10 Minute Sales Discussion™

From: The Canterbury Sales ™

Question: Why can't you find good salespeople?

You Can't Find Good Salespeople:

The Entrepreneurial Fallacy

Business owners and executives often lament, "You can't find good salespeople."

They explain, "I have a great product. I'm respected in the marketplace. Customers love me. Why can't my salespeople sell?"

I know a business owner who churns his sales force of five salespeople every year or two. He is unable to find "good salespeople."

Is there really a shortage of "good salespeople"? Are they as scarce as hen's teeth and "Glengarry leads"?

Perhaps.

Here is another possibility. If owners and managers seek a shortcut, they could be victims of the *Entrepreneurial Sales Fallacy*.

These leaders built the business – working 10-12 hour days, putting everything on the line, taking non-stop rejection, all without the benefit of the current product and customer base.

They are entrepreneurs and argue, "Why can't the sales team *continue* to build the business, with all the resources in place? I don't ask much of them – only that they sell. And they can't even do that!"

Changing market conditions often impede new business development. What once worked, no longer does because of new competition. Business development hits a brick wall because leadership allows the sale to become a cutthroat commodity sale.

In response, many leaders embrace the *Entrepreneurial Sales Fallacy*.

They expect the typical salesperson to act like an entrepreneur, proclaiming, "I want the salesperson who is so good, has so much confidence, he/she wants to work on straight commission. That's my kind of salesperson."

Then they toss the sales team to the wolves, unprepared with the selling skills and psychological mindset required for a very challenging sale. This grinds most salespeople into pulp. So, of course, the leadership needs to replace the sales team frequently.

One company, with about 75 sales people, churns 80 percent of the team annually. This costs the company more than $1 million annually in human resources costs (recruiting and product training) and lost profits (lost sales and lack of coverage for existing clients).

There are not enough entrepreneurs born to staff all the sales positions. But entrepreneurial skills can be taught.

Instead of the high turnover policy of "you can't find good salespeople," a more realistic policy would be to train and mentor salespeople. Such a policy would include:

1. Screening Candidates – Ensuring essential traits, including cognitive ability, ego strength, gregariousness and the ability to be coached.
2. Providing a Strong Standard Sales Call – A step-by-step procedure for selling – built on a defendable position creating urgency, ideally with an inescapable argument.
3. Teaching Selling Skills – Both the rational process and a series of exercises building ego strength to take greater chances. Then **designing** a sales process – to help the team manage the purgatory of "**call me back in two weeks."**
4. Providing a Strong Sales Management Program with Accountability – Insisting on evidence-based outcomes* from the sales team.

   **When it is not a one-call close, what evidence does the buyer provide that he/she is serious? Can we prove the buyer is a participant versus a spectator?*

But wait, some owners say, "The sales team doesn't even try. The phones are never lit."

This may be true, in part because the sale is so difficult. The sales team must do its part – make a strong effort. But leadership must provide support, as well.

When you consider the cost of sales team turnover – including recruiting, product training and lost sales – a strong sales training and sales management system is virtually free.

Do not fall victim to the *Entrepreneurial Sales Fallacy*, waiting for the "Glengarry sales team" to show up at your front door. Develop good salespeople.

© Bombadil LLC 2008

If you want additional copies of this essay, or would like to have them mailed to your sales team, call Andy Gole at 201 415 3447.

Andy Gole has taught selling skills for 13 years. He started three businesses and has made approximately 4,000 sales calls, selling both B2B and B2C. He invented a selling process, Urgency Based Selling™, with which he can typically help companies double their closing or conversion ratio. Learn more about Andy's method at www.bombadilllc.com or by calling him at 201.415.3447.

Bombadil

URGENCY BASED SELLING™ SYSTEM