



Canadian Professional
Sales Association

Since 1874

6 TIPS & TRICKS FOR SALES LEADERS



It takes talent, skill, and perseverance to become an inspiring and successful sales leader. Your goal is to guide a high performing sales team, after all, and only the best can lead the best. It's also your responsibility to wear many hats, and to pull them all off. You manage group dynamics, influence the workplace culture, and keep the working environment one of growth and innovation—among other things. Management of such a high caliber requires a versatile person that possesses many unique qualities.

There's no point in sugar coating it: Being a sales leader is an incredibly tough job. Get ready to be a star seller, a motivational speaker, a keen strategist, and natural born leader, depending on the ever-changing demands of the day. And not necessarily in that order, either.

But there's good news, too! First of all, it's an incredibly exciting and rewarding job. Second of all, even sales leaders need support and guidance. There are some tried and true tips and tricks to help both the budding sales leader and the seasoned sales professional keep themselves and their teams sharp and focused.

Everyone can benefit from a quick refresher. Whether you're feeling too green or too worn out, or maybe simply a little uninspired, don't worry! There are changes and tweaks both big and small that can greatly impact your success as a leader.

Get ready for a reboot with the following tips and tricks.

1 | LEAD WITH POSITIVITY

Are you not seeing the type of behaviour, enthusiasm, or results that you've been expecting from your team? Pay attention to your language and leadership style. Leading with more positivity is a tiny change in perspective that you can put into action immediately.

Your team takes their cues from you. If you're overly negative—about customers, about missed goals, about individual performances—all those around you will emulate your bad attitude.

It shows true leadership and strength to remain positive and enthusiastic during difficult times. When faced with challenges, choosing to focus on positive outcomes, encouragement, and constructive (but not harsh) feedback is a powerful way to set a good example and boost team morale. Your customers are sure to respond better to the positive shift in your salespeople, too.



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**YOUR TEAM TAKES THEIR
CUES FROM YOU**

TRICK

Challenge yourself to end each workday by focusing on at least one positive professional triumph. Did someone close with a notoriously undecided customer? Did the team follow up with an impressive number of leads? Shifting gears and focusing on success will recharge your team at the end of the day, especially if it's been a particularly rough one.

2 | FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR PEOPLE

As a sales leader, you're always encouraging your salespeople to follow up with leads before they go cold. Take your own advice and follow up with your own team accordingly.

It's one thing to talk the talk, but there must also be follow through—and this means following up. Whether it's to track the progress of specific goals set in coaching, training, or sales meetings, or something more general, touching base with your team is important.

It's a great opportunity for you to glean the types of information and activities that are most useful, how to better engage and challenge your team, and which issues are still lingering unresolved.

TRICK

Following up on key discussions will help you build connections and trust with your team. It will also promote accountability. After coaching, training, or sales meetings, schedule a short five-minute follow-up with each team member set for later in the week. Committing to a time for a follow up meeting time right away will show that you've made it a priority even with your hectic schedule.



3 | CREATE A CULTURE OF LEARNING

The sales industry is in a time of great change. Naturally, a position in sales is by no means static or stagnant. It requires constant learning. That means that innovation and growth are not only nice; they're necessary.

Sales leaders would benefit from emphasizing the need for constant development and training—for both themselves and their team. Creating a culture of learning is key. Your team should feel empowered enough to take learning and development into their own hands, but you should also make resources available.

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**TEAM SHOULD
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TRICK

Try offering constructive feedback, providing recognition to team members who focus on growth, creating a formal training and development plan (that is constantly being updated), or developing a more informal way to share knowledge and resources.



4 | ACCOUNTABILITY COUNTS

There may be no “I” in team but there are actually two in accountability! What does this mean? It means that success in sales is a team effort, but it’s also important for both sales managers and team members to be held accountable—not only for blunders, but for successes too!

On the one hand, sales leaders shouldn’t be quick to point the finger at their team for missing targets before examining their own performance. However, if your team is successfully accomplishing their goals, you don’t want to steal all the credit, either.

It works both ways. If your team fails, you fail. If your team succeeds, you succeed. There is no need for blame. Share accountability.

TRICK

Try acknowledging your own accountability during a particularly difficult situation, and see how your team reacts. They will likely be more willing to examine their own shortcomings and opportunities to improve. Make sure to also follow up with your team to offer either coaching, feedback and encouragement, or recognition, depending on what the situation calls for.

5 | RECOGNIZE GREATNESS

If being a sales leader is a tough job, being a salesperson is no walk in the park, either. Your team members likely work long hours and dedicate a lot of their time and resources to the success of the business. It's important that you recognize the hard work they put in if you want to keep morale high. No one will give their 100% if they feel like their efforts are unappreciated.

A strong recognition program can be a great tool for a sales leader looking to promote development and dedication, and set the tone for a happy workplace. Planning a big end-of-the-year bash is one thing, but to reinforce behaviours on a daily basis you will need a better system—smaller scale, but ongoing. Rewards don't always mean monetary, either. There are many other ways to compensate and motivate your team members besides cash bonuses. Figure out what works best for your business.

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU RECOGNIZE THE HARD WORK

TRICK

Look into sales compensation plans, or create a list of perks that are relevant and valuable to your specific team—and make sure you can deliver on them. Then create a sustainable, ongoing reward system.



6 | GET ON THE SAME PAGE

Alignment is important. A team can feel broken or disjointed without it, so it's important to promote open communication between yourself and your salespeople. The goal of this, among other things, is for everyone (not just management) to be aware of and fully comprehend the goals and values of the business. Sharing the same vision is meaningful.

TRICK

Set aside time in the day for a short meeting—or even a 10-minute briefing midweek. Even a small time investment can make a big impact when it comes to aligning your team.

TIPS, TRICKS, & MORE WITH CPSA

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