

COACHING PIPELINES AND PERFORMANCE

“How’s that working for you?”

It’s an entertaining question when asked on television, an enlightening question when we actually think about our activities and answer the question truthfully.

PIPELINE REPORTS

How is yours working for you? Is it helping you **develop** your **people**? Are you doing **more business** because of it? Does it improve your ability to create accurate forecasts? Do any reports actually cause more business? While they might allow us to identify areas which require attention, reports can’t and don’t develop people or business.

Too many pipeline reports cause sales people to demonstrate they’re **busy – not brilliant**. Many contain misleading information.

Even managers with the best of intentions can’t usually find time to review and use the overwhelming volume of information that is sent to them. Few reports are ever reviewed and even fewer are used for coaching and for developing talent.

So, why spend the time? Why create a climate that fosters frustration or conflict? You need the information, but do you need the report?

Here’s a radical idea ... change the process and change the outcome. Instead of requiring reports, measure what matters by asking your people the right questions well. **Coaching is a contact sport!**

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

We’ve devoted several newsletters to the subject of measuring activities that correlate to results (<http://efficientmarketing.com/newsletters>). We believe that the most significant sales activity is the completion of a Serious Meeting[®].

As a coach, therefore, we recommend that you ask about Serious Meetings, about activities that cause them, and about the results that follow. Asking the right questions will allow you to discover the truth – while **adding tangible value**.

You’ll achieve optimum results by using a consistent approach. A copy of our Monitor & Measure What Matters model (#111) is available upon request by sending mail to info@efficientmarketing.com

If, in your business, there is an activity which is a better predictor of results, use it. Just keep in mind that we must be able to **correlate the activity to a desired result**.

COACHING PERFORMANCE

We believe in attacking ambiguity, but – in terms of *performance* – we want our people to have a degree of flexibility in determining what *performance* means. At Efficient Marketing, we define *performance* in terms of the quality and quantity of activities and behavior. So – don’t tell your people what “*performance*” means, let them tell you and agree on the definition.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS WELL

We have overwhelming evidence that coaching discussions are more effective when a formal process is used. **Plan** your performance coaching session, **prepare** like a pro, execute with precision. Be ready! Be prompt! Be focused! We are judged by our actions.

Develop your own consistent approach to performance coaching. We’ve enjoyed great success using these steps:

STEP 1: A few days before the coaching session, Schedule an Appointment. Say something like “_____, on _____ @ ___ am/pm, I would like to invest some time together to:

- Discuss your assessment of the past (day, week, two weeks, month)
- Establish expectations for the next (period)
- Agree on the plan you will execute to meet those expectations.”

STEP 2: Prepare for the session by collecting information and preparing your hand-written agenda. Review it. Review notes from previous sessions.

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STEP 3: During the discussion, collect information – do not request a report. As coach, you will ask questions using your own version of our Monitor & Measure What Matters form.

During the meeting/discussions, use a handwritten agenda to channel your questions and comments. By doing so, you are modeling the behavior you expect your teammates to use with clients and endorsers.

If appropriate, discuss non-business topics – them and/or family. But, don't stray too far from the agenda and objective – developing people to be more productive.

STEP 4: Use planned comments and questions. Here are a few examples:

- “Let’s review your expectations for the past _____.”
- “How do you feel about your performance during the past _____?”
- “What went really well? Why?”
- “What didn’t? Why?”
- “What has to happen during the next ____ for you to feel good about your performance? Your results?”
- “What do you believe is possible in ‘your territory’?”
- “What is needed?”
- “Do you need any help? From Whom? What?”

You may believe that you don't have time to ask lots of questions and complete a form. Do you have time to not ask?

Make wise choices. ■

Tim

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