

Front Page

Hot Topics ■ Biz Beat

Challenge U ■ Briefs

Celebration/Enterprise

Community Reports

Portfolio ■ Columns

Resource Directory

Portfolio / Columns: Debbie Mrazek

Debbie Mrazek, The Sales Company

**Prescription for healthy sales
June 2004**

Sales are down.

As corporate America struggles to ramp up performance, these three words cause panic, stress and difficulty. Yet managers fail to realize that their primary challenge may be a sickly sales process within their own ranks.

It's time for a sales check-up.

The doctor is in.

It's no accident that sales often are characterized by many of the same words used to describe the health of human beings. The sales process is a living, breathing and ever-changing organism within each company. At times, it may be sluggish, sickly or just plain worn-out.

STAY CURRENT!!!

Enter your email to receive updates in your business community directly from ICCB

your email

Submit



Search our Site

Search

On the flip side, healthy sales translate into a growing bottom line that delivers profits. Plus, healthy sales develop more of the kinds of customers the company desires. Finally, companies with a healthy sales process can forecast – accurately and predictably – their future sales performance.

Companies whose sales don't fit this description should head to the sales doctor for a check-up.

Step 1: The examination

Just like a doctor, this step takes the business' vital signs to get an idea of its sales organization's health. Key employees talk about where the company is and whether the root of the sales problem is internal or external.

Internal issues may include fear, lack of certain skills, or lack of the tools needed for success. External forces could point to something in the business



Don't forget
Check the site on
Wednesday's
for updates!

or company that affects sales – from poor customer service to unfulfilled customer expectations.

Simply taking the time to analyze the situation yields positive results. For example, executives and sales professionals at a large manufacturing company discovered they were not meeting a critical client need. With minimal adjustments, the company was able to move sales upward very quickly.

Step 2: The diagnosis

When it comes to your personal health, a correct diagnosis requires professional, medical help. In that same vein, companies with lagging sales often choose to engage a sales consultant to help diagnose their internal failings. This objective third party can walk through a sale with a company sales representative and provide insight into what's working and what's not. The diagnosis might include changing the sales approach, hiring more capable sales people, or a combination of two or more strategies.

For example, a business owner tried diligently to hire effective salespeople. He compensated them handsomely and trained them rigorously. But sales still lagged far behind his expectations.

The diagnosis? With the help of an outside consultant, this executive determined that he should be filling the role of chief salesman. His superior market knowledge, industry relationships and product knowledge could not be duplicated. So rather than spending time on finance or human resources issues, which could be capably handled by his team, he determined that he should focus primarily on heading up sales efforts.

Step 3: The prescription

The most active phase of the sales check-up is the prescription. During this step, companies look at what they can reasonably accomplish to move sales in the desired direction. This may begin with more aligned goals. Setting goals requires a structure that can ensure sales organizations are on the right track for its professionals and for the company.

In most companies, sales forecasts are not worth the paper they are written on. Forecasts often are presented to management without any evidence to support their assertions. What's more, it's not uncommon for the sales force to fabricate forecasts in an effort to keep top management at bay.

These sales managers are harming the company – which must plan ahead to fulfill its projected sales. By putting all sales information on the table, openly and honestly, major problems can be headed off at the pass.

Step 4: Instituting an ongoing regimen

In this phase of the sales checkup, the company develops a plan to prevent it from returning to a vulnerable sales situation.

To remain healthy, a company's sales organization must develop new habits. For example, a global service company seemed to have healthy sales – until the economy took a dive. Then the phone stopped ringing. That's when the

organization found out its sales force was great at answering calls, but completely unskilled at making them.

The firm instituted a program focused on helping its sales representatives develop and maintain relationships with key accounts and prospects. By putting the focus on the lifetime value of the client, rather than the dollar amount of a single sale, the company launched its employees on a revitalized sales effort that could be sustained over time.

Don't wait until your company is on the brink of serious illness. Invest in a sales check-up to transform future sales challenges into healthy sales. Make your appointment now.

Debbie Mrazek is founder of Plano-based The Sales Company. She can be reached at 972-618-1880 or debbie@the-sales-company.com. Learn more about sales at www.the-sales-company.com.

ARCHIVES:

[Click here for Portfolio and Columns archives](#)

[return to top of page](#)

Local Weather (click for forecast)



Plano, TX
Reported by Addison, TX
Partly Cloudy

Fri Jun 25 08:48 AM CT
Temperature: 82°F/28°C
Humidity: 74%
Barometer: 30.02in/1018mb
Winds: CALM at 0mph/0kph

Click for Forecast

THE WEATHER CHANNEL
weather.com

Inside Collin County Business Links

News

[Business Beat](#) | [Briefs](#) | [Community Reports](#)
| [Columns](#)
[Resource Directory](#) | [Search](#) | [Archives](#)

Resources

[Event Calendar](#) | [Business Resources](#) |
[Subscribe](#)
[About ICCB](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Advertising](#)