



Five Key Principles of Sales Motivation



So it's your first day at your sales job and your sales manager is presenting you with your incentive plan! How exciting is that? And you're probably thinking your new employer really has it together to make that the first priority of the day, right? Because money is the only thing that really drives a true salesperson, isn't it?

Or is it?

Let's examine fundraising. Fundraising is a form of sales, and yet many professional fundraisers working for non-profit organizations earn less than sales professionals in the private sector. What motivates these individuals, if not big bucks?

Often it is a sense of contributing to their community, or being the change they want to see in the world, or a private passion grounded in personal reasons (example: fundraising for the American Cancer Society after losing a family member to the disease.)

Then there are the tales of sales pros who rock the leaderboard and break the bonus bank, only to move on to greener pastures with another company and struggle to make a quota that other reps are easily meeting or exceeding. They just can't seem to get as excited about what they are doing (or what they are selling) as at their previous job.

The sooner a sales manager learns that managers don't motivate people, and that any individual can motivate only himself, the sooner that manager is on the road to running a motivated and successful sales team. A good manager doesn't drive success – she simply supplies the fuel, the roadmap, and turns the key.

Motivation is an ignition switch, not the engine.

Sure, financial incentives and rewards are a motivation to any true salesperson (or most any employee for that matter.) But the passions, hobbies, and interests of an employee can be powerful motivators as well. This is especially true with the Millennial workforce, where making a positive impact in the world, or a contribution to the community in which they live, is a big part of what brings them to their employer of choice, keeps them coming to work each day, and drives them to succeed while they are there.

Therefore, employers who really "have it together" don't count on their incentive plans as being the only thing their sales engines need. Certainly bonuses and commissions fuel the engine, but engines also need oil to keep running smoothly and water to prevent a meltdown. Smart employers start motivating their sales force *from the initial interview*, and have a scheduled maintenance plan from there.

1. **Start motivating before the hire.** When screening applicants, recruiters probe to find what a candidate's interests, hobbies and passions are, and what they've accomplished in life related to those passions.
2. **Find their passions and feed them.** Hiring managers make note of those other-than-dollars motivators and see if there is a match in their workplace.

- Does your candidate enjoy food drives and serving Thanksgiving dinner to the homeless? Perhaps your organization has a holiday food drive and needs someone who can spearhead such a project.
- Does your applicant participate in bicycle rides or 5K runs for causes? It could be your organization might benefit from some visibility in the community and you could use someone who could put together a company team for such an event.

3. **Cash is just paper with numbers and dead presidents printed on it.** It's what we do with money that makes it so attractive. When an individual joins your company, of course you want to show off your incentive plan. Do so with relish – but know it can be even more effective if you can tie it in to wants, needs, desires, and passions.

- Does your new rep love sports cars? What kind of sports car is she saving for? How much would she need to make to purchase it in 6 months to a year?
- Does your rep love to travel? Where has he been? What has been his favorite place to have visited so far? What is still on his "bucket list"? What's the next travel experience on the horizon? How can you help him purchase those tickets?
- Does your rep just want a better life for her family? What does that mean? What does that look like? A home of their own? A more reliable car? An upgrade in home furnishings? A family vacation instead of a staycation? How much would she need to make in order to make that happen?

4. **Time is money.** Today's workforce often values paid-time-off as highly as cash – some even more so. Don't forget time off as a motivator. And, while your top salesperson is "gone fishin'", be sure to hang a sign on his cubicle to inform the rest of the team that he's earned a well-deserved day off and is thoroughly enjoying it.

5. **If life is a journey, nobody really wants to reach the finish line first.** Keep in mind that pushing only toward a monthly, quarterly or year-end quota doesn't always motivate. The journey there has to be engaging and stimulating enough to keep your sales team motivated even during the long, dry stretch of road. Keep your sales team focused on the big win with contests, games, and prizes that celebrate incremental steps forward and little wins all along the way.

Good managers don't drive sales professionals to success, they find the motivator ignition switch and turn the key. They provide the roadmap and the fuel (training, tools, coaching.) And they play pit crew along the way (mentoring, ongoing training, one-on-ones and reviews.) And everybody stands in the Winner's Circle. Need help training and motivating your sales team? [Contact us](#) here at Invenio!

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