



Sales Leaders, Does Adding Pressure Help Your Underperformers?

Description

It can be challenging to figure out how to best handle a direct report who is just not performing well. Our first inclination as sales leaders may be to put more pressure on the underperformers. While you may have a few salespeople who perform better this way, adding pressure might end up doing more harm than good.

Sometimes underperformers have already put so much pressure on their own shoulders to set meetings, close sales and hit their quotas that adding more can be stifling and ultimately debilitating.

A Quick Story

When Lisa was in sales in 1990 at ADP, she struggled with hitting her numbers and put even more pressure on herself than anyone else could have possibly put on her. In frequent team meetings, she was constantly faced with how poorly she was performing compared to others. This external pressure, combined with the pressure she was already putting on herself, ultimately had a huge impact on her performance. Her lack of confidence was clearly coming across to prospects as she seemed too needy and desperate for the sale, and she eventually decided sheâ??d quit.

When she went to her boss to give her notice, he told her she was making a huge mistake as he knew how successful she could be. He made her a deal that if she stayed for three more months and didnâ??t improve, he would help her find her next position. He could see that she was so focused on her numbers that the pressure she was feeling was contributing to her lack of success. Then, he gave her the best sales advice sheâ??d ever gotten. He told her to **stop worrying so much about the numbers and just focus on doing the right number of the right activities right.**

This conversation with her boss was an absolute game-changer for Lisa. Once he released that pressure valve, she was able to relax and ended up finishing in the top 8% of 2,000 salespeople that year!

Three Steps to Helping Your Salespeople Boost Performance

If putting more pressure on your underperformers won't help, what can you do instead?

1. **First, rebuild their confidence.** Remind them of past successes and assure them you'll work together to get there again. Let them know that sometimes all it takes is a small tweak to their sales process to make a big difference.
2. **Then, help determine where they are struggling.** Plan to go out into the field together so you can see the challenges they face and schedule time to debrief.
3. **Lastly, put together a developmental plan.** Work with them to set activities that will get them from the 50-yard line to the red zone and ultimately into the end zone.

How Do YOU Help Your Underperformers?

What are some ways you help your direct reports boost their performance and potential when they're not hitting their quotas? We'd love to hear your suggestions in the comments below!

Want even more suggestions for leading your sales team to success or some assistance with how to best support your direct reports day to day? [Contact us](#) to learn about our customizable sales leadership program and how we can help you help your team boost performance!

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