

A guide to get you sales force all fired up and stumping for the cause.



It always pays to keep your sales staff happy because, according to Tina Cuerva, co-owner of My Office Business Center & Virtual Office, "Sales is the lifeblood of any business." And because a business's survival depends on how motivated your staff is to achieving your revenue targets, here are 10 ways to get them to keep your cash register ringing:

1. Hire the right people. Business consultant Alrey Galang, owner of Think Solutions Enterprise, says entrepreneurs must have the knack for spotting people with the personality and penchant for selling.

2. Know them well. "As a leader, the entrepreneur should know and treat his salesmen like members of his family, and should stick by them through thick and through thin," says Galang. This deep familiarity with employees will point the business owner to effective

ways by which he could lift their spirits and encourage them following a bad sales call or a deal that fell through. Adds Michael Puyat, owner of cleaning company Super Home Specialists Corp.: "Employees will appreciate your delving into their personal and professional affairs by rewarding you with greater effort and patience with clients and prospects, and a more steadfast resolve to achieve targets."

3. Keep them in the loop. "Keeping sales people informed of company events and strategic programs will keep their confidence up and make them well equipped in the marketing arena," Galang says. Periodically discussing sales objectives with them makes them feel they belong to the company.

4. Be a mentor. Set the example by being the epitome of a great salesman. Go on sales calls with your agents and introduce them to your contacts. Nothing delivers the message better than actual demonstration.

5. Provide an attractive package tied to meeting sales targets but reflective of market conditions. Galang sets great store by giving your sales team their just rewards, and that means doling out incentives when targets are met or exceeded, but putting demerit mechanisms in place for lackluster performance. Immediately sorting out the reason for performing below par will keep your sales team from becoming arrogant, spoiled, and unsuited for the task. "Always pamper your salesmen without spoiling them," he says.

6. Be fun and fair. Puyat says it's important that the sales agents' morale is always high, because anything less than this would lead to inefficiency, incompetence, and later, to missed sales opportunities. "Morale is equated with fun and passion, openness with the boss, and a feeling of importance. When a boss is fair and just in compensation and in promotions, everyone's morale is up and this leads to a happier and wealthier organization," he says. Puyat defines fairness by firing employees found to have run afoul with company policies or with the law, and giving out bonuses when the business is doing well.

7. When the going gets tough, be honest. Collection and cash flow problems have a direct effect on your staff, so better to let them in on it and enlist their help in turning things around. "We tell them that every effort to make our company healthier is a group effort," Puyat says.

8. Encourage the team to share ideas. To give the sales staff a sense of company ownership, Tina Cuerva of My Office Business Center & Virtual Office suggests that they must be motivated to spread their thoughts about how to bring in more business and how to implement sales programs more effectively. This process, she says, ensures that everybody would be accepting of company policies that arise from brainstorming sessions.

9. Always sharpen their selling skills. Keep them updated on the product, new sales pitches, dealing with difficult clients, good grooming, and anything related to their work. For instance, Puyat trains his team leaders "to create a personal connection with the client and to offer the latest promotions at perfectly timed moments during the job. They are trained to check for body language and verbal signals that tell them to segue to their sales pitch." "When your sales people believe in the product they sell and are happy doing it, they are able to convince clients," Cuerva says.

10. Give them a pat in the back. Like bonuses, simply congratulating them on their achievements reinforces their good performance in a positive way. Cuerva calls this an "emotional paycheck," which usually has a deeper and lasting motivational effect on employees than monetary rewards.

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