



8 Themes to Work on Driving Sales Productivity

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Am I the right person and how are you selecting me?

Knowing who to select is really the first step. It is important to start with a 'success profile' that articulates what the role is all about, key deliverables, interlinkages and specific profile requirements. This makes the search process specific and consistent across stakeholders. Along with this, the 'right' selection process completes the step. One key aspect that does get missed out at time is enabling hiring managers to be fully competent in the process so that the model is used consistently. Right hiring = higher predictability of success.

How will you help me get ready for my role?

For sales, early success is key. Not only does it drive outcomes quicker, it does play into retention. As one sees success, they get motivated, engaged, incentives come in, recognition and hence it drives them to do even better. A smart onboarding process is designed to help sales members succeed in the context of the organisation.

Who do I report to and how can I deliver?

It would be great to understand how one can progress in the organisation and how expectations from the role is evolving. It starts with the manager in the current role that will change as time progresses and role changes. The sales and organisation hierarchy become important to understand so that one can aspire where they wish to be and plan to make it happen

What are my targets? How will my contribution be evaluated?

Clarity of purpose is not just the vision and mission but the actual conversion of the same into the role expectations and deliverables. One wishes to be successful each day, every day and for that targets – both input and output and the appropriate framework of managing performance is needed. And this is where supervisor's role becomes critical. The supervisor is a coach, guide, mentor to help their team member move up the curve as in their success lies the supervisor's success.

How are you motivating me to stretch? And for a good job done, what do I get?

Come on, least you can do is a pat on the back for a job well done and not only for outcomes but the sheer effort that the sales member puts into it. It is not about money only but a wider platform to be recognised and stand out. Variable earning does make them feel good but specific, seasonal or product-based upsides do help. In the Indian context, social recognition also plays a role and could be a point of consideration.

If I need help to hone some skills, what support can I expect?

Enhancing capability in a structured manner is one input to consistent productivity. Dylan's Times They're a Changin' has never been truer. Beyond products and process, one needs to be also developed on key attributes of a great sales professional, what am they are doing well on and hence what they need to develop. The expectation may not be face to face in a class but a multi-modal experience where learning is byte sized and on the go. This will also help prepare them for their next role as we all know that the 'best sales person may not be the best manager'.

What are the tools and platforms that will simplify my life?

With simplicity being the new normal, one is eagerly looking at means to simplify life. Helping one save time and keeping the focus on core role becomes more important. There are many platforms, process and technology enablers that can do this today. Smart organisations are experimenting and adoption newer ways of doing things across the entire employee life cycle

Is the organisation culture enabling for me? How will supervisor coach and guide me?

The manager has a critical role to play and he/she can't shirk away from it. In fact, I believe that the role of a manager is making their team and members see success, address their issues and make them shine. It is about creating a transparent, engaging environment where one can be who they wish to be and give their best again and again because they love what they do where they are. Remember "smells of the place"

Creating a Productive Frontline Force

Organisations that rethink their approach towards business strategy and articulate a response quickly may well capture opportunities faster than others ... one area that will require immediate attention will be SUSTAINABLE SALES PRODUCTIVITY ... how can we do more with what we have?

Before sharing specific aspects on the HOW, important to appreciate some nuances around this theme.

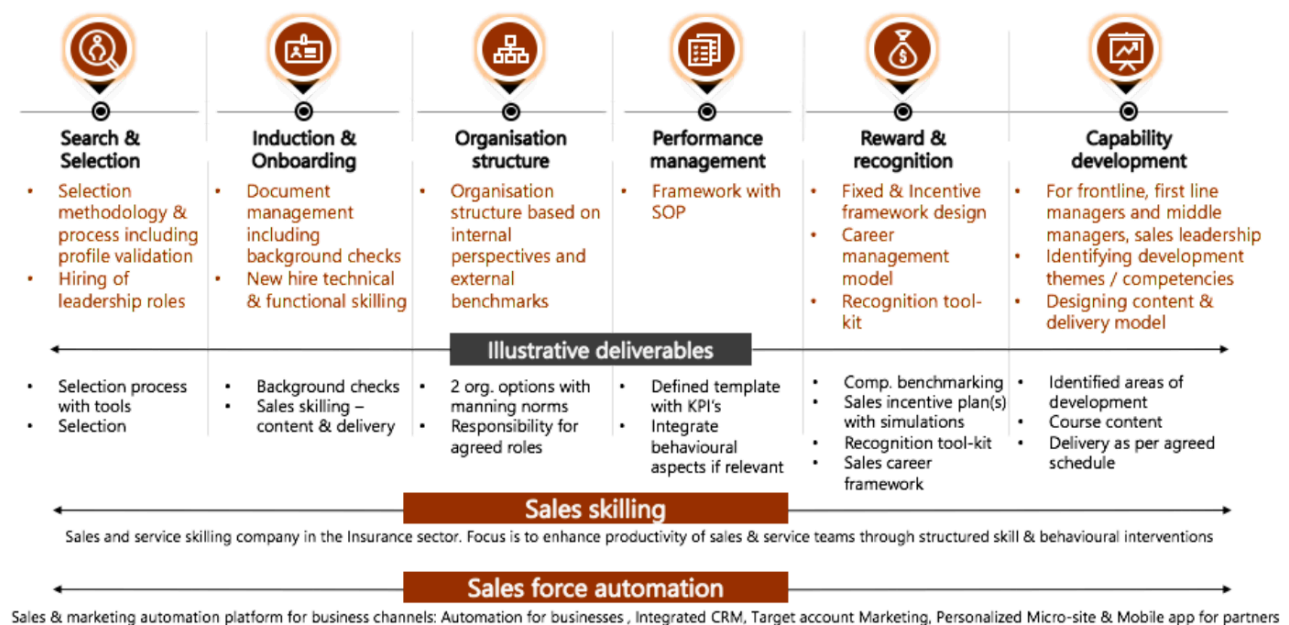
- Sustainable, high performing Sales organisation, needs work across multiple touch-points Journey commences with a comprehensive understanding of the current internal situation
- Along with the frontline resource and enablers, focus also needs to be on the immediate supervisor / branch head and other roles, as they define actual execution on ground
- In essence, such interventions are transformative with a large change management component Essential to view this as an extended journey, from immersion to design and implementation
- Organisation has to commit to invest time and internal knowledge with an open frame of mind
- Comprehensive smart communication will be an essential ingredient for success

I believe it all starts with how one is made to feel, the moments of truth, the ‘smell the organisation’. Dr Sumantra Ghoshal used the metaphor of “smell” to refer to the corporate environment and culture and explained what should be the top-management mindset to improve the “smell” of the workplace for the sustainable success of the organization. The same individual behaves differently in two different contexts and it is the quality of management who create the right context around their people to improve their contribution to the company.

Productivity has two components – quantity (surely) and quality (absolutely). Output that is not of the required quality is wasted effort and high quality but minimal output is not good enough.

It is a process or a composite framework of multiple touch points and initiatives and not one transaction in isolation.

At SDF, we have created an integrated offering that allows us to provide a comprehensive solution. Our first critical step is what we call ... IMMERSION wherein we understand the client context and journey in great details along with existing process maps, branch / office visits. Based on the findings and validation of an existing hypothesis, the specific solution set is customised from the list in the diagram below.



About the Author:

Debraj is a Senior Partner, SDF, is a strong believer in the power of positive relationships as an enabler to development and growth. He is an experienced professional with two decades of professional experience in Human Resources. He is a Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder Centred Coaching certified coach for Executives & Teams. Debraj's passion lies in driving performance through people. He advises CEO's & CXO's on appropriate solutions to address their people challenges. He has worked in both consulting and line roles, and has seen and experienced the complete value chain from strategy to execution. This allows him to conceptualize and execute solutions that are practical simple and practical, two elements, he attempts to embody in everything he does. He completed his Masters in Personnel Management (MPM) from SIBM, Pune with distinction

About Salto Dee Fe Consulting:

Salto Dee Fe Consulting (SDF) is a business enabling consulting firm that works at the intersection of Strategy & Execution and Business & Human Resources. We partner with organizations to leapfrog their business to its next phase of growth. We do this by co-creating bespoke solutions that are scientifically validated and enable organizations to meet their business objectives. With expertise across industries, sectors, and geographies, we partner with you to solve your most important HR challenges. We are exclusive partners of TSG - The Talent Strategy Group (New York). TSG is globally respected for their Thought Leadership in Talent Management based on science-based simplicity. Amongst their clients are multiple Fortune Top 100 companies.