

10 Characteristics of the Best B2B Telemarketing and Inside Sales Leaders

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When it comes to developing telemarketing and inside sales managers, some companies make some mistaken assumptions.

Companies put a lot of stock in their inside sales teams, and rightly so. These men and women are the face of a company. They make the calls, engage with prospects, and turn decision-makers into customers. As such, companies invest a lot of time, effort, and money into ensuring their reps have the best possible product training, interpersonal skills and sales savviness to do the job. Then what do they do? They tend to pluck the best producers away from the phones and move them into management.

On one level, this makes sense. These are special people—the best in the business. If you recruit managers from your inside sales force, you know that you have people who understand the job, the industry and the product or service. By meeting and

beating quota consistently, they've proven that they know how to engage, communicate and close.

Where management often goes wrong, however, is assuming that top producers will magically morph into sales managers that can instill their talent, persistence, and determination into the whole team.

Unfortunately, it's not that simple.

Inside sales managers are more than people in charge of the inside sales department. They need to be leaders. They require the temperament, training and character to inspire, encourage and mentor ordinary sales reps to become the best producers possible.

It's your job to recognize the characteristics of leadership and provide the training to help your inside sales managers lead your inside sales and tele-sales teams to new heights. To prove my point, consider that 69% of reps that exceeded their quotas also rated their sales leader as excellent or above average.

Here are nine characteristics to look for in your leaders:

1. Demonstrates a Passion for the Business

Passion can be infectious. It can inspire others to accomplish more. If you want a leader to inspire others, look for a person with a passion for selling and the industry.

2. Leads by Example

A leader doesn't bark orders. Whether they want reps to be more persistent in their follow-ups, to get to work earlier or to become more informed about the products they are selling, the leader instinctively makes sure that they live up to these expectations. In this way, rather than dictating behavior, they empower B2B tele-sales and inside sales to want to achieve more. And their example shows them how it's done.

3) Recruits Raw Talent

Inside sales and telemarketing leaders understand their industry well enough to identify raw talent. They have the discernment necessary to know whether or not a rep - with the right training and opportunities - has what it takes to develop into a

top producer.

4) Builds Upon Talent

Developing talent requires more than training and mentoring. Good leaders provide the tools and inspiration that will retain good reps once hired. They challenge agents by raising the bar, encouraging them to grow and providing opportunities. They invest in the required tools and technology as well as competitive compensation.

5) Sets the Right Targets

While meeting quota is a rep's number one objective, good leaders will set other targets to keep individuals and the team on track. They may set goals for calls per day and require monthly checks to see that CRM records are up to date. But what sets great leaders apart is their ability to use targets as a way to emphasize critical tasks, encourage desired behaviors and overcome weaknesses.

6) Monitors Results

True leaders manage by the numbers—not merely by gut instinct. They use metrics to track the results—both of individuals and the team. They're systematically measuring and analyzing everything from lead conversion rates and length of the average sales cycle to quarterly revenues and customer retention rates. This way, they can identify a potential problem early and give a rep extra training or put a sales team back on track quickly.

7) Monitors Quality

A leader does not bury his or her head in reports. They get to know how the team members handle prospects and customers. They listen to calls, gain understanding of the agent's soft skills and product knowledge. The customer is number one, so your reps need to treat them that way. How is the overall customer experience when dealing with your team? Are they asking all the right questions and following up on emails in a timely manner?

8) Takes Responsibility

Responsibility is about more than being accountable for inside sales meeting its goals; it's about demonstrating the leadership skills to accept responsibility for the

outcome. And rather than playing the blame game, they know that when the team falls short, loses a vital sale or misses quota, the responsibility ultimately rests with the manager. What's more, a leader proactively assumes authority for fixing the problem and making sure everyone understands what they need to do going forward.

9) Instills a Culture of Teamwork

Leaders encourage teamwork among reps as well as across departments. They tear down the barriers between field reps and inside salespeople and insist on the same opportunities and standards for all. They facilitate greater alignment among sales and marketing to create a single set of objectives, focused messaging, and better customer experience.

10) Establishes Procedures

Sales leaders want to manage reps with a consistent, even hand. They want agents to know what's expected. No surprises. By systematizing procedures, such as email campaigns, follow-up routines and nurturing schedules, reps are always clear on their next steps. They not only know what they are expected to do but also have resources to turn to for reference if they are unsure of what to do.

It takes more than a top producer to become an inspired tele-sales and inside sales leader. It requires character, commitment, empathy and understanding to build a winning sales team.

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