



The
Sales
C O A C H
Enhanced Performance. Delivered.

Sales Management Puzzle

How to focus on the fundamentals
of sales management





Are you a **first line sales manager**? If you can become an expert at the core disciplines listed here, your team and career will thank you...

First line sales management is one of the **most rewarding and demanding roles** in any organisation. Your targets are fixed, but nothing else is. Your team's requirements, the market, competitors, the economy, your clients, their challenges and even your organisation all frequently shift.

In such a dynamic environment, both internal and external, there are so many priorities to take care of that the core of the first line sales manager's role can be missed. Our simple **sales management puzzle** (see below) can help you to focus on the fundamentals. Do you have each piece of the puzzle covered?

Typically, we find that 'company-wide' operational aspects (such as the GTM strategy, product market fit, ideal customer profile, positioning and messaging, core onboarding and development, tech stack, targeting and incentives) are all carried out at a second line or company level. Or, with first line input or ownership in smaller or start-up environments.

Outside strategic and operational aspects there are a set of skills and disciplines which, in our experience, we see high performing sales managers excel at. They form the **sales management puzzle**.

Peter Drucker shared: "**Leadership** is doing the right things, **management** is about doing things right." In many roles this can be a blurred distinction, because we need to **lead and manage** – ourselves, our teams and others. When we explore sales management, we do so in this blurred reality of leading and managing. Yet often we find the 'discipline of management' is either undervalued or poorly applied.

If you are a **first line sales manager**, excel at these core disciplines and you will go far.



Pipeline Obsession

Know your team's pipeline at a macro and individual level. Does it make sense (dates, stages and qualification maturity)? What has changed and why? Is there enough coverage of the right solutions? What is this telling you and how do you coach from it?

Coaching Deals & People

Learn a repeatable coaching model and how to apply it. Coaching is critical; it's not a task but rather a mindset – it should be a default behaviour. Become proficient at coaching for performance, coaching to drive skills, coaching 'directively' to drive change, micro coaching conversations, coaching groups, and deal coaching.

Team Culture & Cadence

Be aware of the rhythm of your team: weekly, monthly and quarterly. Use the forums you hold up your sleeve to help them focus, be accountable and upskill. "There is a shadow of the leader." What is your shadow? It is defined by the norms, behaviours and standards you set. It is how we play the game and generate the fuel and energy of the team.

Sales System & Leverage

Help your team leverage the systems available to them. Ensure your sales process, methodology and model are working for them and coach to them. Help them leverage the tech to drive the promised efficiencies and effectiveness (or block the noise).

Performance Improvement

Continually support and lift performance. Learn a way to assess where your team are on a regular basis. You could adopt the skill/will matrix or (even better) a performance-based one. One approach doesn't fit all. Requirements and performance change, so have a game plan to help set non-financial objectives. Support these and decide how you will follow up.

Metrics, Data & Insight

You need to know your business inside-out. This includes what the data and metrics are telling you at a macro level and then for each team member. Help them find and act on the insights in the data. Marginal gains can have a huge impact if acted upon, so you need to know where and what they are.

Forecasting & Reporting


This is a bugbear for many – get good at it. Know what needs to be true for an opportunity to be in the forecast zone, and be sure to leverage your qualification methodology well.

Report beyond the metrics and numbers. You should construct a narrative around the data in terms of successes, challenges and suggested changes. Don't forget to ask for input in return.

Cross Team Collaboration

Sales and marketing integration is critical, but so is collaboration with many functions, including lead generation, product, customer success, finance and legal. Remove the blockers, ensure the interactions are high value and efficient, and obsess around leveraging the value while protecting your team's time.

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