

Book Summary/Review: How To Hire & Develop Your Next Top Performer

The following is a highlighted summary of the book, How to Hire & Develop Your Next Top Performer, published by McGraw-Hill Trade. The statements below are key points of the book as determined by James Altfeld and have been made available at no charge to the user.

How to Hire & Develop Your Next Top Performer: The Five Qualities that Make Salespeople Great By Herb Greenberg, Harold Weinstein & Patrick Sweeney

Two Types of Conscientiousness

"Externally driven" and the other we have dubbed "internally driven."

People whose conscientiousness is internally driven accomplish goals and complete tasks as an expression of themselves. They have an inner drive to practice for an extra hour every day - an hour they don't even notice goes by. This kind of conscientiousness embodies the kind of self-control that results in actively planning, organizing and carrying out tasks. In this way, what has to be done - without the need for external sticks or carrots. Individuals whose conscientiousness is internally driven combine high levels of "self-drive" with a high degree of responsibility.

Externally driven individuals are very cautious and anxious. They worry about things being done to accepted standards. They are driven by rules and expectations laid down by others. This type of conscientious individual has to be told what to do and then reminded when to do it. When you are trying to manage someone whose conscientiousness is externally driven - the good soldier - your job becomes much tougher.

Internally conscientious athletes, however, will practice foul shots on their own. They will be annoyed at their inability to bunt well enough and will practice after the team is long gone. The internally conscientious athlete will come to camp in good condition because he or she "wants to" and is driven to, even if not observed.

The difference in behavior in the sales area is just as clear. Externally conscientious salespeople will read the script extremely well. They will make the requisite number of calls. They will present the product or service precisely how they are directed, and will never deviate from the prescribed rules. They will also follow the action plan laid out by the sales manager. Internally directed salespeople, on the other hand, will organize their time on their own, and may, in fact, resent too much interference by the manager. They will organize their presentations, and may even take some liberties, depending on their factors, in bending rules where appropriate. In other words, internally directed individuals simply need less management than their externally directed colleagues. Persons with ego-strength feel as bad as anyone else would when they encounter failure, but they react to that failure much as the hungry person does to missing a meal: they are that much hungrier for the next opportunity.

The failure, though disappointing, does not destroy their positive view of themselves.

Growth

The ability to grow
The ability to learn

Decision Making

The ability to make quick, correct decisions

Detail

...handle some degree of detail

Organization of Work and Time

The ability to organize one's own work, in combination with initiative, also needs to be considered in determining a person's sales potential.

Communication

...ability to communicate

Receive a message from the customer and understand it correctly.

The ability to receive accurate feedback from a customer, coupled with effective presentation skills that address the customer's reaction.

Team Player: The Ability to Delegate

Ability to function as a team member.

The ability to turn a job over to another or bring in required help can make the difference between success and failure.

Assertiveness

Assertive enough to ask for an order

Assertiveness is the ability that enables individual to get other people to do willingly what they might not spontaneously do on their own. Assertiveness allows an individual to have a special effect on others which commands their respect and admiration and causes them to respond in a positive way to what that individual is asking or suggesting. Assertiveness involves the ability to get a positive response from others and use that response to bring about a desired attitude or course of action

Aggressiveness

Aggressiveness is the willingness to actively oppose someone else's position, interests, or point of view, even if it could adversely affect that other person.

Shrewdness

Ability to read between the lines and to further process information. Shrewdness and empathy allow the salesperson to act as a consultant, helping customers discern their real needs and meeting those needs through the product or service being sold.

Sense of Inner Urgency

Individuals with inner urgency will act to obtain immediacy.
Inner urgency, for good or ill, most often leads to action.

Inside the Team

The only way the cellar dweller, a team perpetually at the bottom of the league, can be turned into a championship team is through painstakingly building that team into winners.

The first key step is to make the best use of the talent you have on hand. Get the most out of what you have and then add to the roster - in business it is done through recruiting and selecting productive people.

Start with the Manager

A team must be viewed as a totality, and not simply as individual elements. Every team has particular strengths and weaknesses. We should start with the team leader-the sales manager.

Most managers fall into one of two broad categories. The first category is typified by an outstanding salesperson replete with empathy, ego-drive, ego-strength, conscientiousness, and service motivation, but seriously lacking some key management attributes. Sales managers in this category need a group of self-reliant, well disciplined, self-starting salespeople reporting to them. Such sales managers cannot be counted on to be highly effective at delegation or follow-up. They are most likely not strong in structuring the work and time of subordinates. Their motivation is to show the salespeople how to sell by outselling every one of them.

The second category of sales manager is exemplified by those who possess strong administrative skills. Managers help plan and structure the work of a sales force, follow up effectively on the work of others, and are adept at analyzing data. They set goals and objectively evaluate performance. They are effective delegators.

Establishing sales quotas that are realistic, achievable, and, at the same time, challenging is essential to creating a positive, high-energy environment. Quota-setting activities should be carefully reviewed and given sufficient attention so that the goals are challenging, rather than defeating. In addition, new managers must recognize their roles in creating an environment that is energizing, optimistic and results-oriented.

Upgrade Productivity

- " Offer developmental programs, internal or external, in these areas: assertiveness training, time management, listening skills, closing techniques, presentation skills, approaches to prospecting and technical training, to name just a few.

- Provide training to enrich the product knowledge (technical know-how) of salespeople.

- Conduct team-building sessions among the salespeople and between salespeople and management to increase morale and productivity.

- Develop a team selling system that allows the strengths of one salesperson to augment the weakness of another.

- Reorganize compensation geared to the particular dynamics of the sales team.

- Develop an incentive program built on group, in addition to individual, productivity.

- Divide sales responsibilities between those capable of new business acquisition and those more suited to maintenance and expansion of existing accounts.

- Reassign salespeople to managers with whom the chemistry would be more effective.

- Teach managers how to be more effective in working with sales teams, given the dynamics of that team.

- Counsel salespeople and managers on a one-on-one basis, making them aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and helping them more effectively play to their strengths and away from their weaknesses.

- Develop a series of one-on-one meetings between individual salespeople and their managers, with top management, or perhaps an outside consultant, as a meeting facilitator.

Install objective performance measurement systems (or review and update old ones to be sure they reflect changes in the company's direction).
Utilize focus groups to uncover and resolve problem issues.

As we look at building a sales team, we must look not simply at what each person can or can't do, but how each person fits into the team - and fits into the game plan that the team is supposed to implement.

Before completing our discussion of compensation, we want to stress this point: As important as money is, and as potentially valuable or inhibiting a compensation can be, the key to sales success still remains whether the individual possesses the basic dynamics or motivations and whether he or she has the other requirements necessary to sell successfully in a specific sales job. It is that inner motivation that drives the salesperson to the next prospect and propels him or her out the door the next morning. Money helps the successful salesperson keep the score.

But it is the inner motivation, the desire to get yes and the emotional gratifications that closing brings, which is the force behind the real salesperson's performance.
Detailed job description, which should include management's specific expectations:
Critical expectation of the job over and above simply retaining and expanding an existing book of business. Some element of performance appraisal.

Profiling Required Competencies

Each task in the job description must be considered in terms of the qualifications and skills objectively required to do the job. Judge the kind of motivations, skills, and personality strengths that are required to do the job as it is understood and described.

Career Aspirations

What the telephone interview is designed to do is simply to determine whether or not the applicant is worth pursuing further. The interview should serve to straighten out any discrepancies in the resume; briefly explain the job, including its negatives; answer the applicant's questions; and permit that applicant to briefly sell management on himself or herself as a viable candidate.

The statement can simply be made that the applicant will be contacted shortly about the next step. There is not a next step; a polite letter is sent indicating that there are simply too many highly qualified applicants at this time.

A Balancing Act

Leader, mentor, trainer, taskmaster, coach, monitor, liaison, administrator, baby-sitter, disciplinarian, organizer, herder of cats. When performed well, the sales manager's role is the glue that keeps salespeople on course with the goals of the organization. It is the sales manager who cultivates, monitors, and protects the precious revenue streams on which every business is dependent. Often the key communication pipeline between field operations and internal operations, the sales manager plays a critical role in the selection, development, coordination, and productivity of the people who, in turn, generate the revenue lifeblood of the business.

The sales manager's role requires organization and discipline, a high level of patience, the ability and willingness to delegate, and the capability of deriving satisfaction from seeing someone else win.

The Differences

The top-performing managers, on the other hand, while having more moderate profiles on the characteristics noted above, exhibited significantly higher scores on:

Cautiousness, an inclination toward due diligence and "looking before you leap"
Thoroughness, an orientation toward working with and managing details
Self-structure, a tendency to define priorities and exercise self-discipline
External structure, an orientation toward working within and maintaining established rules

Top Salespeople vs. Top Managers

(See figure 25-1, pg. 179)

The salesperson in the field often perceives the manager as the person who "has it made".
...communicate the fact that compensation for the successful salesperson is high - so high that of all people in business earning over \$100,000, more than half are salespeople.
...sales offers rich opportunity for fulfillment and nonmaterial personal gain, including maximum opportunity for freedom to do a job in one's own way.
...Salespeople should be careful to avoid managerial jobs unless they are convinced that their best talents and greatest opportunities for gratification lie in managing.
...They probably would earn about \$20,000 less in the managerial spot. There is a ceiling on the earnings of managers, but not on those of salespeople...
...if not the responsibilities of the manager. Be prepared to:

Sublimate your own ego; let the people under you get the glory.
Learn how to handle detail, for there will be lots of it, including, in addition to your own reports and administrative record keeping, all the sales reports and expense vouchers of every salesperson in your territory.
Organize your own activities and those of your sales staff.
Induce your staff to act without forcing compliance, an exercise that requires infinite quantities of patience (a characteristic not notably abundant in top salespeople).
Make decisions of a more far-reaching nature than those that affect a single sale; this requires that you gather and evaluate all pertinent information and consider the consequences.
Plan and analyze - for countless hours - prospect lists, advertising programs and marketing plans, instead of dealing with people.
Figure on attending frequent meetings, listening to the problems and complaints of your salespeople and justifying their performance - and your own - to your supervisors.
Handle such personnel chores as firing people you like or recommending that they be fired.
Function as a liaison between the needs of each salesperson and the company.

Those Who Can

We have concluded that leadership and management tasks can be divided into four dominant themes:

Influencing and Directing
Building and Maintaining Relationships
Problem Solving and Decision Making
Personal Organization and Time Management

Influencing and Directing

In order for any manager to be successful, he or she must be adept at influencing and directing the actions of others.

Effective managers or leaders must be capable of assertively presenting their goals and ideas in a confident and straightforward manner without damaging the confidence or self-esteem of their audience. They must have the drive and empathy to be persuasive when necessary and able to provide clear direction in order to convey expectations and provide feedback. The management role requires the ability to delegate and follow through without taking over or abdicating - a tough trick for a highly ego-driven salesperson who is addicted to closing and has limited patience for people who might inhibit movement toward a sought-after goal or objective.

Building and Maintaining Relationships Problem Solving and Decision Making

All management and leadership roles begin with the recognition of a need, opportunity or problem.

...recognize problems and issues; analyze root causes, evaluate and consider alternatives, develop goals, strategies, and tactics; and most important, make decisions.

...problem-solving capability

...open-minded

Personal Organization and Time Management

Organization and time management constitute the critical task of management. The best managers are adept at setting and juggling goals, objectives and priorities. Working within established rules, systems and procedures, top managers must define key tasks, establish and/or implement measurement criteria for tracking results, assign priorities and resources and follow through to ensure timely and accurate completion of assignments. It is the consistency of sticking to a defined set of tasks and a well-managed agenda that results in expectations attained.

Staying focused, managing interruptions and distractions, persisting, making adjustments to an established plan in a timely manner, and using time efficiently - these are the hallmarks of managerial performance.

The most effective managers have a high level of discipline, a thorough style of working with details and, as well, a strong sense of urgency. They do not focus on details for details' sake. Rather, they are achievement-minded and have the flexibility and confidence to make decisions or shift the agenda to respond to developing needs. Moreover, they have the focus necessary to balance near-term objectives with long-term goals.

...the easiest way to raise the performance of an entire company is to raise the effectiveness of its management.

The Essence of Leadership

Leadership is the ability that enables an individual to get other people to do willingly what they have the ability to do, but might not ordinarily do on their own.

CEOs and other top leaders we studied embody many of the characteristics of top-level salespeople. And they seem somewhat "challenged" when it comes to tasks requiring discipline, structure and a conscientious focus on details and due diligence.

For most organizations, it is the leader's voice that sets the tone, defines the vision, and manages the agenda. "If you put leaders in a group, within a very short period of time they will stand out - either because of their conversation and the ideas they express or simply because of the way they present themselves."

Managers focus on results. Leaders know that results are achieved through people.
Managers are implementers. Leaders are initiators.
Managers command through their position. Leaders inspire following because they can make great ideas come alive.
Managers have their opinions. Leaders help form opinions.
Managers are followed because they are bosses. Leaders are followed because we believe in them

The Most Important Aspect of Leadership

...the most important aspects and the worst aspects of being a leader. Among the choices we asked them to rank were:

- Creating the right vision
- Getting people to embrace that vision
- Maintaining momentum (motivating, influencing, and persuading others)
- Managing change (strategic planning, problem solving, etc.)
- Surrounding yourself with the right people
- Developing staff (coaching individuals, managing performance, facilitating teams)
- Delegating authority
- Orchestrating priorities
- Making tough decisions about capital, financial, and human resources
- Staying the course
- Keeping self-confidence

When you are leading an organization, surrounding yourself with the right people becomes an either-or situation. Either you hire and develop people whom you thoroughly enjoy working with, people who are bright, engaging, conscientious and adept at solving problems-or the chemistry is not there and leading becomes a constant battle. In general, the leadership group we surveyed recognized the critical importance of first having the "right idea" and then getting other people (who embrace that idea) on board and engaged in the tasks of implementing that idea and effecting change.

Influencing and Directing

...the executives and salespeople who participated in our studies are far more likely to exhibit impatience and take risks and are much less cautious in moving forward than are the top-performing managers. In general, both salespeople and executives are likely to present themselves in a directive, highly compelling, though somewhat intense and impatient, manner.

...managers...may be more effective in supporting, coaching, and mentoring others, including the leaders they report to, than in taking the dominant leadership position.

Problem Solving and Decision Making

Leaders tend to be somewhat more creative and bring tremendous problem-solving ability and flexibility to the core leadership tasks of recognizing issues and opportunities, developing strategies, and working through barriers that impede progress toward important goals.

Knowing Who You Are

You have to start out by being true to yourself. Self-awareness is one of the most fundamental concepts of getting on in the world.