



Improve Your Sales Performance

Now and Permanently by Maximizing the 3 Ts



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INTRODUCTION

**TALENT
TRAINING
+ TACTICS
= PERFORMANCE**

All sales performance starts with top sales talent. But, talent alone does not guarantee performance. Talent, training, and tactics taken together increase sales performance. They prompt a lasting, fundamental change in a sales organization.

Our clients have discovered the permanent competitive advantage that results from...

- Selecting the right talent
- Training them in a selling strategy that makes sense (to both the sellers and their clients)
- Leveraging that talent and training with business development tactics that support and enhance the strategy and drive revenue

We hope you will find this brief paper helpful.

**Talent, Training, and Tactics
produce performance increases
today and tomorrow.**

TALENT

Talent + Training + Tactics = Performance

Acquiring top talent is the essential first step a sales organization must make. Performance begins with talent.

Start with talent and develop a winner. All the training in the world won't help a Shetland pony win the Kentucky Derby. Only if you start with a thoroughbred do you have the possibility of developing a Secretariat or Seattle Slew.

The same is true in selling business services in a competitive environment: It's essential to start with talent. Hiring decisions are perhaps the most critical decisions a company ever makes. Superior talent selection allows you to build your sales team with people who have the raw material; the inherent characteristics to be top sellers.

All the training in the world can't give a person talent. Just ask yourself if you know anyone who *learned* how to be **curious**...who *learned* about how to be **competitive**... who *learned* how to be **caring**. Of course not! That's what we mean by talent. And yes, those are three really important characteristics we look for in sales candidates.

In addition you should look for:

- Strong focus
- High output
- Self-disciplined
- Self-motivated
- Strong internal drive to grow and improve every day, every year
- Optimistic, and not just some of the time
- Likes people and understands people
- Finds problems and has plenty of ideas and ways to solve them
- Enjoys asking for the order
- Knows instinctively when and how to ask for the order

You can't teach any of that to anyone—but people who naturally have those talents can be taught to be great salespeople.

“We generate more revenue with the same number of sellers—because the sales staff we have today is more talented.”

- General Manager

TALENT

Talent Action Steps

If you **cannot strongly agree** with each of these statements, it's possible you have some talent issues to address:

- We hire much better salespeople than our competitors.
- Our sales management team is a clear strength of our organization.
- Every member of our sales management team is a solid performer... a keeper.
- We have a clear succession plan for every person for whom it is appropriate.
- Currently, all of our salespeople are performing at or above expectations.

Maintain a Talent Bank. Treat recruitment and selection as two separate processes. Seek out highly-talented sales candidates of various experience levels before you have an opening. Keep track of those candidates, and when you have an opening, reach out to the people on your list.

Conduct a Job Analysis. As a sales manager, it is important to place people in positions where their talents are a strong match. Are you taking the time to make sure the candidate's natural talents and abilities align with your expectations?

Analyze the position. Consider the innate abilities required for that job in general:

- **TALENTS.** Innate abilities and ways of experiencing the world (cannot be taught)
- **SKILLS.** Both existing skills and skills that *can* be taught
- **EXPERIENCE.** Experience necessary for consideration

Provide coaching and feedback. Are you providing in-field coaching, giving quality feedback and helping your sellers to build on their strengths? If you are not providing positive feedback on their strengths, and helping your sellers work around their weaknesses, you are missing an opportunity.

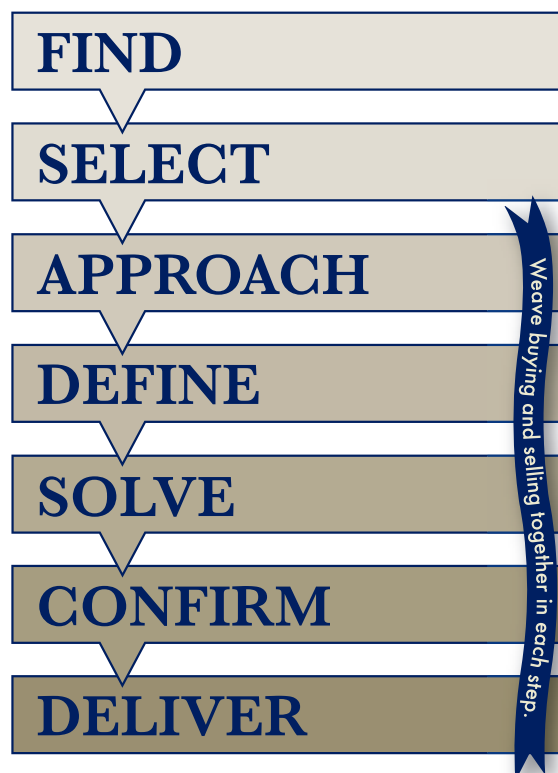
TRAINING

Talent + Training + Tactics = Performance

You've hired strong talent. That's necessary, but not sufficient. Just as pro athletes need a smart game plan as well as individual coaching, your pro salespeople require a smart strategy and individualized coaching and development. For ideas on how to build a sales culture that delivers high-value solutions and earns preferred vendor status, read on...

At The Center for Sales Strategy, we have spent nearly 30 years perfecting the "game plan," a seven-step sales process. It begins with selecting high-quality prospects that fit your organization's ideal customer profile. The rest of the process is an *interactive approach*, where the salesperson works with the prospect in a highly collaborative way that weaves the buying process and the selling process together.

The result improves the proposal (makes it more buyable) as well as the prospect (makes them readier to buy). These proposals also create solutions better targeted to the client's needs; and thus, far more likely to deliver ROI to the client and reorders and renewals for the seller.



WHY Selling and HOW Selling

couldn't be more different!

Sellers are more successful when they move away from telling prospects *Why to Buy* their products and services and start focusing on *How to Use* all of their capabilities and resources to meet the prospect's defined need(s).

	WHY Selling	HOW Selling
Process is...	Pitching	Creating
Aims to sell a...	Product or service	Tailored solution
Reference point is...	Product/service attributes	Prospect's needs
Value offered is...	General	Specific
Sounds like...	"WHY you should buy my product, and why it's superior to the other choices you have."	"HOW we can, together, use my product and my other resources and capabilities to meet your specific needs."
Makes the salesperson...	A convenient clerk	A valuable ally
Keeps competitors...	Re-bidding	Shut out
Bottom line...	Pitching general value for any prospect	Creating specific value for this prospect

TRAINING

Training Action Steps

If you **cannot strongly agree** with the following statements, you may have sales strategy and/or training issues to address:

- We have plenty of very good prospects.
- We're very good at identifying ideal prospects and turning them into big clients.
- Our salespeople have relatively little trouble getting in to see new prospects.
- We do a great job of identifying the prospect's real needs.
- Our salespeople always lead with *How* we can help vs. *Why* we're better.
- Our process leads to tailored solutions, not generic or one-size-fits-all packages.
- We do a great job of delivering ROI for our clients.
- Our team turns out great proposals.
- Our account retention is very strong from year to year.
- Our salespeople have enough time for both their top clients and their best prospects.

Identify target accounts that fit with your organization's Ideal Customer Profile (ICP). Some of the things you will want to look at include: Dollar potential, access to the decision maker, a good fit for your organization, and your own personal reasons and enthusiasm for wanting to do business with this company. When sales people invest time trying to develop prospects that don't fit their ICP, those accounts are less likely to close and, if they do, are less likely to become substantial, profitable accounts.

Use technology for prospecting. A sales meeting activity could include reviewing what an ideal target account looks like in your organization, and how to use Google and LinkedIn to identify more targets that fit that profile. More, high-quality targets should equate to more appointments and more sales closed.

Set aside time to select your top targets and determine a plan of approach for each. Start with a strong valid business reason. Lead with something that will show your target account why meeting with you is a good use of their time. This should not sound like a sales pitch, and probably won't mention your products. It might start with an article, a trend, something you observed while interacting with the business recently, or a conversation you had with an employee or customer. Demonstrate the value you bring before asking for the appointment.

TRAINING

Training Action Steps Continued...

When planning how you will approach each Target, be persistent! Often, sellers give up before they make contact with the decision maker. Remember the decision maker is busy trying to run a business. From their perspective, you are just one of many vendors trying to sell them something... something they might not perceive a need for at the time.

When making initial contact, be creative! If you leave the exact same message with the exact same valid business reason each time you contact the client, you might not ever get their attention. Instead, use voice mail and email. Drop by, use video, a creative audio file... whatever it takes to break through the clutter while also demonstrating your professionalism, expertise, and desire to be a valued resource.

Conduct a Needs Analysis Question check up. If sellers are getting lots of quality appointments, but are failing to make sales, maybe they are having trouble in the define stage. When was the last time you looked at the needs analysis questions they are asking or conducted in-field coaching? Are they looking at the client's website, and reviewing the prospect's LinkedIn and Facebook pages to gather intelligence prior to the call? What about other forms of research that will help them ask informed questions?

Remember: it's about learning, not pitching. Ask questions designed to establish you as someone who understands their business, and who is also eager to learn more about their business needs. The worst thing you can do is begin the meeting with a prepared pitch or a package. The first appointment is all about establishing rapport and credibility and then discovering specific needs you can solve.

TACTICS

Talent + Training + Tactics = Performance

With a solid foundation of talent and training, your business development tactics will become dramatically more effective. But the tactics must be what we call *tactegic*. Too often, short-term tactics undermine the sales strategy and sales culture you are trying to build. When tactics support and enhance your strategy—when they're *tactegic*—the momentum to propel your sales performance is focused and powerful.

Your sales team will experience a sales lift once you've established a customer-focused culture in your organization. Focusing on activities that fall under any of the seven steps of our sales process: **Find, Approach, Define, Solve, Propose, Deliver...** will help deliver performance results. For example:

- **Focus on the Valid Business Reason.** If the sales team has not had as much success as you'd like setting quality appointments, you could set aside time to have each seller plan out valid business reasons and then put a focused effort on setting appointments over a certain period of time (a day or a week). Our clients refer to that as an *TargetDrive*.
- **Work on establishing a significant online presence for your sellers.** If sellers are getting through to decision makers, but having trouble establishing themselves as experts, maybe it's time to help them polish their LinkedIn profiles and create other personal positioning pieces that establish their professionalism, expertise and empathy.
- **Devote time to brainstorming.** To help sellers improve performance in the solve stage, you might devote time each day or each week to brainstorming. Before you start, the seller should have already conducted a needs analysis and you should understand the problem your target account is trying to address. Remember this should not be a surface-level problem. This is a big need, one that must be addressed... even if no budget currently exists for a solution.
- **Conduct a proposal audit.** Before any proposal leaves the office, ask yourself the following questions: Has the client seen and agreed to everything that is already in the proposal? OR Is there anything in the proposal that might cause the client to not say yes? Review proposals and determine at what point your sellers are getting the prospect involved in the idea-creation process. It's hard for a prospect to turn down a solution they had a hand in creating; which is one reason the sales process should feel more like a collaboration and less like a sales pitch. Get the prospect in on the idea early, before it is fully developed. Their input at this stage keeps your idea on track to address their most important needs—and you are sure to include the bells and whistles most important to the prospect.

TACTICS

Tactical Action Steps

Evaluate the tactics you currently use to drive short-term revenue. Sales managers in a pinch to meet revenue goals often abandon the very philosophies and practices that deliver long-term success. Clients of The Center for Sales Strategy pursue a sales process in which sellers carefully identify ideal prospects, learn each prospect's key challenges, and develop tailored solutions that deliver ROI. An example of a sales tactic that would work against that strategy is the classic "phone jam" in which sellers "dial for dollars" in an attempt to contact massive numbers of prospects and pitch them a generic program without knowing whether it will serve their needs.

Some examples of tactics that are consistent with culture and strategy include:

- **An Idea Jam is a focused initiative designed to help a seller come up with several potential solutions that address a prospect's needs.** Rather than conducting a phone blitz, or pitching deep-discounted packages, spend that time brainstorming solid ideas to present to your top target accounts.
- **A TargetDrive is a tactic designed to focus on your target accounts—your best prospects.** Consider how much more success you'd have if you invested the time to research the market situation for your best targets and came up with a plan of approach for each of your top targets that will help you become a valued partner.

Know which metrics are important to your organization. Salespeople will perform the activities that are measured and rewarded. It's tempting to measure the number of appointments set, or the number of proposals in front of clients. However, both of these activities can undermine the sales culture if steps are not taken to ensure these are quality appointments and solutions-based proposals to qualified target accounts. If these are important metrics, be sure your team is following the process of first identifying and qualifying target accounts... and walking them through the entire sales process. No shortcuts allowed.

“Everything we ask our account managers to do tactically in the TargetDrive aligns with our strategy of selling with a client focus.”

-Paul Briggs, General Sales Manager

PERFORMANCE

Talent + Training + Tactics = Performance

An organization that combines talent, training, and tactics will see measurable performance results. There is no doubt that getting the right team in place, providing quality training and following up with tactics that support the overall sales culture leads to a boost in performance.

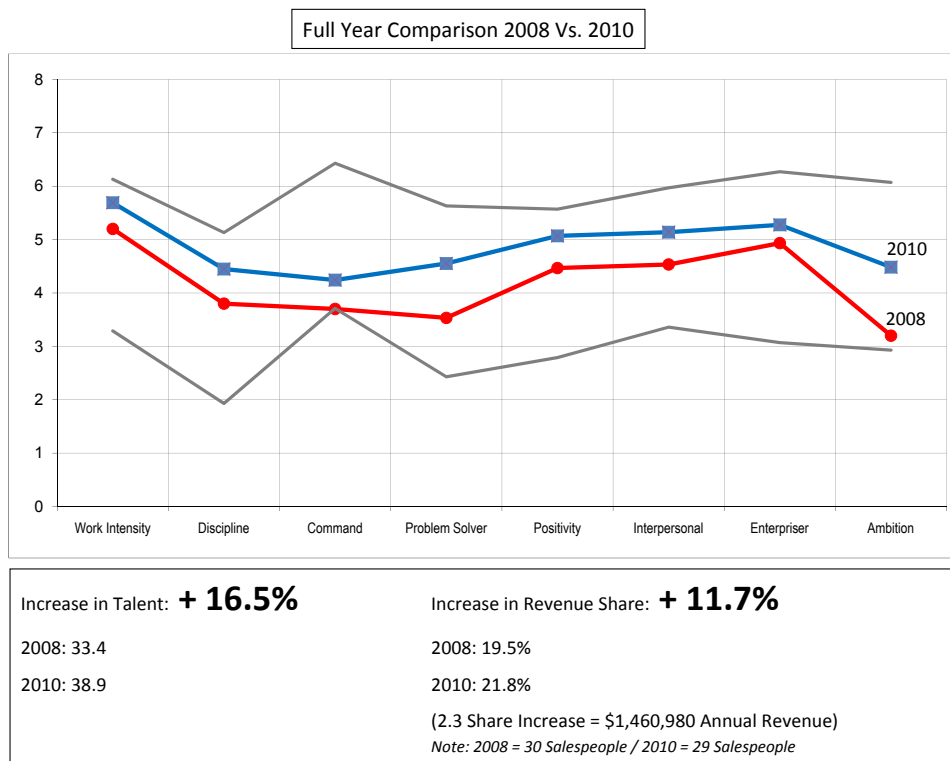
Think of sales performance as a three-legged stool. When all of the legs are strong, there is nothing sturdier, but if one leg weakens, the stool falls. Your talent, training, and tactics must all be strong.



PERFORMANCE

Performance Examples

Talent Performance: Improving talent will improve your performance. The graph below shows how one sales organization increased its talent by 16.5%, and increased its revenue share by 11.7%. Market revenue stayed the same, but their share of revenue went up. They did not increase head count to achieve this lift; they increased talent.



Training Performance: Several of our clients have measured the success of our training by the amount of business closed during training. We call that a *Performer's Club*. It's a great example of starting with talent, putting them through training and adding a tactic... and it equals millions of dollars.

Tactical Performance: A lot of our clients participate in something we call a *TargetDrive*. After they have the right talent in place and have trained them, they add on the tactic of a *TargetDrive*. The *TargetDrive* increases revenue and helps management determine where there are opportunities for development.



TALENT

People can be taught how to approach new prospects, how to ask better questions, and how to BrainStorm solutions. However, you can't teach people to be curious, caring, or competitive. *Success always starts with Talent.*

For nearly three decades we have helped sales organizations recruit, select, develop, and retain the best sales managers and sales people. We have the proven instruments to identify who has the right talent.

+ TRAINING

While many consulting firms offer sales training, we help your organization build a permanent culture of delivering client solutions. One that both salespeople and their clients want to be a part of.

We change the sales conversation from WHY **buy** your product, to HOW to **use** your product. Tailoring your products, services, and capabilities to meet your client's specific needs and *produce the results your clients seek.*

+ TACTICS

Our training is integrated with revenue development tactics that put business on the books within weeks! Our *TargetDrives* offer strategic support to new business development, sales incentives, and sales promotions.

Too often, sales tactics that bring in short-term revenue can actually undermine your long-term strategy. We implement 'tactegic' sales activities that will *support, enhance, and advance your strategy.*

= PERFORMANCE

TWO Special Offers:

We offer **one free Sales Talent Interview** for any sales manager or corporate executive who would like to learn more about how this tool could be helpful (unless an exclusivity clause in a client contract prevents us from making this offer in your market). For more information and to schedule your free Interview, contact Matt Sunshine at mattsunshine@csscenter.com.

“My experience with the training system has been particularly rewarding. Even as an old dog, there are some clever new tricks I’ve learned and some forgotten tools I’ve relearned. The concepts will prove extremely valuable in client and AE interactions.”

- Steve Ellzey, Sales Manager

Want to see more of what we do? Download *Thirty Provocative Questions*, a diagnostic that will help you spot opportunities for development within your organization. Email your completed form to mattsunshine@csscenter.com for a **free evaluation and consultation**.

For more information about The Center for Sales Strategy,
contact Matt Sunshine at mattsunshine@csscenter.com

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The Center for Sales Strategy is a sales performance improvement company focused on business-to-business selling. We increase performance by taking a uniquely strategic approach to talent, training and tactics. Our clients sell tailored solutions to repeat customers, drawing on a portfolio of resources. Our services include comprehensive consulting and coaching, online training, and on-site workshops. Since 1983, The Center for Sales Strategy has been providing measurable results for B2B selling organizations in the United States, Canada, and Australia.