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About STAR Results

STAR Results is a sales leadership coaching, training and consulting organization dedicated to leadership development. Our mission is to inspire sales leaders, managers and sales people to rise to their full potential.

The sales force is the key growth driver for many companies, yet many companies fail to operate anywhere close to their full potential. We help sales organizations maximize the performance of their sales team by transforming sales managers into great sales leaders.

About Steven A. Rosen MBA

Steven is the founder and president of STAR Results. Steven Rosen brings over 25 years experience, both on the ground and in the executive suite, to his work with individuals and organizations to transform sales executives and managers into true sales leaders.

He is the author of 52 Sales Management Tips: The Sales Manager’s Success Guide, and has been honoured as one of Top Sales World’s Top 50 Sales & Marketing Influencers for 2014.

When you hire Steven, you get Steven. He personally works with a select group of clients and their management teams to elevate them to greater personal and professional success. Steven knows sales — inside and out; he’s been in the trenches and commanded the troops. Steven builds high-performance teams, mentoring senior sales executives and front-line sales managers to grow their businesses to new heights.

Steven has a fresh approach to corporate leadership, strategy development, execution and team building in the pharmaceutical and packaged goods sectors. His expertise in aligning sales and marketing initiatives to achieve key business results and exceed customer expectations has enabled Steven to continually exceeded sales objectives from his days as a sales rep to his achievements as a VP of Sales for Alcon Canada and Biovail Pharmaceutical Canada.

Steven knows the types of challenges and obstacles you’re up against. He’s been there and broken through, and you can too. He is a high-energy and colourful speaker who will inspire your organization to realize STAR Results.

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Steven holds an undergraduate business degree and a Masters in Business Administration from Concordia University.

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Executive Summary

Sales organizations are experiencing unprecedented change. As sales decline and profits get squeezed, companies are finding it increasingly difficult to support large sales forces. Sales leaders are being forced to find new ways of being more productive using fewer resources.

Most companies have traditionally been very good in supporting sales reps with initial training programs, product training and ongoing skill development. However, we have seen less support from the same companies in developing their sales managers.

The purpose of the 2015 STAR Sales Managers Development Survey is to understand the priorities of sales leaders in the area of sales manager development. Our goal is to benchmark the importance and level of support sales managers are receiving with respect to four core sales management skills:

1. Coaching Sales Reps
2. Managing Performance
3. Hiring Top Performers
4. Business Planning/Acumen

Number of Respondents: 310 respondents participated in the survey from across the globe and across industries.
Key Findings

1. The four critical skills/activities we surveyed (performance management, hiring top performers, coaching and business planning) were all deemed important responsibilities of the front-line sales manager role.

2. Sales organizations place a high level of importance on managing sales performance and hiring top performers.

3. Coaching and business planning were considered an important responsibility of the sales manager yet significantly fewer respondents agreed/strongly agreed that their organization found these two skills/activities as important.

4. There is a significant gap between the importance organizations place on hiring skills, sales performance management skills, and business planning verses the ongoing training support the organizations provide in these areas.

5. Roughly 50% of respondents agree/strongly agreed that their organization is providing ongoing support in developing core sales management skills.

6. A majority of respondents indicated that their organization didn’t have a formal process to evaluate the success of making the transition from sales reps to managers nor did their organization provide formal training to support this transition.

7. A majority of sales leaders agreed/strongly agreed that their organization did not have a dedicated training function/resource to support sales management development.

8. Nearly half the respondents stated that their number one sales manager development priority in 2015 was improving performance management skills.
Sales Managers Responsibilities

The following chart represents the most important responsibilities the front-line sales managers have according to the responses in the survey.

The majority of sales leaders agreed/strongly agreed that the four core skills surveyed are highly important job responsibilities of the front-line sales manager role.

Managing performance is deemed to be the most important responsibility followed closely by coaching sales reps, scoring 96% and 94% respectively. We intend to expand the list of key skills/activities in our 2016 survey.
Organization Recognition of Sales Managers Skill/Activity Importance

The following chart represents sales leaders level of agreement on importance organizations place on each skill in the survey.

A majority of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed that their organization place a high level of importance on hiring top performers and managing performance.

Both coaching and business planning/acumen were seen as relatively lower in the relative importance by the respondents.
Sales Managers Responsibilities Vs. Organization Recognition of Sales Managers Development Importance

The following chart represents the relationship between the sales manager responsibilities and the organization importance of each skill/activity surveyed.

Comparing the importance of each activity/skill to how important these skills/activities as viewed by the organization, we saw a drop off in the number of respondents agree/strongly agree on the organizational importance on all four skills surveyed.

Coaching had the largest drop off (34%) between how sales leaders viewed coaching and how important they felt the organization viewed coaching. Many industry studies have shown that coaching is the most important sales management activity for driving sales performance.

We see this as a major disconnect in how organizations view the the importance of coaching skills. We wonder if this has a negative impact on the performance of many sales organizations.
Organization Support of Sales Managers Development

The following chart represents the level of agreement/disagreement sales leaders had on whether their organization provides ongoing skill development in the four core skills surveyed.

A majority of respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that their organization is providing ongoing support in developing core sales manager skills. Although the organization put a high priority level on the core skills surveyed, there is a disconnect in the level of ongoing support being provided to their sales managers skill development.

Senior executives would agree that sales managers are critical to driving sales performance, however, it appears they are not putting their money where their mouth is. As sales organizations evolve to a more customer focused business model, more decisions are being made at the territory/customer level. As a result, the need for better trained front-line managers becomes even more critical.
What is the Opportunity?
We believe that sales organizations that can effectively address the training gap in their front-line sales managers will see positive impact on sales performance.
Organization Recognition of Importance Vs. Organization Support of Sales Managers Development

The following chart represents the relationship between the organization’s recognition of the importance of each skill/activity and the ongoing support organizations are providing their sales manager development.

There is a significant gap between the importance respondents put on hiring skills and performance management skills, and the ongoing training support the organizations provide in these areas. There is lack of alignment between the importance organizations put on key sales management skills and the level of support they put behind developing those skills.

Across the board, organizational support of key sales management skill development falls terribly short. Less than half of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that their organizations are investing in the development of their front-line sales managers key skill sets. It’s not surprising that organizations are not getting the most of their sales teams and that managing performance will continue to be a challenge for managers.

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New Sales Managers Transition Evaluation and Support

The following chart represents the level of agreement on whether organizations have a formal evaluation process of the sales manager success in the transition from salesperson to manager, and formal training offered to the new sales managers making this transition:

Most sales organizations promote their top sales reps into sales management roles. Once promoted, a majority of sales respondent organizations (54%) do not provide training to support this transition. Also, a majority of respondents (63%) disagree that their company has a formal process to evaluate whether sales managers have been successful in making the transition from sales reps to managers/leaders.

This explains why many new front-line sales managers fail to perform and succeed in their new role. Companies that do not have sufficient internal resources to develop new sales managers should be looking to outsource this process. The first 90 days are critical for the success of a new leader.
Dedicated Sales Managers Training Function

The following chart represents the presence of a dedicated training function in the organization to support sales management development.

Less than 40% of respondents said that their organizations have a dedicated training function/resource to support sales management development. Depending on how many sales managers a company employs, such a dedicated function may be considered too costly. However, given the importance of the front-line sales managers development, the organizations should set up strategies and funds to support the ongoing development of their sales management team.
Coaching

Q: My organization is convinced that sales managers would be more effective coaches of their salespeople if they had ways of continuously elevating their coaching skills.

An overwhelming number of sales leaders agree/strongly agreed with the statement. Based on our experience, a high majority of companies do very little to gauge the coaching effectiveness of their sales managers. New assessments such as The Coaching Effectiveness Snapshot™ allow both sales leaders and front line sales managers to get feedback on their coaching effectiveness as seen by their sales people.

Q: My company continues to train our sales managers on coaching skills in a meaningful way even after they have been in their role for several years.

Slightly less than half the sales leaders agreed/strongly agreed that their company continues to train tenured sales managers on coaching skills. Industry studies have shown no correlation between sales manager tenure and effective coaching. Coaching is a challenging skill and companies can benefit from ongoing training on this critical skill.
Leadership and Alignment

Q: Our company looks to its sales managers to align sales team goals with corporate goals and values.

This question looks to understand whether organizations look to their sales managers to align their sales teams’ goals with the company’s goals and values. There was a 50/50 split on this, which surprises the author, as I believe it is critical to have all employees aligned with the corporate goals and values. Given that sales is the key revenue generator and the face of the company to the customer, it seems like too many companies don’t see the link.

Performance Management

Q: My company utilizes a proven, performance management approach that teaches our managers how to effectively manage performance.

About half respondents agree or strongly agree that their company has a proven performance management approach in which they train their managers. There are certainly opportunities for more organizations to have a more defined performance management process to help their managers become more effective at managing performance.
Biggest Priorities for Sales Managers Development in 2015

The following chart represents the number one priority respondents have for sales managers development in 2015.

![Bar chart showing priorities]

Based on our survey, the number one priority for sales management development in 2015 is improving performance management skills. This emphasizes the increased focus sales leaders have on sales performance. Also, there are many new apps being developed to better track and manage key performance indicators. The second priority is developing better sales coaches.
Recommendations

5 Strategies for Developing a Strong Sales Management Team

1. Provide intensive support and feedback for new sales managers to ensure a smooth transition from sales rep to sales manager/leader.
2. Support tenured managers with ongoing education to promote continued skill development; do not assume that experience alone guarantees success.
3. Identify the critical competencies/skills required to be a successful sales manager and provide development initiatives to “sharpen the saw.”
4. Align your training initiatives with organizational priorities.
5. Outsource! If internal resources are lacking, be proactive and bring in outside expertise.

Best Practices for Developing Great Sales Managers
Appendix: Respondents Classification

The following tables represent the classification of the survey respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>18. Your location</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>19. What industry are you in?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Goods</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Tech</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### 20. Please select the title that best describes your role.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VP Sales</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Unit Manager/Director</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Sales Manager/Director</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Sales Director</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Line Sales Manager</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainer</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 21. How many direct reports do you have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 22. How many first line sales managers are in your company?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;4</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-10</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 23. What title best describes the person you report to?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Sales Manager</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Sales Manager</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Unit Manager</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP of Sales</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>