

An OAD LLC Report

Sales Reps - Doorkickers vs. Maintainers

In many industries a common career path to outside sales has often followed this scenario - Start a person in an inside position to learn the various products and their applications, e.g. warehousing, inventory control, engineering; then to Inside Customer Service or Sales Engineering, and, finally, to outside commissioned sales.

Outside Sales, envisioned by many as being as close to nirvana as one can get while still working for a living. A car with paid insurance, gasoline credit cards, meal and lodging reimbursements, cocktails with clients, and cruising the highways during the day just collecting those orders with an occasional trip to the office to pick up commission checks. Unfortunately, reality is slightly different, and all too often the new Sales Representative and the employer usually realize this in hindsight.

The financial results are losses larger than the company imagined . . .

- Lost sales revenue.
- Wasted salaries, benefits, and training revenues.
- Dismissal of a once-valued employee.
- Lost or disenfranchised prospects.
- Additional recruiting or training \$\$\$.

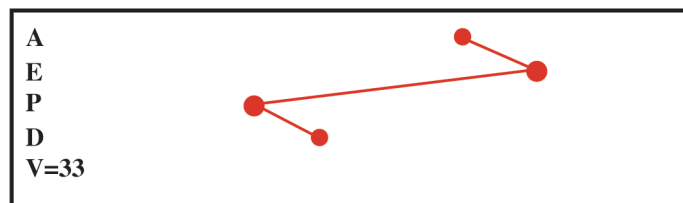
All of this, of course, is not to say that a company does not repeat the process. One of the reasons for this repeat pattern is because too much emphasis is placed on product knowledge. The more complex the product, the more knowledgeable the Rep must be - so common sense would reason.

Consequently what is often sent out to the field is a product expert, not a people expert. Initially a product expert is filled with confidence because he or she knows the product inside and out, can explain features and benefits, and know prospects who need the product. It's simply a matter of making an appointment, presenting the product, providing a complete explanation of its uses, and (logically) the purchase order will be issued.

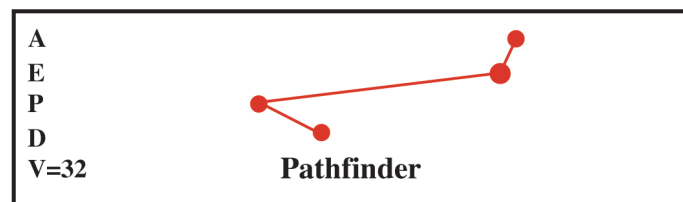
Much to the amazement of the expert, however, appointments are extremely difficult to get, and, once obtained, it is usually with someone far removed from decision-making authority. In this scenario, numerous calls to the same prospect are required before a possible sale is made. The report to the Sales Manager, "They're sold, it's just a matter of time."

Doorkickers

Outstanding Sales Representatives know how to prospect, to establish contact, get to a decision maker, to qualify and CLOSE!



These abilities are primarily due to force of personality. These are assertive, persuasive, and impatient individuals who are not so much focused on the intricacies of their products as they are on getting the product (or service) and its benefits in front of someone who can make a decision or call a meeting of decision-makers. In OAD jargon, these are **Higher A & E - Lower P & D** personalities.



High commissions relative to base salary motivate Doorkickers, and they require latitude in how they work their particular territory. They are de-motivated by close supervision (e.g. detailed call reports, paperwork) and tampering with the territory and commissions. This is not to imply that product knowledge is not necessary or important, but that can be taught - a sales personality cannot. We have repeatedly seen that Reps with the right traits will consistently outsell the Rep who has advanced product knowledge, but lacks sales temperament.

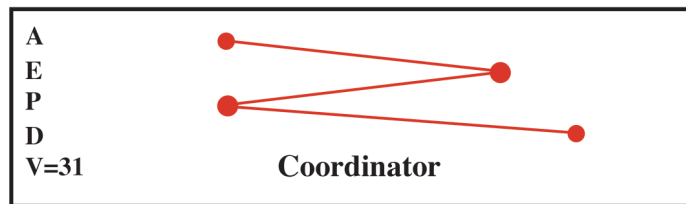
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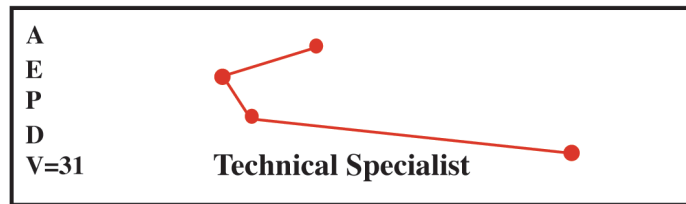
Maintenance

Once a customer is solidly established it is time to introduce the strengths of the Maintainer.

Maintainers are service-oriented personalities. Their interests and strengths lie in making certain the customer remains happy. Depending upon the nature of the products or services, these individuals may be called Account Managers, Engineering or Software Support, Inside Customer Service (not "Inside Sales"), or Outside Customer Service, Repair, /Installation, and other related types of activities. In OAD terminology, these are Higher D/Lower A personalities. The socially-minded are Higher E's – Coordinators and Friendly Service. The Lower E technically-minded are Technicians and Technical Specialists.



Maintainers are motivated by a competitive base salary with less emphasis on commissions – they are more security oriented. They like having good product literature for support and accessible supervision when they encounter a problem. Obviously Maintainers need exposure and reinforcement in selling skills, but selling will rarely be their primary strength – service will.



Organizations should periodically analyze how their Sales and Customer Support departments are staffed and structured in order to develop the right mix of field Doorkickers, Maintainers, and Inside Customer Service. Reliance on one group to assume the responsibilities of the other results in playing to weaknesses and underutilizing strengths. A complete integration of job roles may seem the most efficient and cost effective way of selling, until one determines the amount of sales never made and customers lost.