
Future Of Commercial Services: Sales Manager

Introduction

Commercial services are what strengthens a nation financially. In our ever-changing world, commercial services play a critical role in any country's economy. In fact, I doubt if any nation can survive without commercial activities. Commercial services refer to activities that facilitate trade. They are more or less aids-to-trade, such as retailing, warehousing, transportation, marketing, etc. Each of these branches of commercial services offers a wide range of career opportunities. In the retailing sector, one can delve into various careers be it a sales representative, a sales manager, a wholesaler, a retailer, etc. There is also another aspect, the transportation sector which offers career opportunities, such as distributorship, drop shipping, etc.

Of all the various careers mentioned, the most common one is sales management. Sales is an ancient form of doing business. In the early centuries, humans exchanged goods through trade by barter. Conversely, as the world got more sophisticated, business firms and industries realized that they needed to acquire the services of sales personnel. Therefore, this gave rise to the career, sales management. Therefore, if we are to fully explore the potentials of sales managing, pertinent questions need to be outlined.

Firstly, who is a sales manager? What are the qualifications and requirements needed for the job? What skills are needed to be upwardly mobile in the field? What nature of capital is required to start, if any? What are the ranks in this profession? These questions outlined above would enable us to obtain an in-depth knowledge of the dynamic nature of sales managing.

Talent, Aptitude And Qualifications Required Bb A Sales Manager

Sales managers are usually responsible for a team of sales representatives selling a particular type of product or work with a certain type of customer, such as business to business scale. They are usually responsible for a team of sales representatives selling a particular product or working in cooperation with a certain firm or customer, such as business to business scale. In most organizations, sales managers have several responsibilities. They include activities like:

- Developing sales strategies and setting sales targets
- managing individual and team quotas
- creating a sales plan and proactively experimenting to improve execution
- monitoring progress in real-time and analyzing data
- overseeing the organization's sales training
- initiates and develops effective sales promotion strategies
- keeping an active watch over and involvement in key accounts
- mentoring individual sales reps and administering incentive programs
- recruitment, hiring and firing of sales representatives
- allocating areas to sales representatives
- developing and supervising the sales department
- compiling and analyzing sale figures

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- collecting customer feedback and market research
 - reporting back to senior managers
 - keeping up-to-date with products and competitors

In order to execute these functions as an efficient and effective sales manager, there are some important skills that are required of you in order to perfect your role:

- **Recruit, hire and onboard new sales people:** Sales managers are often responsible for building their own teams (or working alongside HR to build their team). In many roles, sales managers are tasked with the responsibility of recruiting, interviewing, extending job offers to, and training new sales people for a smooth transition into the team.
- **Leadership:** Successfully navigating activities such as: incentivizing, empowerment management and motivation on a regular basis takes a massive amount of initiative. Your job isn't to do everything for your team, rather, build the right and efficient team that can excel when given useful tools, proper guidance and incentive. That's what leadership is.
- **Ability to train, coach and mentor:** A sales manager has to effectively train his/her members and enable them to grow professionally beyond just leading his/her team. A sales manager should understand their responsibility to help the members of their team nurture and develop their skills. What matters most is the ability to increase sales performance of others; this is what makes a sales manager effective and not only consistently beating quota in your current position. The importance of acknowledging that you'll need to be ok with stepping out of an active selling role, in exchange for making your primary role, in exchange for making your primary mission helping others sell should not be underestimated.
- **Defining, implementing (and innovating) sales plans:** Implementing process and regular planning are essential in order to maintain a successful business model as your sales team grows and the company scales over time. Having an easy to follow sales plan, packed with process documentation, scripts, templates and ongoing training ensures your team members are all on the same level, makes sure your team performs consistently and shields against the possibility of some team members falling behind others. A sales plan is a living instrument that's actively shaped in real-time as your organization grows, changes and most importantly learns. As a sales manager, it'll be your job to keep up, modernize, impose and design your team's go-to-market plan.
- **Organizational skills:** There will be a lot of demands on a sales manager's time during the day so one ought to plan out his schedule in order to get a major jumpstart on being organized for the week ahead. Part of being an effective sales manager and Leader is showing your values and clearly articulating your priorities to your team members. Share exactly what's expected of them, how you'll be measuring their performance and rewarding them. It is also important to establish how you want your team to work, taking the time to explain in detail how you want your team to work. Set the right goals and enforce your sales process.
- **Interpersonal and communication skills:** Interpersonal skills are traits you rely on when you interact and communicate with others. They are mostly used for the purpose of communication and building relationships with others. Strong interpersonal and communication skills are key as most sales manager jobs today clearly highlight just how much you'll often have to hop on the phone, show up for presentations, dive into partnership development and otherwise be involved in the sales process with key accounts from start to finish. Not everybody is very good at these skills but it can be

improved by going out of your way to over-communicate (within reason) with your fellow co-workers. Examples of good inter-personal skills are active listening, teamwork, responsibility, leadership, motivation, flexibility, patience, empathy and dependability,

Other top talents and proficiencies required by a sales manager include: meeting sales goals, negotiation with other firms, motivation, sales planning, building relationships, market knowledge, developing budgets, staffing and the ability to work calmly under pressure

To become a sales manager, you need to possess proven experience in sales, with a good record of achieving targets. Most employers would consider your sales and management experience, market knowledge and track record to be more relevant than your academic qualifications once you reach management level.

Employers may prefer you to have a qualification such as an HND or degree for some sales job, such as hi-tech scientific or engineering equipment. You may wish to back up your experience and develop your management skills by studying towards a relevant level 4 professional qualification. In some jobs you could be travelling around the world to meet customers, so it may be helpful to speak a second language.

Most sales managers have at least a bachelor's degree; some may have a master's degree in business, management or related field. However significant experience (1-5 years or more) in the sales field, as a sales associate or in some other sales capacity, as well as proven leadership will help.

Possible Job Opportunities In Sales And Marketing

Below are some possible job opportunities in Sales and Marketing:

1. **Marketing Manager:** In the sales and marketing industry, the role of a marketing manager is essential as they are the people responsible for figuring out price, thereby helping organizations to efficiently maximize their profits. They also ensure that a company's customer base is satisfied as well as estimate the demand for the company's products and services and determine possible prices for those products. In addition, they are also saddled with the responsibility of hiring staff, team building, proper and strategic planning and managing budgets.
2. **Insurance Sales Agent:** The services of an insurance sales agent are necessary if companies are looking for reasonable insurance policies. Insurance agents contact potential clients so as to sell their various insurance policies to them, namely, auto, health, home and life insurance. They also sell property damage and liability policies as well as employee and executive coverage and product liability. Insurance is regulated and as such, agents must be properly licensed.
3. **Sales Representatives:** The relevance of this profession is based on the buoyancy of the economy. Customers' needs change with time and as a result, sales representatives must be able to adapt and evolve with changing trends as well as anticipate the needs of their customers at that particular time. Sales representatives are tasked with the sale of goods and services to businesses, government agencies and organizations instead of selling directly to consumers. Manufacturers and wholesalers depend heavily on sales representatives to promote merchandise ranging from food products to sports

equipment. Sales representatives must possess two crucial skills, namely, an enthusiastic personality and a tolerance for travel. They are expected to attend trade fairs and conferences so as to obtain information on upcoming new products as well as the changing demands of customers. They are also tasked with carrying out administrative duties such as analysis of sales statistics or filing of expense accounts.

4. Logistics and Supply Chain Manager: It's not just enough for a firm to produce goods; they need to be able to transport those goods to the consumers. Hence, they require the services of logistics and supply chain managers who will assist the firm to transport their goods in a timely and cost-effective manner, thereby meeting customer requirements. Logistics and supply chain managers are charged with the responsibility of directing and managing of a firm's logistics and supply chain operations so as to efficiently maximize productivity. They also play a vital role in developing and maintaining good relationships with vendors and distributors.

Prospects In Sales And Marketing

Prospects are potential customers that would possess certain criteria that a firm looks out for. Some of these criteria could be if they fall into a firm's target market, that is, a specific group of people who the firm wants to sell their products to and who the nature of their products appeals to, as well as the financial capacity to buy the product and the authorization to make buying decisions. Once a firm identifies a person that possesses these criteria, he becomes a prospect to the firm and as such, they begin business transactions with that person.

Sales prospects are vital to the growth and expansion of a business as they are a source of revenue to a firm. As a result, firms are expected to track their prospects, as doing so would help them to obtain information about their prospects as well as find out where they are in the sales process, for instance, a lead can become a prospect, then a sale and eventually a repeat buyer.

Costs Involved In Sales And Marketing

The costs involved in sales and marketing vary according to the size of the firm as well as sales made within a specified period of time, in most cases, a year. Cost of sales and marketing could arise from services such as advertisements, public relations, promotions and trade conferences. As a result, firms need to make marketing budget, so as to cover the costs of these services. Depending on the industry, marketing budgets can range from 1% to 30% of total sales made. New businesses may spend up to 50% of their sales for marketing services provided. Smaller firms may try to estimate the amount their competitors spend and imitate them.

Work-life Span And Retirement Plan

People who work in sales and marketing may work for up to 35 years in the field. In addition, they might work in different capacities in sales and marketing. However, the retirement age for sales managers is between 60-65 years.

Occupational Challenges As A Sales Manager

In the line of work of a sales manager there are various challenges one will face as a result of day to day work as well as accidents that greatly impede the work of a sales manager.

A few of those challenges are listed below:

- Sales representatives reporting false or misleading information to the sales manager

Sales managers face the problem of their subordinates reporting false information on the numbers relating to the sales for a time period. This could be caused by an error on the part of the sales representative in the adding of up of the numbers of their sales or in a more serious case it could be done intentionally with the objective to defraud the company .This problem can be curbed through regular inspections and checks.

- Sales representatives not having some skills essential to the sales representative job

This is when the new hires for a company lack the needed skills to sell goods effectively. This challenge is one that is resolved overtime as the new employees learn the specifics of the trade from their seniors in the company.

- No reliable automatic way to track sales

This problem is one that relates to the first one mentioned in that keeping track of all sales can be quite a challenge and it is up to the sales manager to come up with the optimum solution to track sales. One example of said solution is a CRM (customer relationship management) software.

- Maintaining consistency with subordinates

It is important that a sales manager is able to maintain a level of consistency when dealing with his/her sales representatives so that every person working under them can all feel satisfied doing their jobs.

- Aligning with marketing

As a sales manager it is necessary that one can reliably align their goals with those that are in charge of marketing. Setting meetings with those in charge of marketing is important so that a sales manager can alter their sales strategy as needed to allow the work of the marketing team boost the sales of the sales team.

Possible Impact On Society

The role of a sales manager in the society is something that cannot be understated; it is an important role that takes charge of the process of distributing goods from firms to their customers and bringing in revenue for the firms they work for. This in turn allows the firms to perform charity works for the communities where they are located.

Conclusion

From the above, it is quite evident that it is not easy to become a successful sales manager. A lot of factors and skillset are required for one to be a seasoned professional. Above all, these outlined facts enable one to remain focused in achieving one's career goals.

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