, and instead of learning how to be manipulative, charming, unassuming, disarming, clever or whatever, *instead* learning to be good at providing service at what I do.

Whatever I do now, instead of learning how to sell it, I learn how to *provide* it. I learn how to *communicate* it. So in other words, I learn how to be a *contribution* - someone who is out to effectively communicate about and thus *provide* something of value for someone else. What I also notice is that manipulation is generally *fear-based*... "If I don't say this in this particular way, if I don't hold this back, it's not going to work. I'm not going to be able to close the deal." I find it generally fear-based when someone operates from a context of "what *should* I say here? is *this* the right thing? I'm worried about the right time to say my close... Now, should I keep presenting, how should I handle objections and all that kind of stuff?" At any rate, there's something else available in sales. And this book is about how to be a manager of salespeople willing to practice from that realm of what else is available. Something like being the real deal. Someone who is great at what you do and highly valuable to the right constituency.

To repeat, I wrote a book recently called *Contribution Selling* which really breaks down how to be the person that people want to do business with authenticity. When people need something, they want the real deal and they want a solution to their problem. And - if you are in your industry being extraordinarily good at what you do, then you have a solution that people need. Thus, that whole book talks about how to be the person that people are actually looking for to help them *solve* their problems and get on with their business and how to articulate that in a way that's enlivening, as well as how to be responsible for human beings' natural tendency to be manipulative and inauthentic from time to time as situations come up that cause concern or fear or anxiety. So that's *Contribution Selling*. You can find that at [ContributionSelling.com](http://ContributionSelling.com).

One thing I noticed is that once I got clear on being a contribution, being the real deal, being of service and taking great joy and having great pride in my ability to be a contribution - to be valuable, to bring value to people who I interact with - I've noticed my numbers are great *and* I sleep well. I feel good about the work that I'm doing *and* I feel good about when I onboard a customer because during the first call or interaction, I make a point of that conversation being a really valuable experience for someone who really can benefit from it. I treat myself and all the parties involved with the most respect and dignity. I noticed that being the person that people want to do business with is really awesome and not difficult at all. It's actually easy. And additionally, I noticed that it really works to simply look for the people who are looking for you.

For example, if I'm a sales coach, I'm not going to talk about my sales courses with someone who has no need for that.

That sounds simple, right? I just see the opposite all the time. Let's say you're helping somebody who is starting a business. And you give them the big presentation, even though you are pretty sure they are not quite ready for what you have to offer, just in case... people hate that. You hate that. It makes you anxious, and it makes them anxious. Really, only talk business with people who are looking for you. Be exactly the person that they are looking for and then learn how to articulate that. It's in the interest of those people that they know you're a valuable person to speak with... A resource if you will. So that's an example. You might begin to notice that there's something available that wasn't available before, such as *sales as an opportunity to contribute*, the opportunity for you to be the person that people want to do business with, all through "only looking for people who are looking for you."

And there's lots of more, but this idea of freeing oneself from confusion and manipulation and fear-based activities into an actual love-based state of being, being the real deal, being of service... all of these being values or principles you have, and learning how to articulate that all in a way that's really easy for people to hear and receive and say yes to. And finally, being completely unattached while at the same time being totally committed. Being unattached gives people the freedom to really say yes or no. People can say no with ANY consequence, they're are much more likely to feel safe and respected enough to say yes. And you're still committed that you have value and you're moving forward. It's a great way to do business and it's a great way to increase your results.

The way transformation works is you now are starting to see something that was not there before. Like a new view of something... In this case a new view of selling. A new view of managing, or even yourself as a leader... So literally something is now possible that was not possible before because you can now see something you have not seen before. Like a future of you being this new kind of the salesperson or you being this new kind of manager where you get to just empower the heck out of your team, take wonderful care of them, and then watch them take care of you.

As we begin, it's only a possibility and what will be required is some kind of support, some kind of *action* to make this possibility real. Have you ever noticed that we fall asleep having a brilliant idea in mind and we are so sure we will remember this idea because it is so important and timely... And then... We go to sleep and presto, just like magic that idea is gone never to return. This has happened to me more times than I care to remember and I'll bet it has happened to you too. So if something is going to be possible, it's important to start taking action.

Some actions that one could take to have something come into fruition that's just starting to show up as possible are things like sharing - sharing with other people...sharing with people who would be interested in what you have to say...in real life conversations...and having conversations with people creating commitment. It's like making promises for something. Saying Yes to something. you have to create a future where you're going to get supported in some kind of action, especially new actions.

Sharing is one way for having things actually happen that have never happened before, where you see some of these futures to be possible and actually have them fulfilled in the real world. So we're going to be looking at how to grow. It's going to require some growth on your part as well to really be effective, and we will talk about growth and then maintaining that growth. So transformation means to share something - something enlivening, something intimate, often something that you haven't shared before, that you haven't yet *really* told the truth about, like you're really digging deep and sharing something that's vulnerable in nature or intimate or authentic, like your *actual* truth in the matter...how it *really* is for you. Maybe it somewhat might surprise somebody what your truth in the matter is, and then you can share the victory of being able to share it or the victory over how things have been for you in the past and what that now makes possible. Through this sharing, people actually see something for themselves and what *they'll* then need is some kind of support through a way to continue to fulfill on and expand on what's possible. This is important because this is how you're going to be interacting with your sales team. We want to make performance and experiences available that just weren't available for them before - literally a transformational experience. So really you're going to be this transformational leader sales manager, and your team is going to love you.

## Leadership

Let's begin to focus on leadership by moving through some misconceptions about leaders and leadership. One thing that is really relevant in a sales environment is often the real drive for results and outcomes - quotas and the need for cash. It's very tempting for leaders to start driving there. People like driving for quotas and catching people making mistakes, correcting people, showing people how to get it done right...whatever it takes to drive, drive, drive. However, have you noticed *people really hate that*? Have you noticed that *you* hate that when people push you and drive you and manage you? You don't like it. Your team doesn't like it either. So have another approach - which is to *care for your people*.

The dynamic of leadership I propose is that *the leader is the one who cares for the rest and takes care of the rest*. This is the situation where your team feels cared for, where you really have their back.

I've had managers who talked all day about having my back, but when something happened, it was really clear they did not have my back and I never forgot that. Instead, you want to *actually* have your team's back authentically and vigorously and you want to care for them and make sure they have what they need and make sure they have something at stake.

They're not just showing up for a paycheck - there's some game, some engagement, some conversation, some common goals, and some camaraderie. Give them the sense that this is something that you guys are working on together. And you want to be able to demonstrate that you *really* care for them. This doesn't have to be a big deal. It's, for example, actual eye contact in the morning with a "Hello, how are you?" You've asked someone how they're doing and *this time* what I'm asking for is that you *generate being interested* in how they're doing. There's nothing less connected than someone saying, "Hey, how you doing?" and you start to say how you're doing and they're walking off getting their cup of coffee. So *actually* be interested in the welfare of your team. *Demonstrate* that interest. If you have a thought in your head like, "oh, well, I'm not sure how interested I am in my team," that's fine, but just *be interested*, right? *Generate being interested* - act as if you are NOW until you really ARE. Just do it. It's not a big deal. You don't need to wait for the stars to align. You can simply *be interested*. Be interested in their welfare. Be Interested in if they have what they need. Be interested in: are they fully resourced? Are they winning? "How's it going on the Home Front?" People are real. They're human beings. They have lives, they have concerns, they have strengths, and they have constraints. It's important that you interact with other human beings as though they're human beings, not just your vehicle for getting what you want in your business. People can tell the difference. I've been a professional salesperson in different industries and I could really tell the difference when I was in environments where people had my back and had an interest in me and I could tell the difference. I could tell the difference between that and when they just don't care, where I fulfill a purpose and soon as I'm done, I'll probably be gone. It's really clear - you can feel it, you can hear it in the conversation, you can see it in the choices that are made and the body language and intonations of communications. On the other hand, *you* want to be the person who clearly cares for their team and makes a big difference and really inspires loyalty and an ardent desire to have you win. Have you ever had a manager with all this, who *had your back*? I'm going to bet that for *that person*, you really wanted to have them win - you noticed and appreciated their desire to have *you* win. Conversely, have you had managers that clearly did not have your back, where you are just there to fulfill some objective they had? There's no interest in you specifically. Your welfare and your success don't matter. And you can tell the difference, right? Really, those types of managers get tolerated at best until something better comes along.

So the fear of the manager who's beating up your people subtly or otherwise - the people working for them are going to be gone as soon as they get a chance. They're just there because they haven't found a better opportunity yet. Trust me, I don't care what they tell you and how well they smile at you in the morning. Salespeople are good at that - they are good at making you think they love you. But if you're not taking care of them, they don't love you. They can't. It's not possible.

They can tolerate you, maybe they've never been in a good environment so they don't really know something's better, but it's bad for results, it's bad for longevity, and it's bad for your soul. So be the manager who really cares for them. It's super easy to do - just think about the little things that people have done for you to let you know they care for you. It's very simple.

The next thing that is really critical in terms of leadership for your team is that they have a high level of *situational awareness*. It's really critical that your team understand the game that they're playing, that they understand their position on the team, that they understand how all their positions fit together, and that they're super clear about the play or objective right now - the objective today, this week, this month, like whatever we are doing right now.

Let's start with an analogy. If you're a football player, it's really important that you understand that you're a football player, right? That you're not confused thinking maybe you're a basketball player or maybe you're a football player. It's really important that you understand the game in football - there's running and passing and blocking and tackling. In basketball, there's dribbling and shooting. Different games, different skills. It's critical that your team members understand the game they're playing - basically, don't have them selling or trying to do something they don't understand, as that would be ridiculous. So make sure they know what game they're playing.

Secondly, make sure they understand their position. So some sales forces have different levels: maybe a less experienced prospecting type person or a more experienced one...one person makes the appointment, and another actually does the appointment or has the conversation, whatever it is. And there might be technical people involved that supply something or install something or fix something or whatever. And there's management people and there's the owner, you. It's really important that your team members understand what position that they're playing. For example: if I'm a football player, it's important that I know that I'm a quarterback and not a running back, that I'm not a receiver. I understand that I'm a quarterback.

The third thing is how the positions fit together. For example: how does the quarterback position fit in with the other positions? The quarterback is behind the offensive line of receivers and hands off the ball to running backs, etc. It's critical that your team member understands how they fit in the scheme of things. With that clarity, as things are moving and breakdowns happen, they can be generative and even creative in fulfilling the intention behind their particular position. People want to solve their own problems - they don't want to come bother you every 10 minutes. Trust me, nobody. Therefore, have them be fully situationally aware in order that they understand what they're doing, who they're doing it with, what all the other people here are doing, *et cetera*. It's not only good for mechanics, like getting things done quickly, or for having your players be more independent. It also just feels good for your team to understand what game they're playing, what position they play, and how it all fits together.

The last piece is: it's really critical for everybody to understand the play we're running right now. Continuing with the football player analogy: as a quarterback, I'm clear how football is different than everything else. As a quarterback, I know what a back does, or doesn't do - I do a, b and c and don't do x, y, z and there's a running back and receiver and we all interact together and it's beautiful.

I understand how that all works and *right now* we're running a pass play or we are running a running play. Not just any play, *the specific play*. So on any given day, on any given hour, it's really critical that your team understands what they're doing *right now* and what the objectives are - what the measures for performance are and so on. And if you'll make sure they all have this situational awareness along with the previous part of caring for your team, what you are going to find is a *fierce* loyalty to you and your company, and an ardent desire to have you win. And look, it takes nothing: all this so far is just being a caring, loving adult human being - caring for your team and giving it a little bit of thought in making sure everybody understands what the game is, what their position is, how the positions are with each other, and what we're doing right now. So that's easy and it makes a world of difference.

So another aspect of leadership is *conversational intersections*. Consider that the potential of *any* conversation, any intersection between you and a member of your team, is a whole new future. In the business setting or in a sales environment or in a sales management environment, the potential of any conversation is that there's a whole new future. What do I mean? If you're totally present and plugged in and interested in generating yourself and clear-headed and big hearted and you're paying attention, you're going to notice things that you've never noticed before. So you might notice one of your team members is having a rough day and you pull them over and you talk to them and you see how they're doing and you look for how to support them and how to have them get back to winning. Where you listen and you see there's a skill gap with someone - they literally don't understand closing, like they're talking the talk and they won't shut up and they have to understand the dynamics of closing a sale but they clearly just don't...If you have a conversation with them from love and empowerment, making sure your team members win, that they have what they need, that they're fully resourced and understand what they're doing - that's a *new future* for that person. All of a sudden it's a new future for that person to be effective and it's a new future for you to have another team member be doing great, "great" like performing at a high level for you. Often times, people just need a little pat on the back or a hello. People want to share if they have something good happening, they want to come tell you about it. You should provide a structure to let people share victories throughout the day and provide a structure for people to ask for or request support and make requests and ask for coaching and training every day.

If your people are stirring up a lot of mud and really going after it and talking to people and uncovering things and trying things, there are going to be *questions*. There is going to be confusion and chaos and that's all good - because every conversation is an opportunity for a new future, specifically the future of the deal closed, or a salesperson better trained, better prepared, more engaged, or more effective. As a leader, you're looking for opportunities to have conversations that actually create new futures. Oftentimes we avoid conversations, right? "I'm busy....I don't have the thing that I promised...I know what they want. I don't have that yet...I'm not going to say yes to that" ...or just whatever it is, right? Set all that aside and start having conversations with people. I'm not talking about hanging around the water cooler all day and just chit chatting. I'm talking about when appropriate, go have the conversation.



Make it your business as the leader to have a new future be present, one in which the other party is settled, taken care of and has whatever they need - they have their resources, their question is literally answered, they're peaceful, and they're ready to get back to work and ready to tear it up for you. These conversations - if you look at them as *intersections* and as a *possibility for a new future* that they can start getting interested in, then all these things will conspire to have them give an unparalleled loyalty to you. You just have to make sure the opportunity is *real*. I'm going to talk more about that in a minute.

First, you need make sure your people can actually succeed. Make sure they have what they need, including a conscious caring leader to care for them and help them through the tough parts and answer questions. At the beginning of a relationship, there are always lots of questions. New hires have lots of questions - good. You want to imprint your desire to have them win and your desire to have *them* be the real deal and you want to imprint that *you* are the real deal with your sales people *early and often*. That beginning of a relationship can be really critical and a wonderful opportunity. But whether it's a new relationship or not with your salespeople, you want to encourage loyalty and a desire to have you win. Take care of your people, give them what they need...be a decent human being with them. When somebody asks your team member "hey, what's it like at work?"...Or "what's your manager like?" or whatever...you want them to say amazing things about you. Not because they're being manipulated or forced, but because that's what's really true for them. Loyalty and desire to have you win are *so doable*.

Another key aspect of leadership is *the holding of the vision*. As a team member or as a salesperson, your view of the world is somewhat limited. Now these kinds of limitations, they are pretty specific on purpose, right? To keep that salesperson or team member on task and focused and to keep them in the white lines or the rails of where they can be effective and successful in their job. So that's all perfect. Your job as the *leader*, however, is to hold the vision for the whole thing. What kind of vision? For example, that sales can be a *contribution*, that your company is world class, that your service is awesome, and that your customer service is second to none. When sales people have questions or they're frustrated or they're discouraged, you can create a conversation and recreate the vision - your future for the company, the future for your team, the future for everyone's success, the inspired point of the whole company or just whatever it is. But *your job is to hold the vision* for the future, the inspiration for the whole project, like what we're all doing here, and it's important that that inspiration and that vision is available whenever you're there to whoever needs it. That's literally part of your job. So don't be annoyed or roll your eyes if someone wants to have a conversation with you about what we're doing here because that's a valuable conversation and that's part of your job description.

So next, and this is probably the biggest thing for you - I call it *cultural integrity*. The integrity that I'm talking about first of all is: answering the question of, "does it work?" If you have a bicycle wheel with all the spokes in place and perfectly aligned, the bicycle wheel will work beautifully, but as you remove spokes from the bicycle wheel, you'll find that it will work less and less well. So that's integrity: "what do we need in place in order for everything to work properly, as effectively and as efficiently as possible?" Answering the question of "how well does it work? Is it working smoothly and fluidly?" Then we can ask what's *cultural integrity*? Integrity with the culture is the background conversation within the company. When you walk into a company, especially as an employee, there is a certain feel and vibe - really driven, really caring and nurturing, really distracted, or really forceful and manipulative. Lots of companies have leaders and owners and bosses who yell and are abusive and curse. There is a culture at *your* company too. There is a culture right now. You might say "There's no culture. I don't even know what that is." No, there *is* a culture and you can notice it or not. What I'm suggesting is that you get out in front of the culture - start driving the culture, name the culture, talk about the culture. What do I mean? Well, my personal favorite style of culture is being a contribution - so the culture of my coaching company is a culture of contribution, of being the real deal. It's a culture of coming from a loving space and at the same time saying what needs to be said to move the needle for whatever my customers and the clients desire. Whatever the game is we're playing, people will come to me with specific objectives and aspirations and goals and so forth. My job as a coach is to have people win around me. So the culture for me is being a contribution and being the real deal, being provocative and yet being safe and fun and nurturing. That's *my* culture. Some of that was organic, and some of that was specifically chosen and created for my company based on what I'm up to. If you are the owner of your company, if you're the leader of the company, *the culture is on you*. If you have a manipulative, backstabbing, undermining culture, there's only one place to look: yourself. If you have a culture that's empowering and vigorous and a culture of winning and care - that's on you, too. *Congratulations*, right? But don't worry about where it is today; it doesn't matter. So you can have the current culture in your company and we can fix it if need be. *You* can fix it. But first, you have to be truthful, to be straight about what the culture is. Just look around and start asking around. Your job, though, is cultural integrity. So for example, if you were to set up your whole company culture around contribution selling, and then you start being manipulative with your team and with your customers...That *doesn't* have cultural integrity, because you're talking about contribution while you're being a manipulation. People will notice and see that and feel that and hear that and they're probably not going to mention that because you're their boss, right? But it's there for them and it destroys everything. If you talk about integrity, but don't manage your promises and agreements, there's no cultural integrity, plain and simple. If you talk about taking care of your customers and you rip your customers off and people observe that you do that, there's no cultural integrity. Here's the thing: cultural integrity won't guarantee results, but it is a background condition that is necessary for results, at least long-term sustained results. So once you create whatever you're creating, contribution and being of service, being the real deal, whatever your flavor is on it, *then* it's your job, first of all, to *be* that. *You* are the one responsible for the integrity of your company, you are *yourself* the integrity of the culture of your company. So you need to model and display whatever the culture is at every opportunity. And look, you *will* fail and you *will* make mistakes and that's fine.

Simply clean it up - that enhances everything, as we said earlier. That's actually *better*. So it's better to declare contribution, do a little misstep, be manipulative in front of your team, and then clean it up and really demonstrate how important it is. "No, I'm not going to do that anymore...I do that too...This is what we're committed to, this direction we're going, no one needs to get hung, drawn and quartered, no punishment required..." Just note, does everybody keep aligning yourself up to whatever the principles and values are that we embrace? And again, the example of my company has to do with contribution, being the real deal, being fun, being provocative, being safe, *et cetera*.

Then there's *walking the talk*. It is highly detrimental and very common for leaders and business owners to say one thing and behave another way. I've seen it a bunch of times. So people talk about integrity nonstop and meanwhile don't practice that. People talk about listening, and are interrupting constantly. People talk about caring for their customers speak poorly of their customers. So whatever your talk is, you have to walk your talk. It's a big deal. Nothing can happen worthwhile over any period of time if you personally are not walking the talk. Give the appropriate attention to what you say and *then* give the appropriate attention to walking consistently with your word.

### **Character, Process, and Outcomes**

While I studied coaching through many years of study and practice on the subject of performance, I'd like you to stop worrying about outcome goals and objectives for half a minute. *Stop worrying* about goals, outcomes and objectives for half a minute - quotas and so forth. Get interested, instead, in two things: character and process. *Character and process*.

So this whole thing about being a contribution, being the real deal, being of value and being of service, providing great customer care...let's call these *character traits*. So some star salespeople are not terribly great with their customers. They get it done other ways - being manipulative, forceful, tricky or whatever. Some salespeople just have wonderful *character*, on the other hand. *Character* determines what your team will be doing when you're not there. Character will determine if they can really get on board with being a contribution, being the real deal and taking your view and taking care of your company and customers. That's number one - Character.

Number two is *process*. Stop beating people up about what their numbers are at the end of the month and get interested in and engaged with what they're doing every day - because that's where it happens. When you have too much emphasis on the quota or the objective, it's like being on the football field and instead of running the play, you're standing there staring at the scoreboard. Meanwhile, the play's running and you're just standing there looking at the scoreboard. So stop looking at the scoreboard, and get interested in the processes.

Ask yourself - what's the space of the sales rep? Do people have what they need when they're in action? Investigate and do a check-in in a loving, provocative, revealing and contributory kind of way. Get rigorous about your own character. If you're speaking poorly about customers in the office, stop doing that. I don't care how frustrated you are. In other words, you literally have to *model* everything you want - everything. Assume nothing. Your salespeople are bringing nothing. You want integrity, bring integrity. You want energy? Bring energy. You want compassion? Bring compassion. You might want a high tempo. Bring high tempo. Think of it like raising kids. Kids don't listen to their parents. They just observe and they do what they observe. The parents do and the kids are the same way their parents are being. You can talk to them but what they're going to follow is *what they see*.

It's the same thing with your company. You want to *be* the person you want *them* to be. You want to *behave* the way you want them to behave. And you want to *speak* the way you want them to speak and you want to have your attention on things to make sure the character of your team is in place. If you've got somebody who's just not willing to get with the culture - for example, someone who's not willing to be a contribution to customers...or if you've got somebody who's not willing to manage their internal states so that they can be great with you and great with the customers...or if you've got somebody who's not willing to learn and expand...those are *character* issues that are not going to work on a world class team.

Notice this: I said *world class team*. A world class team is in the top ten percent. So what I recommend you shoot for is world class, the top 10 percent of the industry, the top 10 percent of...what? You pick - and it doesn't matter...say, for example, top 10 percent in closing percentages. Of all those, pick a game you can win. Because you want to *win* and *then* be the top 10 percent in some critical aspect of your business. *Be world class*. Being world class is fun - I recommend it. I definitely consider myself a world class coach and I determined that by how quickly and how effortlessly my customers and clients get to their objectives and how much they enjoy the process. *Character, process, and outcomes* - in that order. Make sure the character is in place: the character of your company, your own character, the character of recruiting - recruiting is where you're going to need to be paying particular attention to the character of the people that you're inviting into your company. Which is next...

## **Recruiting**

So again, we're looking for character and we're looking for people who have fit into a process. Character, character, character. One thing to look at for you as the owner is to look at: what are the characteristics of the salespeople that you've met or worked with in the past? What are the characteristics that you really appreciated? I recommend you pause for a moment and literally write down at least five things. What are the characteristics that you appreciated in salespeople that you've worked with before? I tend to hear things like "patient" or "a good listener," or things like "they knew what they were doing," or "they were really helpful" or "they really cared" or that kind of thing. Now - same question, except in the reverse.

What are characteristics of salespeople you did *not* appreciate, that did *not* work? Like “they did not care for me,” or “they did not know what they were doing” or “they did not help me very effectively,” or things like that.

A couple of interesting things about that. One is, we'll start to notice that all of those things are completely trainable. You can train yourself and you can have someone trained and coached to be a great listener, to have awesome product knowledge, to actually care for their customers, to be interested in generating exciting and unique solutions, to really take care of the customer, to really take care of you and your business - that's all trainable. It either already exists in them or it's trainable. And as the leader, it's really critical that the people you're bringing into the organization have the characteristics of the character that you're looking for. Both by your own personal preference and by what the demand of the industry is. If you're in a situation or you're in an environment where there is a lot of educating required, you're going to need somebody who's good at explaining and leading conversations and good at follow up with and having people see new things for themselves.

That's going to be critical - again, all of these already exist in a candidate or they're going to have to be trained. So you really want to start getting interested in what characteristics are required in your people to have your business be successful. One way to vet people is the character - the right character or characteristics required to be successful in your industry. And next, there's the skills required - meaning, does the experience of the person that you're talking to lend itself to their being successful in the industry? Now, what do I mean by that? One thing that's important to do is to distinguish different aspects of your *sales environment*. Here are some examples: first is your product - are you selling a product or service? It's a little bit different selling something people can look at and touch versus selling something that exists completely in language. So that's a different process. If you're selling advertising, that's a service. So you might be interested in having somebody who has demonstrated being effective in an intangible service kind of environment for that, right? Another way to look at your sales environment - is it a commodity or an educational environment? Like when I was in the copier business, everybody knew they needed to copy and they were just picking the right copier. Oftentimes when I'm coaching people, on the other hand, they are not clear whether or not they need a coach and we have conversations about what's available in coaching. Two different things: a commodity or coaching. So if you're in a commodity environment, selling copiers, that has a lot to do with personal charisma, people, vibe, and the individual selling it. When I sold copiers, my copier was actually pretty much identical to every other copier on the market and what I quickly realized was that people were purchasing *me* - they want to do business with me or don't want to do business with me and are checking to see if they like the experience they're having of me with this product. It's not so much about picking vendors, it's about whether or not this is going to work and whether or not they want to work with me. So you might want to find somebody who is experienced on either a commodity or an educational environment.

Another distinction in your sales environment: Is your sales cycle fast or slow? Is it a one call close or a six month process? People who are used to fast environments will go crazy in a slow environment. People who are used to a slow environment may not have the acceleration immediately available to work in a fast environment like being able to close on the first call. Next: are you working in a business or personal environment? Is it an inside or an outside sales position? Is it a single point of contact or decision making or multiple departments and multiple decision makers? These are just some of the things. It's not about obsessively getting all the variables figured out. What we're doing is: we're really looking at your sales environment, making sure you've got the *critical* aspects distinguished...Is this a *farming* position or a *hunting* position, with lots of prospecting and new customers or managing very well a current customer base? So you just want to make sure that the person you're interviewing has the best opportunity to win both in their character *and* in their experiences. Now, both of those are trainable and movable, but you want to give yourself the best odds possible: the best character you can find and the best set of experiences you can find.

Now, let's talk about making the *offer* or the expectation they'll have. Offers are a critical moment because it is your opportunity to both create expectations and imprint something. Remember the section above on those first conversations? These are those conversations. When somebody really wants the job and you're just about to give it to them, it's really a magical moment in which a couple of things happen. First of all, they're really interested in everything you need right now. So make sure that they know every little thing, the thing that might be a challenge...the time of the offer is the time to get all of the expectations set up and this will go a long way to you actually getting what you were promised and what you want from your team members. And then the other thing is how you are with them *right now* sets their experience of the culture in you and your company and your industry and your team members. Therefore, you want to have that first day or few days - those first few conversations - literally to be geared towards imprinting a particular culture that you're installing in your company. You can literally imprint the *company* upon them - when they first come in, they imprint onto the hiring manager, for example. So whoever's going to be doing the recruiting, let's say you are the sales manager or whatever - that person will make an offer, and during that offer, that person should set the expectations and get them imprinted on the new hire because that's what works. Think of those first few moments as critical in setting up how the rest of the company's relationship with them is going to go. If you think about your first few hours, first conversation, first couple of weeks with your employment experiences, I think you'll see what I'm pointing to.

It's also really critical that the offer works for both parties. So don't beat people up on salary. Don't try to get the most for the least or the least for the most. Make sure you're putting together an offer and putting together a deal that really works for everybody. Make sure that the money works. Make sure there's enough salary, enough guaranteed income to handle whatever they have to handle. Make sure the incentives are appropriately designed. Make sure it's well thought out, it's conscious, that the offer works now, and that you don't have to change the rules or change the offer six months or a year down the road as they get more successful.

Make sure you've really thought it out. Make sure that the culture works for both people - that this is the kind of person you want and conversely that this is the kind of opportunity they're looking for - make sure the money works for them and make sure they're going to be able to survive the first few months if there's a ramp up period. In other words, it's your job to make sure you're proposing and agreeing to a deal that works for everybody. Why is it your job? Because you're the leader.

Another thing - in the interviewing conversations, don't oversell the opportunity. Don't oversell the position. Don't oversell the income. Don't oversell the industry. Don't oversell you. Don't oversell the company. Why not? Because it's weird. Who is selling who? You want to allow *them* to do their job and bring themselves to you, get *you* engaged with them. Since you're the leader, let the prospective salesperson interviewing with you do their thing and see *if* they can get you engaged. If they can draw you in, you want to assume that this opportunity is the real deal and this is a real opportunity for a real professional. Assume that in your speaking and mannerisms and facial expressions. Don't make the mistake of selling the interviewee. Let them sell you. It's really critical - the kind of professional you are looking for is going to notice who is selling who. Superstars out there are looking for you. Trust me, I've been a superstar and it's fun, but it's hard to find a good home and it's hard to find a good manager. A good company is going to take care of you and appreciate you and respect you, as a superstar. And the superstars are looking for you. So just be the real deal and get your ducks in a row. Manage your cultural integrity, construct an opportunity that's really going to work for people, have an awesome culture there for superstars, and they're going to notice you, they're going to want you.

Further, a couple of other things to keep your eye on when you're in a recruiting interview with a salesperson. First of all, most people *can* do whatever you need them to do. Most people can do whatever you need done. It's a mistake to be in an interview looking at this person and asking yourself the question, "Can they do this correctly?" Because generally, the answer is yes, people are extraordinary and they can apply themselves and get something done. However, the real question is, "*will* they do it?" There's a big difference. So forget about and assume most people *can* do whatever you need, because the real question is *will* they. And that is what you can ask questions about in an interview: "Tell me about a time when you did something extraordinary. Tell me about a time when you didn't want to do something and you did it anyway." What you're trying to ferret out is those people have extraordinary potential. You want examples of people who have actually built something. They've taken a territory and expanded it. They've taken a territory that wasn't working and made it work. They started a new territory. Maybe they were an entrepreneur and built a company from nothing and they built a department or whatever. But what we're looking for, again, is not *can* they, but *will* they? And we are looking for evidence that people have actually *accomplished* something, have actually built something.

Second thing to look for in an interview is - who is a character versus who is just *smooth*. Salespeople are really good at being smooth. So you need to not be enamored. They're going to laugh at all your jokes and are going to say just the right thing. They're going to seem like your long lost brother or sister. That's what they do. So what you want to keep listening for is character - what's their character? What are they going to do when you're not there? What are they going to do when they don't feel like it? Are they going to take care of your customer when your customer is not being wonderful with them and are they going to be industrious when you're not around? So ideally we have someone who's built something before and has actually accomplished something - they look and feel like the real deal, they're telling the truth. Basically, stay present during the interview. You, as the owner or the interviewer, if it's a great salesperson, they're going to take you on a journey, it's going to be a bunch of wonderful stories and anecdotes and you're going to laugh and giggle and that kind of stuff. That's a pro, right? So your job is to stay present and don't be enamored by the smokescreen, but just watch the ball and ask yourself, where's the conversation actually going? Don't start getting lost in "Wow, this guy is wonderful. He sounds just like normal...la, la, la." Don't drink the Kool-Aid. Stay present. And look for character and ability - do they have the ability to actually get themselves up in the morning and get something extraordinary done...on at least *most* days?

## **Performance**

Let's say you've got a team in place - now we'll focus on performance. First, what I am talking about here is Contribution Selling. I mentioned the book Contribution Selling earlier, with seven steps to the selling process. Thus, one aspect of performance is running the play as designed, right? You may have a different sales methodology - no problem. All this applies perfectly to that, but if you're using a contribution sales model, you want your people to be grounded in the contribution sales model, which is very simple, very elegant, very enlivening, and very effective. I highly recommend you check out that other book to learn more. But no matter what process you're using, performance would be using the process that we're doing the way it's designed. So if it's Contribution Selling, each salesperson is tuned in and trained and completely onboard with practicing the methodology and you're making sure that you're attentive to whether or not your team is working the methodology as designed.

Again, performance is running the play as designed. If you're using a different sales model, no problem, but in other words - just letting everybody do their thing, unless you're extraordinarily fortunate with your sales team, is probably not going to be a good thing. It's probably not going to be the best access to performance and results. Performance is going to be *process oriented*. Remember we talked about character and process? The recruiting part was the character part and this is the process part. So use a methodology that you love and follow it rigorously and with intention and provide a reporting system to measure what you want. A lot of people make salespeople do reports that don't mean anything...sales reports that never get read, that don't provide anything. So *you* want to measure what you *actually* want. And if you're going with this process-oriented-paradigm, then the things you want reported on are things that have to do with that process.



Namely - how many social media posts, how many cold calls, how many networking events, how many people did you talk to, how many proposals did you send out...*process oriented reporting* is what we're talking about. So you want to figure out the two or three things that, if they did those things, your business is going to *thrive*. Don't have them report on 30 different variables - have them report on the one or two or three variables that are actually going to move the needle. The less they have to pay attention to in this realm, the less your salespeople are frustrated and annoyed with having to do reports, and the more they're having fun with your prospective customers. So choose wisely what you want reported on and make sure those are the things that really matter and move the needle.

## Compensation

Let's talk about compensation. One major point around this is - compensate what you want. For example, I was in medical sales for a few years, and the company had four or five different product categories. But in my state, Louisiana, I'm selling in one of the categories we're very strong in and I was doing a tremendous volume and just killing the competition and the other categories we were not strong in and my competitors were firmly entrenched and they're at much lower price points. I figured out the compensation plan - every salesperson is a master at distinguishing the compensation plan - trust me, they'll look at it for two minutes and then know exactly what to do and not to do to get the most money out of the compensation plan. As the designer of the compensation plan, you want to make sure that you're compensating what you want, right? In my scenario, I got compensated for sales volume, so I picked the category I would get paid for - most of my sales happen in the category that had the biggest sales volume and over a year or so I figured out how to really move the numbers. My compensation and numbers were great, but my sales manager was unhappy because I wasn't focused on the other three or four categories of products. Now, had I done that, I would have made less money because I was making money on sales volume - and this one category, I had it wired up so I could get the most from my sales...focusing on the other categories literally would have been a big suck of my time and I would have made less money. Therefore I spent a lot of the time on the things that paid me. I'm not a good person or a bad person, but I'm a *salesperson* and had been in sales for two years and it took me nothing to figure out how the money was going to get made and so I got to work on *that* without reservation. So make sure your compensation plan actually compensates the activities and the process that you want.

Another aspect of compensation when to talk about is *risk versus reward or guaranteed versus incentivized*. There are different reasons to have a higher salary, higher commission or all salary, all commission - there's basically a continuum. It's really important for you to be clear on where your offer is at in terms of this continuum and why. If you're paying 100 percent salary, where you as the owner are taking 100 percent of the risk, they could be there for six months and perform not at all and you'd be out six months salary...*or* you can pay straight commission and then the salesperson is taking all the risk, meaning they can be there for six months and for reasons that have nothing to do with them, it could all be your fault - they still work for six months and don't get paid.

So it was 100 percent of the risk on your part in the salary situation, and 100 percent of the risk on the salesperson's part in a straight commission situation. However, there's a middle ground. Half guaranteed, half commission or bonus...three quarters either way...*et cetera et cetera*. There are different reasons to do different things, but the important thing here to understand is that if you're taking the risk as the business owner, the overall income will be less for the salesperson - smaller salary. If the salesperson is taking all the risks, you want to give them a really high commission...the highest commission you can possibly afford and you still be happy when they sell something, and still be happy when you have to pay on the commission because they're taking all the risks to earn it. Somewhere in the middle is great for most parties: enough salary to keep things put together on the home front while one is steadily going about building a territory, building a career. The main thing I want to talk about is making sure you are incentivizing the activities you want and making sure you understand that if it's all base, income's going to be lower...if it's going to be all commission, the income should be higher.

## **Territory Management**

Now, to territory management. I'm going to go over some basic concepts. Do I want to have one person to go to work on nursing homes and another person work on home health agencies...*et cetera et cetera*? So the first potential category around territories is *geographic*. For example, the horizontal layout: "you take Louisiana," which is how the medical sales company did it that I was with in the nineties - I had Louisiana and southern Mississippi, while my buddy had Texas. So that's one way to do it. The other way is vertical - "you call on hospitals," then "you call on nursing homes," *et cetera et cetera*. Either way, there's no right way to do it. You want to look at the industry, your company, and maximizing the opportunity for as many salespeople as possible. So Sometimes by constructing territories well, you can get twice as many salespeople in your specific area - not competing with each other, plenty for everybody. Or you can have territory set up inefficiently - for example, having one person handling way more territory than they can handle...which means that territory isn't getting taken care of in the best way. In short, .it really matters how you manage territories. Another thing you want to do is manage territories in a way that your salespeople are *not* competing with each other. I recommend a culture of salespeople helping each other, training each other, coaching each other, supporting each other so they can work with each other when you're not there. So you want to have territories that allow salespeople to be cooperative and that culture not cost them anything. The last thing I'll say about territories is that they have to be flexible and grow, so you may hire two people today and over the next five years, hire twenty more. The question becomes: how are you going to integrate those new people into your territories without breaking your promise to the first hires? A lot of people say, "oh, well, there's nobody here - you can have everything" and then when the next salesperson comes in, you have to cut the territory in half...the next person comes in, and you've got to cut your original territory into quarters - and so forth and so on. So you need to have a process that works today and tomorrow and can grow effectively with new people coming on board with company growth. I can talk to you one on one about how to do that, but in any case, it's critical that you have that thinking process in place.

Otherwise you'll find yourself in the trouble that many companies find themselves in when it's time to hire new people: you upset and break your promises and agreements to the people who got you where you are. Then they leave and they're upset and they go work for your competition or start a new company that competes with you. Because they've brought you to where you are and the thanks that they get is their opportunity is diminished - so you can avoid the whole thing by thinking through the territories on the front end and designing them in a way that you get the most efficiency from the most salespeople in a certain area. This is a way that really works - the salespeople can support each other and the territories are flexible and you can grow, adding more people without upsetting the people that got you there.

### **Leadership versus Management**

As the leader, you're also the manager. Leaders and managers are not the same thing. Leaders have things come into existence that didn't exist before. Leaders are the first in. A sales manager or sales person as a leader often is creating sales territories and quotas that don't exist yet. And then managers have things that already exist work really well. Leaders are critical to grow things, while managers are critical to have things that are already grown work beautifully. In a general sense, as a sales manager or as the owner related to the sales team, your job is to have all the small chunk stuff work: "brochures are here...here's somebody who's available to answer questions"...just whatever. It's not okay to have things haphazardly arranged in your company, because they don't work that well from there. If you want world class performance in your world class team, and you want to hire world class people, then know that your job as the owner or the leader is to have everything around them be impeccable - the coffee machine works, the water is drinkable, the bathrooms are nice, just use your common sense...but if a salesperson walks in and something's amiss, you're getting it handled, getting it fixed, making it right. You're it. There's nobody else coming. You're the leader, you're the owner, you're the manager. Essentially just have everything work or whatever's not working, get it handled - that's your job. It's not the salesperson's job. They are out there fighting battles for you. You want to have everything impeccable and working well when they're not fighting your battles for you. Don't make them fight battles on the home front and out there as well. Your job as the manager - which you're also the manager since you're everything - is to just make sure everything's working well.

### **Training**

Now, to training. I talk to a lot of owners that are cranky about training costs. Here's the thing - the only thing worse than having a highly trained person not stay with you as long as you want is to have a person who's not trained stay with you forever. If you want world class, it is going to require a little bit of investment. So that's training. Maybe I'm a little biased because I am a trainer, but this training doesn't have to come from a coach - decent training is available on YouTube and there's no shortage of information on the Internet, Google and LinkedIn and everything else. You can find extraordinary training all over the place. And having your people well trained, having really *clear* training, was inspiring to me when I was a salesperson.

When people train, they're inspired, they're confident, they have a certain swagger about them, they know what they're doing and they're not worried about variables or the unknown or the tough customer or whatever - they are ready to go. And that's really who you want on your team. So training doesn't have to be a big deal, and it does not have to be extraordinarily expensive, but it *does* have to be conscious and you as the owner have to be committed to it. So your people are to be highly trained, skilled, and well supported and it's really up to you. So obviously I'm for training. Then there's *coaching*. Coaching and training are a little bit different. *Training* is teaching people how to do stuff, how things work - it's instructional, it's usually linear. Step one and step two, *et cetera*. Where coaching is a little bit different from training is the coach being a person that's going to have everybody on your team win their game. "Their game? Wait, what about *our* game?" If you've done your job this thus far, *your game is their game*, right? So as a coach, if what you want is they're loyal and they're determined, they have you win and they feel cared for and they are resourced and they know what they're doing and they understand that you really have their best interests at heart...then you're the one managing all of that as well as providing what they need to be successful.

And you also want to be sure you're clear when they're there for themselves, right? So all of this loyalty and desire for your success has been cultivated and develops by having a great space and your leadership and your management. But there's this other thing called "people are basically in life for themselves," right? *In a sense, people never work for anybody else, they always work for themselves*. Maybe they're doing it at your place of employment and being paid by you, but they're there for their own reasons. They might be there because a superstar might be there, because they've been looking for a great home, or a great place to learn, where they can be appreciated and respected and attend to their work. But you want to make sure you understand what each individual is there for - they want to take care of their family, or they're trying to build an extraordinary career, they'd like to have their own business one day, just whatever it is. But include understanding what each individual's goals and aspirations are, what their objectives are, what they would like to win at in life. Include that in the objectives that are necessary and important for your company. And tend to all of it - make sure your people are winning *their* games. Their games are your games and your games can then be their games. A coach is someone who is a stand that everybody gets to win. So again, I'm for coaching. I coach and it makes possible extraordinary results. For example, you may remember a time when you're at work on something - maybe trying to build a career or maybe it's something a little more specific, you're trying to do something, get a project accomplished or something like that. And somebody comes up to you and talks to you and they just say the right thing. All of a sudden you feel like a million dollars and you feel like you can't lose. And it makes a profound difference in results. Coaching is not this fluffy thing that doesn't really make a difference. Quite the contrary. If you have noticed, people who are committed to extraordinary results have a coach. Professional athletes have a coach.

Successful high level CEOs have a coach. Lots of people in life have a coach. If you're committed to results more than you're committed to doing things your own way or doing things in the most comfortable way possible, you have a coach. If you want to be inspired and top performing and successful, the best practice is to always have somebody to talk to you with whom you can share breakdowns, breakthroughs, victories, and defeats. It really is a powerful component of world class performance and results.

So for now *you* are the coach, you're the manager, you're the leader, you're everything. One way to be a very powerful coach right out the gate is to be someone who acknowledges freely and powerfully. What do I mean by acknowledging? Like I don't necessarily mean "hey, great tie," rather I mean noticing something extraordinary or amazing or notable about someone and then speaking powerfully about what you just noticed. So you may notice that someone comes in every morning and just never has a complaint and gets right to work - they're super dedicated. So next time they come in and they're passing by your door, pull them in and then say, "hey, I just love how you come in every morning and you're dedicated and focused and get right to it and there's no bs about you and I just want you to notice and I really appreciate that."

Or you notice someone in your team is really going out of their way to make sure other people have what they need - explaining things or taking time out to explain or train somebody. You could acknowledge that and say, "hey, wow, what a wonderful job. I really appreciate how you support the team, and I just wanted to really notice and acknowledge that that makes a big difference for me. I sleep better at night knowing that you're on the job." Here's what acknowledgment does - it makes people feel better. But it also makes people want to do that thing again. So if you acknowledge somebody for being industrious, they're going to come in the next day and be even more industrious. If you acknowledge somebody for really supporting the team, they're going to come in the next day and be supporting the team.

So stop mentioning and talking about all the things that don't work. Stop catching people doing stuff wrong and start catching people doing stuff right and then mention it and then acknowledge people fully and in a heartfelt, authentic, powerful way - give it everything you've got, because every time you acknowledge somebody, it creates a future of more of what you just acknowledged! It's really critical if you catch somebody doing something extraordinary - drop what you're doing and go run over there and acknowledge the extraordinary thing that you saw if you would like to see it again. What gets acknowledged expands - acknowledgment will create a future of more of what gets acknowledged. So be careful. Be conscious about what you talk to your team about. It starts with compassionate action - the idea that you really get to dictate the culture - you get to create, expand, and cultivate the culture, acknowledging things that you want.

Now, you *can* put in correction. So there are times when you have to correct somebody. And it's very simple, just be really clear and gentle and to the point: "hey, when you answered the phone that way, that doesn't work for me. Here's how you do it. Do you have any questions about that?" It doesn't have to be dramatic at all.

There doesn't have to be any shame, condemnation, or condescension. You don't have to be patronizing, none of that stuff. You just notice the behavior - what it was they need corrected and what you want. Be clear about it.

Now, the next step, if you've done that a couple of times and are not getting what you want, you want to talk about disappointment: "Hey, that's the third time I've seen you do this thing and I'm really disappointed. I really thought we had a conversation about that, a conversation that would have gotten that settled, where I wouldn't have to say that again. Clearly I am mistaken and I want you to know that I'm disappointed now. How's it going to go from here on out?" Expressing your disappointment in something is way better than beating someone up. And let me tell you, it gets them to the quick. So if you've done your job and they know you care for them - if you're this leader I'm talking about, practicing being these ways, and at the end of some day you roll up on somebody and say, "hey, I'm really disappointed with this thing," you're going to have their attention. You're not going to be beating them up and it's not going to be disrespectful. We have their attention and they're going to put it in the correction. And they might not have the character, so that's something to deal with if it's there...so they may not be your team member, but you *can* get a lot done through acknowledgement and expressing disappointment from time to time, like for every ten units of acknowledgement, one unit of expressed disappointment. And I think you'll find that your team loves being managed by you.

## A Close

Let's talk about the close. So if you haven't done so already, here's something to do. I want you to fill out the attached worksheet.

Here are the questions:

Of the characteristics of the salespeople you've enjoyed doing business with in the past, what are the characteristics that you really appreciated?

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Question two: of the salespeople you've done business with in the past, what were the characteristics you did not appreciate?

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Number three, of all the characteristics in each category, which ones do *you* possess? (Tell the truth.)

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Pick a characteristic from the characteristics you appreciated to *start* practicing.

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Now, pick a characteristic from the characteristics that you did NOT appreciate to *stop* practicing.

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All of these characteristics could look at as things that can be practiced. You could start relating to them like habits. Mostly anything that you noticed that you like or don't like can be practiced, learned, and developed over time. And mostly it's a lot easier than you think. It just requires being present, or being interested in being present. Also I want to mention that I do very powerful one on one calls and so you might be wondering "how do I apply this?" and "how do I apply that?" and "how does this work?" and "How would this work for me?" I'd love to have that conversation with you where we'd actually go to work on solving a problem or a challenge or getting a question really answered that will make a difference for you. Typically those calls last no more than 30 minutes. Now that you have bought this book, I would like to offer you that - it's called the Challenge Call. You can go to [kirkmcdow.com](http://kirkmcdow.com) and read about that on the first page. You can put yourself on my calendar with a button that says Schedule Your Challenge Call.

But I also recommend you start to get inspired by something: *what's my culture going to be?* Get inspired by really getting clear about what your sales environment looks like. Get excited about hiring superstars and you having fun managing and leading them. As you start to see new things that are possible, allow yourself to be inspired to share that with others, because it makes a difference. It makes a difference when you continue to create this new future of being this wonderful sales manager with this awesome world class sales team that you're inspired by and you want to keep reminding yourself of this future. And then what you'll find is, as you're out in the world talking about it, some people will invite themselves to come interview with you or to refer people to you.

Finally, I want to talk about the power of yes. Now I'm talking to you as a business owner and I'm also talking to you as the sales manager and how you talk to yourself too. Yes is how anything gets accomplished in life. When someone says yes to something, you may start to see something possible - a new future for your company or a new future for yourself and maybe you're thinking for example: "Should I talk to *this* guy?" Yes, you should talk to this guy. I'm offering a free 30 minute call. But also, you want to get into the *habit* of saying yes to things in general. Things happen when someone says yes: you started your company when you said yes to something and then obviously you want to make sure you say yes to the things are going to make the difference, right?

I understand that people have considerations and want to be sure they're making the best choices. I honor that and I appreciate that. Sometimes there's a process and at the same time, I want you to be super clear: you want to develop a culture of yes to your company: Yes to commitments. Yes to promises. Yes to actions. Yes to new futures. Yes to trying things. Yes, yes, yes. Don't be the company where everybody sits around and talks about why nothing is going to work. You be the leader that is in front of a company that is a big fat yes. Yes to the customers. Yes to moving things. Yes to being leaders. Yes to being innovative. Yes to being world class. So you can practice that by looking and seeing what question you're dealing with right now and look and see what you could say yes to that would move the needle on that thing.



One thing - if you're not going to hire a coach or a consultant, if you're not going to go the professional route, I'm going to give you a tip. I call it *The A-Team*. You want to assemble five to ten people in your life who you absolutely trust. They've demonstrated that they have your back. You can really count on them. They don't put up with any excuses or stuff like this: "That's difficult" or "This isn't going to work" and they're not going to listen to you be grumpy or small or manipulative or whatever. They're not going to buy any of your complaints about how difficult it is or whatever. They're just going to be inspired by what you're up to and only going to hear you as that most awesome, most powerful expression of yourself. And most importantly, they're all generally - at least some one of them at any moment - available for you to call at a moment's notice when you're in trouble. Trouble like you forgot who you are, you forgot what you're doing...When, for example, all of a sudden your sales team seems like the enemy or it seems like no one's ever going to close another deal again, or whatever...you need to reach out to one of your A-Team and talk to and reinvigorate this conversation I've been having with you, to where you see that "This thing is possible"...to where you see that it *is* possible through a high integrity process of contribution and being of service and being the real deal and by being and extraordinary leader, being a great manager, by caring for your people...to where you see that it *is* possible for you to be at the head of a world class team making you proud to be in the industry and proud of what you've accomplished. When your mission starts looking impossible, you need somebody to talk to. So that's The A-Team.

And then of course, you know, hire a coach if you see that that's your highest choice. I, for example, have very affordable packages and I really love what I do. If you bring me onboard, I'll have you win at this thing, hands down. But if I'm not your flavor, no problem; meanwhile, I recommend hiring a coach that's going to help you implement what you want to do with your company with regard to sales. Oftentimes a coach can - what I do for example - literally *replace* the sales manager. Or I play the sales manager or VP of sales role where I'm interacting with the salespeople: I'm doing hiring, I'm doing ongoing coaching, I'm doing training where it's appropriate and I'm available to answer questions, freeing up the owner from all the responsibilities and things that you have on your plate.

So that could be called fractional sales management or outsourced sales management. It's usually quite a bit less expensive than having a full time sales manager, and certainly less expensive than having a partner. Unlike a partner, I don't want half of your business. But I *function* as a partner and as a VP level person on your team and make sure things are moving toward a world class team at the highest possible velocity. So there we go: for more on sales, being a contribution, or sales management, you can find out [kirkmcdow.com](http://kirkmcdow.com). Thank you.