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MENTOR

Clifton Warren

Five tips for being a 'coach on the run'

If you are an aggregator, principal mortgage broker or an executive operating in the finance market, you will be facing intense competition from competitors who are offering a similar range of products and services. However, you can achieve a competitive advantage through the development of your salespeople

In today's world it's not enough to be a good manager or an aggregator; you also have to be a great sales coach. This can be easier said than done, given the daily pressures of running a business.

Despite lack of time, the best sales coaches are always internal sales managers, team leaders and executives as they understand the lie of the land. More managers are not effective at sales coaching because they were never taught how to do it.

If coaching on the run is your only option, here are five sales coaching questions you should ask your sales team every week. They are 'on the run' because the conversation should only take 10–15 minutes over a cup of coffee.

Question 1: What specific goals did you accomplish this week?

The focus should be on actual goals vs targeted performance. The goals that brokers should focus on are:

- number of new customers
- size/loan amount
- number of referrals

This is a good question for starting with. When you ask it, you will hear their success stories and their war stories. Simply listen and congratulate them on their achievements.

Question 2: What specific ideas did you learn?

This is your opportunity to learn – ask about new initiatives, techniques and strategies.

Question 3: What mistakes did you make?

If we do not make mistakes then we are not trying. We all make

mistakes – some are funny and others disastrous. This information should be captured and shared. This question will also provide you with clues as to where your assistance may be required.

Question 4: What specific follow-up actions are needed?

Once you are at this stage, the person should be relaxed and have opened up to you. Now you can determine where your help may be required.

Question 5: If you could do it again, what would you do differently?

It is OK to make mistakes, but not to keep making the same mistake. While we cannot go back, we can be better prepared for it next time. The power in this question lies with the person you are talking to coming up with their own answers to their problems.

This sales coaching process only takes 10–15 minutes for each person in your team.

The person receiving the coaching feels good because you have taken the time to listen and help them work through their sales problems. After the coaching, if more in-depth discussion is needed, you will have an idea of the time and resources required.

To become a great sales coach, you don't need a high-powered degree. All you need is to know the types of questions to ask, to listen, and invest 10–15 minutes with your most valuable asset. ■

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