

## How to Prepare for the Future of Sales Coaching to Drive Performance

There are seismic shifts in the workplace today that are impacting the field of sales coaching and ultimately sales performance including:



Hiring + developing  
Millennial sales  
professionals



Real-time feedback  
to drive sales  
performance



Advanced sales  
coaching analytics

### Millennial Sales Professionals

While there are many perceptions about Millennials, including possessing a lack of engagement and loyalty, they currently represent over 40% of the workforce, and for many sales forces the percentage is much larger. Sales force retention and sales force productivity are critical to business performance, and if businesses can drive engagement and loyalty among Millennials, they will decrease sales force turnover and improve productivity. This has organizations feverishly working on how to attract, motivate, and retain Millennials. However, recent Gallup research, “How Millennials Want to Work and Live,” offers enlightening perspectives which includes information that Millennials are very demanding, but not naturally disloyal or lazy (Crowley 2016). So what do Millennials want? They want much more frequent feedback, better quality feedback, work that has purpose, and a coach as opposed to a boss (Crowley 2016).

As a result, many companies drastically and quickly are revamping their thinking and processes around organizational feedback to include sales coaching. Millennials are the most tech-savvy working generation ever. They think about communication differently and are comfortable communicating important and even potentially emotional information electronically. Millennials want frequent feedback and they are very questioning of the quality of the feedback (Hernandez, 2015). This has serious implications for sales managers. Additionally, Millennials, like other generations, tend to filter giving direct, constructive feedback to others, fearing it might hurt the feelings of the recipient or afraid of retaliation from their boss or others against their own career. However, filtered feedback is as useful as rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic: it feels like you’re doing something helpful, but it really makes no difference in the end. Filtered feedback hurts performance.

# Real-Time Feedback

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Many companies, such as General Electric, Goldman Sachs, Adobe, Accenture, and Morgan Stanley, are moving away from traditional feedback tools to more real-time feedback for coaching and collaboration. Companies are trying to enhance traditional feedback and coaching techniques with various processes and technologies to make the activity more valuable and to drive performance more effectively.

In an attempt to facilitate more effective, collaborative, and faster decision making, as well as performance improvement across the organization, General Electric piloted a shift from their legendary performance management system. The pilot achieved a 5x improvement in performance and is now being rolled out company-wide (Baldassarre, Finken, 2015). Central to this outcome was the creation of a culture of shared accountability and a system of continuous dialogue, enhanced coaching, and real-time feedback. Driven by a mobile app to help facilitate the process, employees could receive ongoing and real-time feedback from anyone in their work circles about competencies, skills, and behaviors to drive performance (Baldassarre, Finken, 2015).

## Receive ongoing and real-time feedback



# Advanced Sales Coaching Analytics

How much more productive would your sales team be if leadership could look across the sales organization and know in real time which sales managers are coaching which sales professionals and on what specific sales techniques? Imagine how such information could improve productivity and reduce turnover. Like GE, many companies are leveraging tools to move this process forward. One such tool is our real-time feedback platform that enables sales managers to simply and quickly deliver and track sales coaching, producing a real-time sales coaching scorecard for the sales consultant and sales management, all the way up through the entire sales organization. This scorecard differs from the normal sales activity tracking most companies conduct, as it gets at the heart of sales coaching behaviors as opposed to the sales metrics. For example, most organizations track number of appointments obtained per sales consultant per week. But these desirable outcomes are produced only as a result of specific, observable behaviors in the sales rep.



## Several such behaviors include:

- **Asking Needs-Assessment Questions**
- **Identifying Pain Points**
- **Generating Prospect Interest**

Most top sales companies do have sophisticated processes for measuring and managing the sales process, and they have robust sales training programs that give sales professionals techniques to be more effective in each stage of the sales process. However, have you ever wondered how effective your sales managers are at coaching their sales professionals? How much time are they spending on it? And are they targeting the right behaviors with the sales professionals who need it most?

Across your sales force, you likely know who isn't obtaining their target number of appointments each week, but do you know if they are receiving the appropriate coaching to improve their results based on the techniques you are trying to drive deep into your sales organization? Our real-time dashboard enables sales leaders with advanced sales coaching analytics to: recognize your best sales managers, train and develop your other sales managers, and performance manage your sales managers who are not exhibiting your desired sales coaching behaviors. As sales leaders, it is important to offer your sales teams something that meets the changing needs of the sales forces and supercharges the team, while also reinforcing proven systems and techniques to drive sales performance.

# 5 Recommendations for Sales Leaders and Executives

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**01** Make feedback between your sales staff more continuous and in real time.

**02** Feedback needs to be competency based on sales coaching competencies so that it has meaning and can drive sales performance through sales coaching.

**03** Use sales coaching analytics to develop desirable sales behaviors that translate to improved sales performance.

**04** Feedback needs to be technology enabled to facilitate communication and complement face-to-face, over-the-phone and virtual coaching.

**05** **Ensure that the foundation for feedback is clearly established. This foundation can be established in as simple as quick conversation where the sales manager and sales rep agree to engage in honest, open and constructive feedback moving forward**

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