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Have You Created an Opt-In Culture?

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"If I don't treat every performance as if it will be my farewell appearance, there's a good chance it may be." – Eddie Albert

I work with a wide range of companies and get to experience a wide range of sales cultures. Some cultures, I am confident I would flourish in, and some I am extremely happy to leave by the end of the day. One problem I have experienced with some sales organizations is that they try too hard to be liked. They are so nice that they have created what I call an Opt-In Culture. This Opt-In Culture results in lower levels of accountability and average business results.

What many sales managers don't understand is that they are the ones creating the culture for their team.

With that in mind, what kind of culture have you created for your team? Individualistic, toxic, bunker mentality, competitive, or even laissez faire?

Do your meetings start on time or are you okay with a few stranglers either in person or on a conference call?

Is your team adopting your customer relationship management technology or are you only getting updates when you ask for it? Are you getting incomplete information based on CRM usage?

Is your team executing the new training effectively? I understand and agree that top performers can be empowered. However, all too often we are you empowering the lowest performers and not inspecting what you expect? Incidentally, empowering lower performers is the quickest way to an early exit and career change as a manager.

Is your team full of excuses as to why they "can't" or "won't" improve their performance, or are you holding them accountable to get the job done?

Are you only using positive encouragement to change behaviors or are you having the difficult conversations to help change behaviors? When you assess your team, are you ranking everyone at or above average?

Does everyone on the team understand their role, responsibilities, metrics, and road map to success?

I recognize that we all want to create a great culture. For example, wouldn't you prefer a winning culture like Bill Belichick created in New England versus an Opt-In Culture (trying to convince someone to do what should be expected)? The Patriots have a culture that every player is expected to conform and have the discipline to know their responsibilities. There are numerous stories of how Coach Belichick has sent home even the most prolific players on the team if they are late for a meeting, regardless of snowstorm or other accentuating circumstances. It is a culture of accountability and no excuses. Does every player fit into that culture? Of course not, but those who don't will not be a part of the team in the long term. The culture is about discipline and responsibility, and the outcome is winning.

Question: What is your vision for your sales team? How will you get there?

Scott Anderson is a founding principal at Diamond Performance Solutions LLC and RevenueForce LLC. He is co-author of the book Reignite- How to Rekindle Your Passion for Selling. Scott spent his entire career-more than twenty-five years selling, managing salespeople, and providing sales consulting, training, and coaching to some of the biggest and best sales organizations in the world. He has worked with leading organizations including 3M, IBM, Cargill, UnitedHealth Group, Carlson Companies, Andersen Windows, Wells Fargo and The Hartford. He has authored numerous articles on sales effectiveness. He resides in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul. Office Number 612-961-1778 email: sanderson@diamonddpg.com