VARIETY AND FUN IN FIELD COACHING

Field Coaching is a vital component of any sales force development program. If Sales Managers want to deliver *results through people*, they can't neglect this training tool!

So much for exhortations! You know you need to do it (and the how's and why's are covered in another paper). The issue here is how we keep field coaching **fresh**, interesting and **engaging**.

DON'T FORGET THE BASIC PRINCIPLES

Creative field coaching is a step beyond basic principles. Get the basic principles established first.

Our aim is to position the basic 10 Step Process in sales peoples' minds so that they follow it when we are not with them. If they are able to take you through the process below *without* prompting, then maybe it's time to try something new.

Precall:	1.	What's the situation?
	2.	What are my objectives?
	3.	How am I going to achieve them?
	4.	What sales aids do I needs?
	5.	(The Call)
Post Call:	6.	Well done!
	7.	How did I go versus my objectives?
	8.	What did I do well?
	9.	What could I change/improve?
	10.	What am I going to do next time I call on this customer?

FIELD COACHING VARIATIONS

When two people work together regularly, a mutual respect develops and they become an effective team, focused on growing the business. With a little pre-planning, these "work with" days can be varied, fun and highly productive.

Here are some variations to plan into the day. These may be in half day chunks (too much variety can become confusing).

1. "No Negatives" Day

No self criticism, no suggestions from the manager on what should have been done differently or better.

In the Post Call, concentrate only on what was **done well** and positively reinforce it.

Slipping into criticism means you have to buy the day's refreshments, handle the next 2 calls, and do the physical work … or whatever other penalties you agree!

2. Role Reversal

The Sales Managers sells; the sales person takes the coaching role.

The sales person briefs the manager in the pre call session, the manager handles the call, the sales person handles the post call debrief.

This reinforces the **process** in the mind of the sales person and helps the manager to keep his selling skills fresh.

3. Specific Skill(s) Day

Focus exclusively on the top 1 or 2 skill priorities agreed during the last work with day. Or, on the skills reviewed at last week's modular training session. Or, on the individual's most recent e-learning work.

4. "Sales Driver" Day

In a retail selling environment, focus on **one** of the things that drive sales: range, stockweight, no out of stocks, off location displays, use of point of sale material, etc.

5. A Customer Needs Day

Spend much more time discussing customers' needs with them – their challenges, business priorities, current initiatives, expectations from suppliers, how we can work more effectively together, etc.

6. A Target Customer Growth Day

Visit existing high value accounts (at the expense of routine calls elsewhere), spend more time and focus on building the business.

7. A Competitor Conquest Day

Focus on competitors' better accounts. Set out to diminish their presence or oust them.

8. Dual Selling Day

Practice dual selling. Pre-plan the call and agree roles (who handles what parts of the call, signals to hand over to the other sales person, etc); both sell during the call; jointly review performance.

9. Two Sales People Together

Delegate the coaching role to a senior sales person who has been trained to coach. He/she accompanies a colleague and handles the coaching role on that person's territory.

Note: It can be useful to put 2 experienced sales people together where each handles half of the calls. They learn from each other first hand.

SUMMARY

Once the basics are understood and practiced, start introducing variations.

Always pre-plan, before the day, before each call, what variations you will use.

When you have exhausted our list, start creating your own!

John Sergeant
john@jsasolutions.com
www.jsasolutions.com
Tel: 61 2 9972 9900