

attempt to coach is that they end up taking over the sales call and try to make the sale for the rep instead of letting the rep fail if necessary. I know that is difficult. In fact, it was the most difficult thing I ever had to do as a sales manager. It is excruciating to watch a sales call go wrong when you know exactly how to make it right. The thing to remember is that your job is to improve the rep's skills on every call he makes. If you step in and sell, you are only helping him on one particular call. You cannot always be there.

The second biggest mistake is to dictate instead of persuade. Coaching is not a dictatorial process of "You must do this." Rather, it is a persuasive process of "If you do this, here's how you'll benefit." Use your selling skills in coaching, remembering that you are trying to sell your rep on a new course of action.

The final method of profitable behavior change is the least fun — accountability. Now, you are not persuading. "Holding someone accountable" means that you are acknowledging the salesperson is deficient in some aspect of his job, that you will not accept that deficiency and that he must correct it. This could be activity-based (maybe he is not hitting his activity numbers), it could be skills-based (perhaps he refuses to implement a critical sales skill despite having been trained and

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coached on it) or perhaps he is not treating co-workers well.

Now you have to say, "Do this or else these consequences could come to you." That does not have to mean termination. It could mean losing territory or customers, entering a probationary period or other smaller, short-term consequences. One thing to remember is this: In all but the most extreme behavioral problems (e.g., lying to customers, maltreatment of co-workers, etc.), you

do not have the standing to hold someone accountable for a behavior unless you have trained and coached him on it already. At some point, if he simply refuses to succeed, yes, you have to terminate him — but it is a progressive process.

Profitable behavior change is possible, it is enjoyable and it is the best way to build your team's results. Remember and implement the three steps and you will be fine. ■

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