

videos. Get them to be serious about the art, science and skill of selling. Then, based on what they have learned, try one new skill per week. Maybe it is coming up with a new question. Maybe it is presenting in a different way. Your customers will tell you — quickly — what works and what does not.

You can drive this as a manager. Here are some easy ways to do it:

■ **Assign reading and reporting. Or, better yet, assign training.** Pick a salesperson every week and have him find a sales article that speaks to an issue he is dealing with. Then have him present it to the team and train on the key concept in the article. This can be even better than you driving the team's training.

■ **Have salespeople come up with one new question to ask customers each meeting.** Try them out in actual sales calls and report on the results the following week. You will end up with a great master list of questions.

■ **When salespeople come to you asking for a price discount, make them give you two specific reasons the customer said he would prefer to buy from your company.** If your salespeople cannot do that, do not give a discount.

Say no to bad deals. Period. Even if the salesperson comes in with a signed contract, if the deal is bad, make him go back and get more money.

■ **This might be the most important point. Say no to bad deals. Period.** Even if the salesperson comes in with a signed contract, if the deal is bad, make him go back and get more money. This is a painful experience for a salesperson and he will not want to repeat it. If you say “no” to a bad deal twice, the salesperson will train himself to get better pricing.

As I stated in the beginning, if your team members are not skilled, you will have to

use giveaway pricing to get business. Why not build their skills instead? Create a culture of sales skill improvement and your job will be more profitable and more fun. ■

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