

# The Four Challenges of Improving Sales Performance



Improving the performance of your sales force is difficult.

There are typically 4 main strategies available to sales leaders to improve sales force capability and performance:

- 1 Hiring better sales people and better sales managers
- 2 Training existing sales people and managers to improve their sales skills
- 3 Coaching sales people and managers to adopt new behaviours
- 4 Incentivising sales people to adopt new behaviours.

The only problem is that all of these strategies are high risk and typically have low levels of certainty around their ability to deliver. When you are under pressure to deliver improved sales results, relying on these traditional levers can be fraught with danger.

**MIND Peak Performance** takes a more scientific approach, taking the risk and uncertainty out of sales improvement initiatives to ensure an uplift in performance.

## Challenge 1: Hiring new Talent

### THE TROUBLE WITH HIRING:

- 30% of hiring results in miss hire; resulting in lost revenue, staff turnover and lost or dissatisfied customers.
- Even if you do manage to target a highly successful sales person or manager from a competitor, many new hires struggle to succeed in a new environment due to different organizational cultures, support infrastructure of product dominance. What made a sales person great in one

environment doesn't necessarily translate into another.

- Hiring new people has a significant productivity lag associated with it. It is not a good strategy for significantly increasing revenue in the short term.
- In highly technical or complex sales environments, there is often a very small or tight market for people with the requisite skills to be able to adequately perform the role. Small markets means high competition, high cost and often long time frames to fill vacancies.

### THE MIND PEAK PERFORMANCE SOLUTION:

- Reduce the risk of miss hires by profiling what makes excellent sales performers in your organisation from a Psychological, competence and Neurological perspective (resilience and learning agility) then assess all new candidates against these benchmarks using multiple methods for increased reliability. An interview alone is not enough.
- Build a pipeline of potential sales talent in advance of hiring requirements and get to know them well. This reduces the time to hire in the event of a vacancy arising and increases your experience of the candidate and therefore the quality of your assessment.
- Provide targeted support to new hires to enable them to integrate well into their new organisation and get to productivity quicker. Changing jobs is one of life's more stressful events, so supporting your new hires with improving their ability to handle pressure will enable them to adapt to the new environment quicker and increase their confidence in making a successful transition.

## Challenge 2: Training new skills

### THE TROUBLE WITH TRAINING:

- Sales training often involves a significant investment of both time and money, yet the reality is that it is very difficult to measure the impact of that investment.
- Our research has demonstrated that most training programs fail to deliver a shift in productivity. This is because they rarely engage the preferred learning style of the participants resulting in a low level of learning effectiveness and a lack of post training follow up leads to a degradation of knowledge retention and application. In other words, if you don't use it you lose it.

### THE MIND PEAK PERFORMANCE SOLUTION:

- Measure the effectiveness of training and its impact on sales and productivity using our RAIT learning effectiveness index to improve the initial impact of your existing sales training program on performance.
- Measure the learning agility of your sales force and their preferred learning style to tailor development in the most effective way.
- Ensure the application of new skills through post training coaching and follow up, ensuring sales manager accountability via our RAIT coaching effectiveness tool.

## Challenge 3: Coaching for sales behaviours

### THE TROUBLE WITH SALES COACHING:

- Most organisations rely on their sales managers to coach sales representatives to undertake new or different sales behaviours that are more likely to result in improved sales performance.
- The problem with is that most sales managers are inexperienced when it comes to effective sales coaching, are often unmotivated to do it and therefore the impact of sales coaching often fails to result in a sustained adoption of new sales behaviours and therefore an improvement in sales performance.

### THE MIND PEAK PERFORMANCE SOLUTION:

- Train your sales managers to be elite sales coaches, using methods used to coach professional sports coaches like the AFL.
- Use the RAIT coaching effectiveness index to measure coaching effectiveness and assist sales coaches to adapt their coaching style to meet individual neurological learning styles and coaching preferences. This process is proven to improve coaching effectiveness and sales person performance.
- Hold sales managers accountable for the incidence and quality of sales coaching through this easy and highly effective measurement tool.

## Challenge 4: Incentivising new behaviours

### THE TROUBLE WITH INCENTIVES:

- Incenting sales staff towards desired sales behaviours and outcomes is fraught with challenges. Firstly, Incentivising someone who doesn't have the skills required to adopt a new sales behaviour will lead to a failure loop where the sales person becomes demotivated due to their inability to succeed with the new sales approach resulting in poor performance, poor rewards and increase in voluntary and involuntary staff turnover.
- New sales incentive programs often result in a number of new sales behaviours that you didn't count on and that are counter productive to organisational and client needs you wanted to encourage.
- This is because many organisations are not sufficiently clear on the real drivers of value in their sales model. Only once you understand the dynamics of value in your sales model should you turn to incentives as a partial solution.

### THE MIND PEAK PERFORMANCE SOLUTION:

- Sales process analysis to determine how to maximize value in the sales process.
- KPI analysis to ensure KPI's are targeting the right sales behaviour to drive maximum productivity.
- Capability analysis to determine which sales people have the capability to deliver on targeted new behaviours
- Incentive modeling to understand the financial impact of new incentives on sales profitability.

Taking a more scientific approach to your sales improvement initiatives takes the risk out of achieving those ever increasing sales targets and can provide a sustainable source of competitive advantage over your competition.

For more information on Sales Science:

**Dr. Stan Rodski**  
CEO & Chief Neuroscientist

**MIND Peak Performance**

Ph: +61 (0)417 329 154

e: [stan@mindpeakperformance.com](mailto:stan@mindpeakperformance.com)  
w: [www.mindpeakperformance.com](http://www.mindpeakperformance.com)