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In Search Of Closers

Most sales managers dream of managing a team of “closers” While the ability to close sales is a prerequisite for many professional salespeople, a sales team full of closers can be disastrous for the sales manager and for his or her company.

When a business first begins operations, or when an established company launches new products or services, evangelizers or visionaries are required to spread the company’s message. This type of salesperson possesses boundless energy and enthusiasm, and is in turn energized by new challenges and opportunities. Primarily concerned with bringing orders in the door, and much less concerned about holding the customer’s hand after the sale is made, she is a “closer.” Strong closers are fiercely independent. They know how to sell, have their own individual styles, and resist micromanagement.

A sales team populated only with strong closers may be thoroughly lacking in the ability to nurture, develop and retain valuable customers. Their sales managers and senior executives might begin to wonder why customers drop from the top of the company’s sales funnel, visit and buy for only a short time, and drop out the bottom of the funnel, never to be seen again.

The buying influencers of an enterprise’s best customers, for example, may resent attempts to continually “close” them on new products and services. They may not require the constant emotional energy transmitted by the “closer.” They may, instead, want thoughtful, non-emotional counseling and guidance on trends and opportunities from the sales team and from other departments in the seller’s company. Once they’ve been closed, they may want and need more than continual product and service sales pitches.

Most companies need a variety of sales talents to help build and sustain dependable, long-term sales revenue. Closers are always required in a selling organization, since all companies need to continually attract new customers, if for no other reason than normal customer attrition accounts for the loss of about twenty percent of a company’s customers each year. The experienced sales manager, however, recognizes the value of talented closers while remaining aware of their limitations.

To be successful, an NFL football team needs an effective quarterback; but a team of quarterbacks would be anything but effective playing against a traditionally-balanced NFL offensive unit. The same need for team balance is a requirement for the successful sales organization.

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