The New Sales Manager
Challenges for the 21st Century
Second Edition

Walter Vieira
The New Sales Manager
‘All truly wise thoughts have been thought already thousands of times; but to make them truly ours, we must think them over again honestly, till they take root in our personal experience.’

Goethe (1749–1832)
The New Sales Manager
Challenges for the 21st Century

SECOND EDITION

A distilled, easy to digest, one-month programme

Walter Vieira
To
CELINE

who has been a major support
through my varied ventures
Contents

Preface 9

Acknowledgements 10

1. The Trauma of Promotion 11
2. From Caterpillar to Butterfly 17
3. Serious Deficiencies of Salesmen 21
4. A Difficult and Challenging Job 24
5. Comparative Analysis—Top Problems in Sales Force Management 29
6. Qualities Liked and Disliked 32
7. Attributes for Success 38
8. Managing the Job 44
9. Managing Time 50
10. Key Role in Corporate Planning 57
11. The Planning Process 64
12. Selecting and Recruiting Salesmen 76
13. Focused Salesmen Training 92
14. Planning the Itinerary 104
15. Effective Communication 110
16. Beyond Words 116
17. Written Reports 119
18. Making Meetings Work 124
19. Morale and Motivation 132
20. Effective Control 141
21. Appraising and Developing Salesmen 147
22. Discussing the Appraisal 153
23. The Salesman Who Won’t Improve 158
24. Common Errors 166
25. A Focus on Ethics 171
Chapter 26. Values and the Sales Manager 175
Chapter 27. Age of Networking and Cooperation 182
Chapter 28. The Sales Manager in the 21st Century 185
Chapter 29. Ten Commandments 191

Sample Forms 195
About the Author 203
Preface

The New Sales Manager, first published in 1997, was well received and became popular with many sales managers in the corporate sector in India and in the neighbouring countries. The reviews in the media were also very encouraging.

Since The New Sales Manager contained what seemed like ‘eternal truths’, I did not want to disturb its contents for a long time. But now, ten years later, I feel that it can do with some additions, to meet changes in the environment. The new issues I have dealt with in the second edition include the use of technology in sales management, from having a simple cell phone network to the use of computers; the use of networking, a critical input in every field in our complex environment; the role of governance that comes with laying a solid foundation of values in sales managers, who in turn will be good examples to salesmen.

I have added more questions to ponder over at the end of most chapters—questions that have arisen while using this book as base material for seminars on sales management.

I hope the readers will find that these additions add value to the book and will help to further increase the effectiveness of the steel frame of the sales organization, which is sales management.

There are now many individuals with MBAs from smaller institutes who start their careers in the field of sales. These salespersons have a good foundation in management theory—often they know more than what a sales manager who has not done a management programme might know. However, The New Sales Manager goes beyond management theory into the realms of experience. It contains material that is not taught in management schools. Therefore, The New Sales Manager will be relevant and useful even to those sales managers who have to deal with the new crop of salespersons who have an MBA behind their names.

Walter Vieira
Acknowledgements

Some important ideas have been taken, with permission, from Professional Sales Management (1988) written by Rolph E. Anderson, Joseph F. Hair, Jr and Alan J. Bush. Some ideas have also been taken from the work in sales management by K. Haas and William Wachs. I am grateful for these contributions.
‘Whatever reason you had for not being somebody, there’s somebody who had the same problem and overcame it.’
Barbara Reynolds

Dear Roy,

THE TRAUMA OF PROMOTION

Now that you have been appointed a sales manager, you will naturally want to know what is expected of you. I am going to do just that, through this series of letters. I hope you will read them, re-read them and try to implement most of the ideas that I am setting down. What I am saying here is the distillate of my experience as a sales manager. I first worked under their control. Later I became one of them and I continue to work with sales managers.

I know that you have neither the time nor the inclination to read tomes on sales management. I will, therefore, keep this series simple and down to earth. You can read just one chapter every day and take a holiday on the weekend!
Figure 1.1
Salesman or Sales Manager?
Most people now agree that *an outstanding salesman need not necessarily evolve into an outstanding sales manager*. Many of the qualities required for an effective sales manager are different from the qualities required to make a successful salesman. A good salesman is a prima donna—an egocentric, successful, creative personality. A sales manager, however, has to work with a team—get work done through other people—be the ‘leader’ of a team. He has to have the ability to *select, guide, motivate, direct, control* and *appraise*. He not only has to have the ability to do a job by himself but also has to be able to get others to do what he wants done.

Yet, most often, a good salesman is promoted to the job of a sales manager, as a reward for the good work done! In the process, the company might have lost a good salesman and acquired a poor sales manager! And therein lies the problem. This is a problem you must guard against right from the start.

To aggravate the problem, most companies fail to give adequate training to a new sales manager. No job description is laid down and, therefore, no job analysis is derived. Neither the company nor the sales manager knows exactly what is expected in the new assignment. There is no clarity of thinking. Since no standards are set down, in the form of a job description, the year-end appraisal of the sales manager also becomes difficult.

What is the process normally followed? The salesman is called to the office, informed about his promotion, given a good raise in salary and allowances and a new executive bag (which looks distinctly different from a salesman’s bag!). There are warm handshakes all around wishing him all the best in his new assignment. In such circumstances, he does need all these good wishes!

Having been thrown into the deep end, he might just about survive if he knows the basics of swimming. Or, he might drown in the middle of his frantic attempts to keep himself afloat. All this while, his bosses stand around the pool nodding sagaciously.
Some, of course, nodding even more vigorously with emphatic mutterings of ‘I told you so’ and ‘I knew he would not make it’.

It is a sad commentary that most organizations spend a lot of time, effort and money in training new salesmen. They do the same with senior management. But first- and second-line sales managers and their orientation and training needs are either forgotten somewhere along the way, or taken for granted!

What I have said here is the rationale for these letters to you. I hope that this series will contribute to your development as a person and as a sales manager. If you can read just one chapter every working day and spend some time on the exercises (Questions to Ponder Over), you can be a professionally-changed person at the end of just one month.

Yours sincerely,

\[Signature\]

Box 1.1

**Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About**

Sid was an outstanding salesman. He had been working for a multinational company for 14 years and was considered the most productive salesman in the country. He was pleasant in his manners, good at verbal communication and could empathize with his customers. Many of his customers became good friends after only a short association. Sid, however, was getting frustrated because some of his colleagues, who were junior to him in service
and who had performed less creditably, had been promoted as sales supervisors while he continued to be a salesman. He felt there was no justice in the company as outstanding performances were not rewarded and this depressed him.

It was about this time that a newly established pharmaceutical company was looking for an area sales manager. A friend of Sid, who knew the marketing manager of the new company, suggested that he apply for the position. He did, and was selected for the job on the strength of his record as a salesman.

The new company had no training programme for sales managers. They did not think it worthwhile to sponsor candidates for training courses outside the organization at a time when there was ‘no money to spare’. Moreover, Sid had no clue about a sales manager’s assignment, duties and responsibilities. He did not make an effort to do any reading on his own either.

For six months, Sid worked according to his own perception of the job. He selected the wrong kind of salesmen—the kind who might have been successful in a multinational company but did not have the ‘self-starter’ quality, the high initiative so necessary in a new company’s field-force. He sent them out into the field without adequate training. The territory coverage plan was not worked out with any thought. In fact, it was virtually left to the salesmen to work out their own customer-classification list and journey plan.

With sales dropping every month, Sid was getting increasingly desperate. Instead of diagnosing the underlying disease, he tried to find cures only for the symptoms. He rushed around the territory, using his contacts and his personal selling ability, trying to build up sales and substituting himself for all seven salesmen of his team. This was physically impossible and the sales graph reflected this.
The responsibility for this sad situation lay with both the company and Sid. But neither was prepared to analyse the problem dispassionately and find solutions. The inevitable happened. At the end of six months, with a yawning gap between targets and actual sales, Sid resigned—before his services could be terminated.

Another sad experiment had ended!

**Questions to Ponder Over**

1. How could Sid have changed the situation in his company? What would you have done if you were in Sid’s place?
2. What should Sid’s superior have done to help Sid in his new assignment?
3. What do you think are the main responsibilities of a sales manager? List them in order of priority.
4. Work out a direct comparison between the job of a salesman and that of a sales manager.
Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.’

Chinese proverb

Dear Roy,

From Caterpillar to Butterfly

It is not going to be quite like the title indicates, Roy, but you will be undergoing a considerable metamorphosis as you take on your new responsibilities as a sales manager.

As I have said earlier, you can no longer be a prima donna. You may be a super salesman, but you can’t possibly do the job of eight or 10 salesmen cumulatively. It is physically impossible. So now you must be a team leader, who is able to guide, train, motivate and control other people and get them to produce the desired results, rather than trying to do the job yourself.

You will have to manage the most scarce and irretrievable commodity—time—so that you can strike a balance between managing and operating, between the desk and field activity.
You will now have to become a planner—a thinking person—in addition to being an ‘activity’ person. As a salesman you surely did some planning. But now you have to plan for your whole team, and plan both for the short term and the long term. Your planning will need to encompass men, material and money in terms of inputs, and achieving planned and approved sales and profits in terms of outputs.

You will have to develop the ability to identify good candidates for your recruiting programme so that you can build and maintain an effective, tight-knit sales team.

You will have to be a teacher and master transfer-skills, so that you can coach salesmen—new and experienced—both through classroom and in-field training.

You will have to improve your verbal and written communication skills. As a salesman, your reports were essentially quantitative. As a sales manager, you will have to communicate far more, and in all directions—upwards, downwards and laterally. Your reports must not only contain facts, but also an analysis of these facts. You must also indicate the action taken by you on your own initiative and then the action recommended to be taken by the office.

You will have to plan, conduct and implement sales meetings. Earlier you were just one of the participants at meetings. Now you will need to learn how to be an effective chairman.

You will have to develop the ability to motivate people by understanding each member of your team as an individual. Only then will you be able to get them to do what you want done—and you will have to resist the temptation to interfere while they are doing it.

You will have to organize the operations of the team to ensure that you have a fit between your salesmen and your customers and territories. Some salesmen are good at institutional selling and some at retail selling. In some territories, knowledge of the local language is imperative. Some customers want a sophisticated approach. How do you manage creating this ‘fit’?
You will have to improve your ability to *deal with numbers*. This will facilitate the planning process as well as dealing with control data.

You will have to develop the art of *active listening*. The higher you climb the management ladder, the more you have to listen. This will make you a better guide and a better leader. You can then use the appraisal process as a development tool rather than a judgement system.

You will have to focus on *objectivity* so that you can deal with your team fairly yet firmly. They will then know that they have a leader who does not approach people, or problems, with a coloured mind and strange prejudices. They will trust you, because they know that your intentions were good even when you may have been wrong.

You will also need to develop those elusive qualities which distinguish great sales managers from the ‘also rans’. The first is ‘marketing foresight’—to be able to decipher changing market trends, competitor moves, environment and culture changes. After all, you are the first ‘analyst’ at the ultimate point of customer contact. All the others are far away, perhaps desk-bound for most of the year.

The second is ‘empathy’—the ability to put yourself in others’ position and see their point of view and sometimes to get them to also see your point of view.

All this will mean *reorienting yourself*, Roy. However, you have been promoted because you have the latent talents to master the various areas of management we have talked about and because the management feels that you can develop further if you set your mind to it.

We will deal with these aspects in greater detail in future letters.

Yours sincerely,
Questions to Ponder Over

1. Can you think of any other areas to be mastered by the sales manager in order to be effective?
2. Does the sales manager have to do the planning for all the members of his team? If so, then how much and in what areas?
3. What kind of involvement should the sales manager have with marketing planning personnel like market researchers, product managers and marketing managers?
4. Since supply chain management is becoming very important, what role should sales managers play in this area?
5. Are there any new technologies that you feel sales managers must now use to increase their effectiveness? Which ones and in which areas? How will they help?
‘If you enjoy what you do, you will never work another day in your life.’

Anonymous

Dear Roy,

**Serious Deficiencies of Salesmen**

A survey conducted in the US among over 10,000 industrial buyers revealed the following serious deficiencies:

- 96 per cent said the salespeople did not ask for a commitment on an order form, apparently because they had ‘lost control’ of the selling situation.
- 89 per cent said the salespeople did not know their products.
- 88 per cent said the salespeople did not present, or demonstrate, the products they were selling; what they appeared to be selling was price.
- 85 per cent said the salespeople lacked empathy.
• 82 per cent said they would not buy from the same salespeople or companies again and cited ‘neglect’ and ‘indifference’ as the major reasons.


**Questions to Ponder Over**

1. As a sales manager, what actions do you propose to deal with the deficiencies revealed by the survey?
2. Write out an action plan in detail.

**Box 3.1**

**Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About**

It was a big sales campaign for a protective pepper spray. Coupons offering a 15 per cent discount on this product were included with my cell phone bill. I thought that the spray would be useful as a quick defence for my teenaged daughter. I promptly phoned the specified telephone number and spoke to the sales manager. He said that two units would be delivered by a salesman within two days and payment would be collected on delivery. I waited a whole week. There was no delivery.

I phoned again and reminded them about the order. The sales manager again promised delivery within two days. There was no apology for the earlier non-delivery. I waited another week. Again, there was no delivery.

I bought a competitive product from the mall downtown in the city at a higher price and resolved never to buy any product from the earlier company anytime in the future.
Questions to Ponder Over

1. If you were the sales manager, how would you use your communication skills to deal with the complaint of the customer?
2. As the sales manager, what action would you take to ensure that the supply chain is made more effective?
‘The only safe thing to do is to take a chance.’
Mike Nichols

Dear Roy,

A Difficult and Challenging Job

You have been a salesman long enough to know that most salesmen are highly emotional individuals. They are like actors, painters and sculptors—all of whom are highly moody and high-strung. A slight upward tilt in the product sales graph makes them disproportionately happy. A minor tilt down, on the other hand, depresses them to the extent that they feel there is no market for the product. Guiding and controlling a group like this is certainly a demanding task.

That is why the sales manager’s job needs intellectual and emotional stability. Having a high intelligence quotient (IQ) is not enough. One must have a high emotional quotient (EQ). And, if possible, a high spiritual quotient (SQ).
Figure 4.1

Agony Aunt?
Just as IQ is a measure of intelligence, which is quantified through a series of tests by trained psychologists, EQ is a measure of a person’s emotional capacity—how far can he control anger, fear, joy and a whole range of other emotions. This is again, measured and quantified through a series of tests. Similarly, trained psychologists also try to measure a person’s spiritual quotient (SQ)—which is a measure of how deeply he is rooted with a sense of values, which come from a belief in a Supreme Being and the teachings of his religion.

Most salesmen work alone. Though they meet people like their customers and salesmen from other companies all the time, they cannot confide in them. In fact, most of these contacts erode their morale a lot of the time, with criticism of the company, its products, service and management. Some of the time, they are out of the headquarters and away from their families. It is only the sales manager who they can lean on, whom they can unburden themselves to and express their fears, hopes and aspirations. This makes the sales manager’s job an onerous one. He has to be a friend to his salesmen, but he is also the team leader. He must know how far he can go and know when to draw the line between a personal and a business relationship.

Selling is full of intangibles. There can always be excuses why sales were not achieved. The ‘money market is tight’, or ‘there is a credit squeeze’, or ‘the season is slack’, or the ‘competition is stiff’, or ‘there is a drought’, or ‘there are floods’—the list is endless. The sales manager must know how to distinguish the reasons from the excuses and this requires a discerning mind. Sales management is not easy.

Finally, the sales manager must be able to weld a group of different individuals into a team, and a group of different, diverse territories into a composite area. Each salesman and each territory will have its own problems. Solutions that are relevant to one
territory will not be applicable to another. The sales manager must have an overview and a vision.

All these factors make the sales manager’s assignment difficult, but if well done, a rewarding one.

An appreciation of the job hurdles listed here will prepare you better to handle the onerous and challenging assignment of a sales manager, to which you have now been promoted.

Yours sincerely,

Questions to Ponder Over

1. Can you think of any other factors that make a sales manager’s job difficult and challenging? What are the qualities needed to clear these hurdles?
2. What are the hurdles that are specific to sales managers and are not applicable to managers in other functions?

Box 4.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

Larry Noronha was a very successful salesman. He was the senior-most salesman of a company in 1952 and he had been working in Mumbai for 14 years. All this time the company kept growing and with an increased number of salesmen, Mr Tellis, the managing director, felt the need for a sales manager to guide
and control the 30 salesmen in the sales team. Life was simpler in the 1950s and the director envisaged a simple organizational structure of just 30 salesmen reporting to a sales manager.

He asked Larry Noronha to take over this new position. Larry was his senior-most salesman and was both effective and popular. He was also an actor in amateur theatre and, therefore, well-known in circles beyond the limited business world.

Much to Mr Tellis’ surprise, Larry turned down the offer. He enjoyed being a salesman. He liked the freedom of a salesman’s job and the way his customers showed confidence in him. He did not want to ‘be responsible for a group of people’. He felt that his own capability and temperament would not allow him to be a successful sales manager. With permission, he suggested the name of a junior colleague, who was then selected to the position.

When the field-force was further expanded four years later, there was a need for a deputy sales manager and Larry was offered this assignment. Again, he turned it down on the same grounds.

Not many people can say no to a promotion with more money and better status. But Larry knew how far his reach matched his grasp. This is a quality few people have mastered. Larry died prematurely of cancer. He was a professional salesman, loved and respected by his colleagues, his customers and a large number of his theatre fans.

Questions to Ponder Over

1. Do you think Larry made a mistake?
2. How would you have acted in this situation?
Dear Roy,

**Comparative Analysis—Top Problems in Sales Force Management**

I have made a comparative analysis of the top problems faced in sales force management. These are given next. While this analysis is not a recent one, the list provides an adequate guideline. It is worth using this list to carry out an analysis of your own field-force.

‘Too many people are ready to carry the stool when the piano needs to be moved.’

Anonymous
### Comparative Analysis of the Top Problems Faced in Sales Force Management

(Ranked by Frequency)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sales Force Management Problems</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor utilization of time and planned sales effort</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequacy in sales training</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time wasted in office by salespersons</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too few sales calls during working hours</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability of salespersons to overcome objections</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent follow-up of prospects by salespersons</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of creative, resourceful sales techniques</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to meet competitive pricing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of sales drive and motivation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faulty recruitment and selection of sales personnel</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on your experience, can you rank the problems now in 2007 in the column provided here?


### Questions to Ponder Over

1. If the ranking has changed, why do you think this has happened?
2. What actions will you take to correct the situation, assuming that these results also apply to your team?
Box 5.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

Hans just did not know how to ensure that all his salesmen were in the field by 9.30 a.m. every morning. He tried the ‘starting point’ system—where he would phone the retailer to check whether the salesman was at the starting point on time. But it seemed like an investigator plan and reduced the dignity of the salesperson in the eyes of the customer.

So he changed the rules. All salesmen had to report at the office at 9.30 a.m. and then they went to their territories. However, this system wasted a lot of the salesmen's time, who in effect started contact work only at 11.20 a.m.

The sales manager is now looking for other ways of maintaining a check on salesmen, which will be more effective and less time consuming.

Question to Ponder Over

1. Do you have any suggestions for a system that will ensure that salesmen report for duty on time every morning, but which will not cause any wastage of time?
‘It is a funny thing about life; if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it.’
Anonymous

Dear Roy,

**Qualities Liked and Disliked**

I just came across a listing of qualities liked and disliked by salesmen in sales managers. This listing came out of a survey conducted among salesmen who were asked to give detailed objective reasons as to why they liked certain sales managers and disliked others.

I feel that this listing gives very important pointers. You will be able to avoid certain pitfalls and also develop some of strengths as a result of being aware of how salesmen actually feel about their sales managers.

Salesmen like a sales manager who:

- Allows the salesmen to use their *own initiative* rather than giving them firm directions.
Qualities Liked and Disliked

Figure 6.1

Perfect?
• *Shares credit and praise* for a job well done by the salesmen rather than taking all the credit for himself.
• *Can make suggestions* to the salesmen in a pleasant, inoffensive manner.
• *Asks for suggestions*—not as a rote—and implements them if they are found useful, or explains why the suggestion cannot be used.
• *Knows his own work well*. The education and background of younger salesmen being generally better than that of sales managers who were salesmen many years ago, the sales manager must make efforts to stay ahead of the knowledge levels of the salesmen to be able to earn their respect.
• Makes *duties and responsibilities clear* to his salesmen, rather than only blaming them when a job goes wrong.
• *Is courteous* towards his subordinates.
• Develops a *feeling of permanence* and a sense of *security*, among his salesmen.

On the other hand, salesmen greatly dislike a sales manager who:

• *Does not allow* his salesmen to use their *initiative* and, therefore, stands in the path of their progress.
• *Is egotistical* and wants all his salesmen to be subservient to him. He wants to be a czar and expects his salesmen to adopt a slavish attitude.
• *Dislikes receiving suggestions*, because he feels there is nothing he himself does not know and that only he knows best.
• *Does not give credit to his salesmen* for a job well done and undeservedly corners all credit for himself when perhaps the salesman is the one who deserves it completely.
• *Shows favouritism* and thus disturbs the morale of the team.
• *Lacks courtesy* and talks down to his salesmen, rather than treating them as intelligent adults.
• *Has poor job knowledge*, which is reflected in poor or wrong planning, which is then reflected again in hasty conclusions.
• *Distrusts his salesmen* and is, therefore, only waiting for a salesman to slip up. This is even worse when the sales manager makes it evident that he distrusts his team members.
• *Makes false promises*, which he cannot fulfil, or which he could fulfil, but has no intentions of doing so. There are many sales managers, who promise extraordinary increments, or promotions, as compensation for the achievement of certain tasks and do nothing about it later.
• *Has no personal interest* in the members of his team. There is no concern for their families, hobbies, ambitions, or fears. He is a machine and commands no loyalty from his salesmen.

You will agree with me Roy, that the whole essence of effective sales management is summarized in these two lists. Isn’t it easier to strengthen the qualities liked rather than try to avoid the qualities disliked?

Yours sincerely,

---

**Box 6.1**

**Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About**

D.M. Sam was the sales supervisor in Punjab for a large consumer product company with eight salesmen reporting to him. He was a large man, with a healthy appetite for good food preferably accompanied with a whole bottle of hard liquor.
Sam had been promoted because he was a successful salesman for 10 years and his seniority was given great weightage by his company. He did not meet any of the other requirements for a sales supervisor. He was a back-slapping, warm, tough salesman, who was loved by some customers and feared by a few. He reminded one of the hero of Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*—a person who was suited to the profession in an earlier era and in another environment.

And so, Sam who had been a bully salesman with his customers and produced sales by fair means or foul, now became a bully supervisor. To Sam, his eight salesmen were his minions. Like Aladdin’s slaves, they were there only to serve his needs and look after his comforts. All Sam did was accompany them on their journey cycle. He did not make any contribution at sales interviews. He smoked right through the day, pinching cigarettes from the salesmen. He expected the salesmen to pay for the conveyance all the time and refused to share the expense. His lunch was to be paid for by the salesman. And in the evening, after work, Sam expected a mini party from them with booze and a good dinner.

Naturally, it did not take long before all the salesmen were demoralized by this bully who set such a poor example. The guidance he provided was little and his ability to motivate was nil. Salesmen who could find jobs elsewhere left hurriedly. Those who couldn’t stayed on unwillingly and resentfully.

Sales dropped year after year, until the company finally identified Sam as the focus of the problem in the area and asked him to go.

A new supervisor was appointed. The successor had an uphill task. The damage done during two years by a bully supervisor would take a long time to repair!
Questions to Ponder Over

1. Are there any other qualities in a sales manager—liked and disliked—that you feel should be added to the list?
2. What could the company have done to contain the damage caused by Sam?
3. What could the salesmen have done to bring about a correction in Sam’s behaviour?
‘Success has a simple formula: do your best and people may like it.’

Sam Ewing

Dear Roy,

**Attributes for Success**

I thought I would expand further on the attributes of success even though I have recently written to you about the qualities salesmen looked for in their sales managers.

In general, a sales manager must be:

- A *driver*—giving directions to his team and motivating the salesmen.
- A *persuader*—who can effectively communicate upwards with the management, downwards with his salesmen and laterally with his customers.
- A *teacher*—who will continuously develop his salesmen.
Figure 7.1

_Hail to the Chief!_
To be all three you must acquire as many of the ‘attributes for success’ as you can and a sense of humour to go through this difficult job of leading a team of intense people with a smile on your lips.

The various attributes for success are good health, high integrity, above-average intelligence, patience, wide practical experience, adaptability to different people and situations, resourcefulness to identify new solutions, an optimistic outlook, loyalty to the company and the team, an enquiring mind, ability to be self-reliant, high level of industriousness and perseverance.

Roy, your immediate reaction will be, ‘Does such a person exist, or is it only a computer model!’ The ideal person does not exist Roy, but we can try to come close to the ideal. After all, the glory is in the striving, not only in the attaining!

Any true leader (and a sales manager is one), must develop his personality in the following five areas: basic character, human qualities, mental qualities, appearance and impressiveness and maturity.

Those who have not developed in these areas are not true leaders. They may appear to have attained success and may remain leaders for some time, but their glory is short-lived and they soon fade into oblivion.

Someone has worked out an interesting classification of the undesirable qualities of a sales manager. I am presenting it here at least for the humour of the classification, but it does ring true when one thinks about it.

Some sales managers are said to be detectives (always sneaking);

some are nettles (pinpricking and fault-finding);

or humming birds (never planning, always on the move, aggressive and dishonest);
or flywheels (who let everything ride and take no corrective measures);
or fishwives (noisy, crude);
or sphinxes (wooden, never expressing themselves);
or machines (rigid, inflexible, going completely by the book);
or zeroes (who have somehow managed to get the job and are just hanging on to it; without any personality traits);
or gasbags (big talkers, small thinkers, always talking about the big sales that they had achieved in the past);
or a grouch (negative, fault-finding).

This is a refreshing classification—funny, but true.

Obviously Roy, many of us are a composite of two or more categories. Nobody is perfect. We can only try to avoid being in any of these categories, by ‘being aware’ all the time.

Yours sincerely,

Questions to Ponder Over

1. Driver, persuader, teacher. How would you list these attributes in terms of priority?
2. How does one develop in the five areas of personality discussed earlier? Which is more important for this—the school of academia, or the school of experience?
Rohan had been a fairly successful salesman for seven years in a US-based company in India. He had an excellent academic record, a good personality and was good at written communication. In spoken communication he was inclined to be brusque and used a high-pitched tone, which many of his customers found irritating.

Rohan was not an outstanding salesman, but he achieved what was expected of him—no less and not much more either. According to his superiors, he was sales supervisor material in spite of his minor disabilities. When there was a vacancy, Rohan was promoted. He then attended the company’s supervisor training programme. However, in spite of the programme and the care taken by the company, Rohan’s personality only changed for the worse. He began to abuse his new-found power. He talked down to his salesmen. He issued orders and virtually prohibited discussions. He seemed to expect even his customers to follow his orders. They found Rohan more abrasive each time he called on them. Their attitude towards him hardened; this spilled over into a resistance towards the company and its products as well.

Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. For Rohan it happened at the first-line management level itself. After a period of one year, when the company found that Rohan would not change, or improve, his services were terminated. Rohan has now joined another company as a salesman in another territory. He refuses to see reason and is still wondering why he failed!
Questions to Ponder Over

1. What are the behaviour traits that one must have to be an effective sales manager?
2. Can the rough edges, such as those Rohan had, be corrected by training, or by superiors?
3. Are sales managers born, or can anyone develop and evolve into an effective sales manager?
‘Into each life some rain must fall. Some days must be dark and dreary.’
Henry Longfellow

Dear Roy,

**MANAGING THE JOB**

Like any other manager, a sales manager has to *guide* and *direct* the work of other people—in this case, salesmen. A sales manager has to secure results through salesmen. He has, therefore, to be both an *effective leader* and an *effective supervisor*. Ideally, the sales manager is an experienced and successful salesman with leadership qualities.

- He is *resourceful*, in that he thinks out new ways to sell; he solves sales problems; he deals with difficult customers; deals with problems of territory coverage; or with low average of orders per day.
Figure 8.1

*Full Steam Ahead!*
• The sales manager is a thinker. He applies his knowledge and experience to analyse every situation, to reach logical conclusions and then acts on them.

• The sales manager should be able to plan for the future: for the next month, the next year, maybe, the next decade. Based on this study and analysis, he must be able to set goals, or targets. He works out the inputs—of men, materials and, consequently, money—that would be required to achieve these targets. He fixes time schedules for these programmes and these then become the operating sales budgets.

• The sales manager must organize for himself and his team. He identifies what jobs are to be done, by whom and where. He calculates how many salesmen he will need, based on the size of the territory, the number of customers and the potential for his products. He then selects and recruits them. He also defines each salesman’s responsibility and authority.

• The sales manager must coordinate the activities of the different salesmen in his team. He unifies and integrates the work proceeding under his direction, to accomplish the company’s sales and profit targets.

• The sales manager must motivate his team. He needs to encourage his salesmen and impel them to higher productivity; not be their boss, but their leader. The sales manager is a member of the team, not just giving directions and commands from above, but is first among equals and gives a lead by setting a good example by his own work.

• The sales manager must control the activities of his salesmen by continuously reviewing the operations and comparing the actual performance against the sales targets and other norms that have been set.

The sales manager must, therefore, always keep the following scheme in mind.
The sales manager can then go further and develop another scheme in a cycle fashion:

**Plan**
1. Set targets
2. Work out *how to reach* them
3. Work out a *time schedule* to reach them

**Implement**
1. *Organize* the team
2. *Coordinate* their activities
3. *Motivate* them to better performance

**Control**
1. *Appraise* the salesman’s performance
2. *Assess* his strength and weakness
3. Assess factors *beyond* his control

**Analyse**
Examine yourself—
*ask what do I do next? How can I do it better?*

---

**Sales Management Function**

- **Job Skills**
- **Job Management**
- **Man Management**

- **Plan**
- **Organize**
- **Coordinate**
- **Motivate**
- **Control**

**Communicate**
In implementing both these schemes, the sales manager will be continuously on the path of self-improvement and, more importantly, in the process of improving his salesmen. And that is the essence of his job as a sales manager. I shall elaborate further on this in my subsequent letters.

Yours sincerely,

Questions to Ponder Over

1. If you were asked to give weightage out of 100, to the three sets of skills required, how would you divide these at the level of salesman, sales supervisor, national sales manager, vice president sales.
   The three skills are:
   • Technical skills, or selling skills.
   • Human skills and leadership qualities.
   • Conceptual skills to look at the broad picture.
2. How will you further subdivide the following major heads, which cover the responsibilities and decision-making functions of a sales manager:

- Overview of personal selling and sales management.
- Planning for and organizing the sales force.
- Developing the sales force.
- Controlling and evaluating the sales force.
- Environment for selling and sales management.

3. In what ways do you think top management can demonstrate and provide support to sales managers?
‘Time is money; the less we have of it to spare, the further we make it go.’

Josh Billings

Dear Roy,

MANAGING TIME

Among those salesmen who are promoted to sales managers, many never become managers in the real sense of the word. They evolve into super salesmen and operate as such. And they have the wrong notion that they are doing well.

One of the main reasons why people operate as super salesmen and not as sales managers is that they are not aware of the distinction between managing and operating. In the process, they operate more and manage little or not at all!

This makes effective time management very important for the sales manager.
Managing Time

Figure 9.1

*Time Bound!*

[Image of a cartoon showing a busy office scene with a large clock and piles of papers, indicating a time-bound environment.]
It is a general rule that the sales manager should spend 50 per cent of his working time in *managing* and 50 per cent of his working time in *operating*.

A sales manager’s working hours should, preferably, be allotted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Routine</th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Special</th>
<th>Creative</th>
<th>Non-contributive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Routine reports from salesmen/Dictation of reports to office/Replies to salesmen/Replies to dealers, etc.</td>
<td>Forward planning/ Meetings—inside and outside/Customer contacts/Other current activities</td>
<td>Rush orders/Organizing large sales conferences, large dealer meetings, or special merchandizing campaigns</td>
<td>Thinking about new sales territory strategies</td>
<td>A waste of time, but cannot be done away with like coffee breaks and chatting with colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 per cent</td>
<td>60 per cent</td>
<td>15 per cent</td>
<td>5 per cent</td>
<td>10 per cent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most sales managers get caught up in the problems of time allocation because of some of the reasons identified next.

- They are either not covering enough ground, or they are trying to cover too much ground. So they are either totally desk-bound, or never at the desk.
• They don’t look at problems squarely and dispassionately. Hence, they lose a lot of time. They may have the best salesman in the poorest territory, or vice versa, and this can be the cause of a lot of time being wasted by the sales manager. The sales manager then cannot get down to brass tacks and thus keeps skirting round the problem.

• They do not set priorities. The more important work does not get more time professionally. Operations are not programmed to run smoothly. There is a constant back and forth, whether at the desk, or in the tour plan of the territory. This again results in wastage of time.

• They are not able to scan reports for ‘figures that speak’, or ‘significant words’. They read everything, including the most trivial detail—like pensioners in old-age homes are apt to do with the daily newspaper—again a waste of time!

• They put off a lot for tomorrow. Procrastination is common among all managers including sales managers. With every decision put off, the list of things to do increases and decisions get delayed—even the trivial ones where timeliness is more important than being absolutely right!

Avoid these pitfalls, Roy, and you will get far more out of your time than you have been able to do in the past.

Yours sincerely,
Common Time Traps for Salesmen

- Poor planning of the day’s activities.
- Calling on unqualified prospects.
- Following a haphazard travel schedule.
- Insufficient use of the telephone.
- Taking long lunch breaks.
- Inefficiency in paperwork.
- Putting in a short day’s work.
- Taking off early on Friday afternoons.
- Spending too much time talking.
- Taking too many coffee breaks.
- Inefficient use of waiting time.
- Entertaining customers too much.
- Walking in without an appointment.
- Staying out of touch for too long with the home office as a result of which important messages get delayed.


Questions to Ponder Over

1. How will a sales manager identify each of these problems with a salesmen? Through their (i) reports, (ii) correspondence, (iii) telephone conversations, (iv) sales meetings/conferences, (v) personal field visits, (vi) sales records and (vii) customer feedback?

2. What kind of action should a sales manager take to correct each of these deficiencies?
Robert was an active sales supervisor, always on the move, coaching his salesmen, showing them how to do it, giving them ideas and encouraging them to think and use their initiative.

He had a team of 10 salesmen in the territory he controlled. Two were outstanding salesmen, two were laggards, who were below average, and the other six were average. The group of six naturally produced the bulk of the sales. Since the average salesmen produced what they were expected to, without doing anything either spectacular, or below the mark, Robert left them alone. He focused on the high achievers because he found it exciting to work with smart and successful salesmen. He also spent a lot of time with the laggards, but naturally this did not produce proportionate results. And the group of six average salesmen felt greatly neglected in the process.

Somehow Robert had not managed a proper distribution of his ‘in-field coaching time’ and this was beginning to reflect in the sales. Before they slipped too much, Robert analysed the problem and corrected the situation. He devoted the required amount of time to the average salesmen as well. Morale improved and so did the sales.

**Questions to Ponder Over**

1. Can you suggest ways in which routine work can be simplified and made less time consuming?
2. What are the other contributing activities you can think of under regular work and special work?
3. What systems will you use to reduce time spent on non-contributive work—especially what is euphemistically called ‘courtesy call’?

4. What are the modern gadgets you can use to save time and increase face-to-face selling time with customers?

5. Are there other reasons beyond the five given here why sales managers face time-allocation problems?
“Think wrongly, if you please, but in all cases think for yourself.”

Doris Lessing

Dear Roy,

**Key Role in Corporate Planning**

The sales manager is a *key figure in the company’s planning function*. Unfortunately, most times, neither the company nor the sales manager recognize or accept this fact.

What generally happens is that the top management decides the sales budget and passes it down to the marketing manager. He then adds on a 10 per cent safety margin to it and passes it on to the sales manager, who adds another 20 per cent as a safety margin (not knowing that the marketing manager has already done this) and then gives the targets to the salesmen.

The salesman is then faced with this appalling figure of a target, which probably had sought an increase of 25 per cent over the
Figure 10.1

A Safety Plan?
previous year and then got another 30 per cent added to it, to make a total increase of 55 per cent. The salesman, therefore, feels depressed and defeated even before the year has begun.

As against this common practice of sending orders from up above, the uncommon but correct procedure would be:

- The top management should first brief the sales manager on the objectives of the company: the growth to be expected in sales and profits; the changes expected in the distribution and pricing structure; the new products that will be introduced; products that are to be strongly promoted; the products to be discontinued; the expenditure to be anticipated for personnel, for advertising and promotion; and what the competitive and general market situation is expected to be.

- This briefing would really cover all aspects of the four Ps of marketing—product design, pricing, physical distribution and promotion/advertising. The sales manager then makes his own notes and works out a plan for his team and his territory. But here again, he does not do this in isolation. He briefs each of his salesmen through a letter, giving them a background of the company’s expectations of sales and profits and all other aspects on which he himself has been briefed.

- He then arranges for individual meetings with the salesmen, possibly spending a whole day with each in a quiet, undisturbed setting with all background material available of past sales (that is, value-wise, product-wise, area-wise and customer-wise data) and with details of total market growth, competitors’ performance and activities, changes in the territory and any other factors.

At this planning session, the salesman and the sales manager put all the data together and evolve the sales and expense budget for the next year for the salesman’s territory.
At the outset, it is made very clear to the salesman that this is not an appraisal interview, but it is a planning session. He then becomes part of the decision-making process. He becomes involved. Orders are not handed down to him. And he understands the rationale for all the actions taken, or intended to be taken.

- The sales manager can then build in specific objectives into the salesman’s budget like selling 5,000 units of product A to customers X, Y and Z every month. Once such detailed specifics are listed out then appraisal of the salesman’s performance becomes easier. The sales manager can guide the salesman in the field more meaningfully when he visits him with the objective of coaching him.
- After the sales manager has met with each member of his team, he will consolidate the figures and discuss these with the regional sales manager. The regional sales manager will, similarly, consolidate his figures and discuss and finalize them with the general sales manager. He, in turn, will finalize the figures with the marketing manager, who will go further, to the marketing director, who will finalize the figures with the managing director.

The sales and expense budget will, therefore, have evolved from the grass roots and then gone up to the top. At this stage, if there is any major difference between what was earlier intended by the top management and what has now evolved, the budget may be sent down again for amendment and moved up again through a process of discussions until a final compromise is reached and an acceptable sales budget is evolved, accepted and approved by all.

Don’t you think this is a more sensible way of working out a sales budget? More importantly, it will give every salesman a
feeling of having participated in the decision-making process. This is what the term management by objectives (MBO) is all about. However, the sales manager must train himself to deal with salesmen with knowledge and skill. He cannot lean back on the ‘do it because I tell you’ system in the middle of the planning sessions just because he finds himself incapable of convincing the salesman. The whole purpose would then be defeated. Once again, remember, Roy, a sales manager must have the knowledge of job skills, job management skills and man-management skills. This covers the whole spectrum!

Yours sincerely,

Box 10.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

Soni was a successful salesman for eight years and then a successful sales manager for 10 years. He had a number of strengths—a good knowledge of his territory and customers, effective control systems and an ability to spot a problem early and then deal with it before it magnified and became uncontrollable. Soni was also a man of few words. He would listen most of the time. This attribute, together with his keen observational ability, made him a good judge of people and events.

Although his salesmen liked him and were happy working for him, they felt that there was one area where he needed to
change and improve. He became a thorough bully, once a year, at budget time. Since Soni and his team were a result-oriented lot, Soni’s boss—the general sales manager—always pushed him to set a high target. No rationale was given, only a figure 30 percent higher than the previous year’s performance was set as the target. And there was to be no argument about it. Soni, in turn, could not provide a rationale to his salesmen. He just set the figure and expected each salesman to accept it.

Year after year, his salesmen would lose out on the incentive bonus, because they would have fallen just short of a target that had been set arbitrarily. This eroded the morale of the team. They felt, quite rightly, that other salesmen in other areas were getting off quite lightly because their past performance had been poor. Soni’s salesmen paid the price for their good performance in the past and they felt that Soni did not have the ability to assert himself with his boss while he more than asserted himself with his salesmen.

Soni’s one minor flaw in sales operations become a major impediment!

Questions to Ponder Over

1. Do you find grass-root involvement in the annual sales planning process too time consuming? If yes, what can be done to reduce the time lag?
2. Do salesmen have the perspective and background to be able to contribute to the planning process?
3. What are the distinctions between market potential and market demand, and sales potential, sales demand and sales forecast?
4. How will you distinguish between a sales forecast and a sales budget?
5. What are the advantages of making a sales plan rather than doing the best you can on an ad-hoc basis?
Dear Roy,

**THE PLANNING PROCESS**

A sales manager embarking on a planning project must clearly understand basic terminology used in demand estimation and sales forecasting—the terms market capacity, market potential, sales potential, sales forecast and sales quota.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market capacity</td>
<td>Number of units of a product or service that would be taken by a market in a given period if the item were free.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
### Concept Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market potential</th>
<th>Highest possible expected industry sales of a product, or service, during a set time period in a specified market.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales potential</td>
<td>Maximum market share that a company, or brand, could possibly obtain during a given period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales forecast</td>
<td>Expected actual sales for a company, or brand, during a given time period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales quota</td>
<td>Sales volume goal for a salesperson, or sales organization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In order to do a good and thorough job of working out a sales and profit budget, you will have to master *five areas of planning* that are relevant to a sales manager.

These planning areas flow from one to the other:

- **Product Sales Planning** (PSP)
- **Territory Layout Planning** (TLP)
- **Territory Coverage Planning** (TCP)
- **Manpower Expense Planning** (MEP)
- **Sales Programme Planning** (SPP)
Figure 11.1

No Surprises!
Product Sales Planning

In the process of planning the operations every year, the sales manager is forced to look afresh at his total area and identify market segments.

- What is the number of customers, both potential and actual?
- What is the size of the customers—maybe an A,B,C classification?
- What brands do they buy?
- Why do they buy?
- In what quantities do they buy?
- At what frequency do they buy?
- Do they buy on cash, credit?
- What is the competition doing in relation to these market segments?

Thus from the sales potential that exists for the product, the sales manager derives a sales forecast. This is an output, which is achievable if certain inputs are ensured.

These inputs will be in terms of planning territory layout (TLP), territory coverage (TCP), manpower expense (MEP) and sales programme (SPP).

It is important to understand the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Growth–Share Matrix, which will help in product sales planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Market Share</th>
<th>Low Market Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Growth</td>
<td>Stars</td>
<td>Problem Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Growth</td>
<td>Cash Cows</td>
<td>Dogs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cash cows are high market share and low growth products which should be milked. Stars are high market share, high growth products, which are worthy of additional investment. Dogs are low market share and low market growth products, which should be dropped as soon as possible. Problem children are low market share and high market growth products, which require more cash investment than they are able to generate. Unless they can be converted into stars, these products should perhaps be dropped.

We also need to understand the Ansoff Corporate Strategy Model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Products</th>
<th>New Products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Markets</strong></td>
<td>Market penetration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Markets</strong></td>
<td>Market development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Market penetration tries to increase sales of current products in current markets with more intensive market efforts. Market development seeks to open up new markets for current products. Product development creates new, or improved, products for current markets. Two other growth strategies above the sales manager’s level of authority are (i) to diversify by purchasing new business, or product lines and (ii) to obtain ownership, or control, over different levels of the channel of distribution.

Sales managers can play the ‘fulcrum’ role in ensuring market penetration and market development – a role where corporate office personnel have little reach.

**Territory Layout Planning**

I am focusing here only on some of the more important aspects of territory layout planning:
The Planning Process

- Each salesman’s *workload capacity* should be carefully analysed. In consumer product marketing, a salesman can make 40 calls a day in an Indian city, that is, he can make 1,000 calls per month in 25 working days.
  If each customer is called on just once a month, then the salesman should be given a territory consisting of 1,000 customers. In industrial product marketing, a salesman may make four or five calls a day; and the territory needs to be adjusted accordingly.
- The *frequency of calls* to each type of customer should be decided. Should Class A customers be met twice a month, Class B customers be met once a month and Class C customers be met once in three months?
  The salesman should devote time *commensurate* with the *sales potential* of the customer. He should not be influenced by the customer’s high academic qualifications, or by the fact that he is a nice person to get along with, or that he is an old friend.
- There should be some *parity in the sales value potential* of different salesmen’s territories. One territory cannot be of Rs 50,000 per month and another of Rs 3,000 per month.
- Some *undeveloped areas* should be included in each territory so that the salesman has an opportunity to demonstrate how he can *develop business*.
- The headquarter of each territory should be at a *point of maximum customer concentration*.
- The territory should be *designed to minimize travel time* and expense.

The best planning is where the *maximum quantum of time is spent by the salesman face to face with the customer* and the least amount of time in travel or waiting.
Territory Coverage Planning

This can only be derived from TLP. Once you have identified the towns to be visited, the customers to be contacted during the visit to the town and the frequency at which these towns and customers will be visited, a route plan, or a journey cycle, can be drawn up.

The route plan will list:

- The dates of the month.
- The name of the town against each date.
- The mode of travel to that town (bus, rail).
- The mailing address if the salesman has to be contacted.

It is a good idea to periodically look at the route plan and check the sales results in the towns that are visited. This analysis will help the sales manager to take steps to improve the sales situation in a town, or to delete the town from the route plan, if it is a situation that cannot be improved.

Concurrently, there will also be a standard list of customers, which will list out the names of customers in each town and have space alongside for jotting the date of visit and business obtained. Thus, a glance at this list will inform the sales manager about the frequency of visits to a specific customer and the result of the visits in sales obtained.

Manpower Expense Planning

From the number of existing and potential customers, the frequency of visits required for different categories of customers, the territory layout and the need for territory coverage, the sales
Figure 11.2

*The Business Surgeon!*
The New Sales Manager

manager will derive the number of salesmen he will need to work in the territory assigned to him.

With an increase in the number of customers and frequency of visits that may be needed, the sales manager might find that he needs more men. He might have to reduce the territory of some existing salesmen to enable more intensive working. He may have to transfer a salesman to another territory for various reasons—the salesman might have gone ‘stale’. He may have to dismiss some salesmen because their performance is below par and they just cannot be made to improve their performance. All this involves the recruitment and training of new salesmen/additional salesmen to achieve the company’s objectives.

Manpower expense planning then places a price tag on all controllable elements of men, materials and facilities that will be expended in attempting to achieve the objectives. The expense will include salaries, incentives, travel kits, fares, administration and incidental expenses.

With this budget, the sales manager can conveniently operate a control system since a standard has already been laid down. A watch on the sales expense ratio will keep him alert to what is happening. In some industries, the sales expense may be 10 per cent, in others it may be 2 per cent. Being aware of the sales expense in one’s industry, it is easy to spot major deviations.

Sales Programme Planning

This specifies what each salesman must do and when he must do it to achieve the objectives of the company. The sales programme could include putting up point-of-sales material, improving shop-window displays, conducting an in-shop or outside-the-shop promotion, conducting demonstrations or a sampling programme, special detailing to customers, or any other sales programme.
To summarize, what is needed for a high level of sales management efficiency is:

- Customer definition and classification.
- Product line emphasis, that is, deciding which products will receive high priority and which products will have lower priority.
- Continuous training in selling skills and product knowledge.
- Optimum usage of a salesman’s time and promotion material for maximum impact on the customer.
- New business activity that should form part of the creative function of selling.

When you have covered the whole planning spectrum of PSP, TLP, TCP, MEP and SPP, you would have laid a solid foundation.

In the execution of these programmes, Roy, please do not rush into implementation before completing the planning process. This is always a temptation, particularly for sales people, because they are action-oriented people. But remember, a job well planned is already half completed.

Yours sincerely,

Box 11.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

E. Woods had been in India for 32 years. He had come as a sales representative with a British pharmaceutical company, had liked
the country and had stayed on. Over the years, he rose to the position of sales director of the company.

Woods had travelled the length and breadth of the country in these 32 years. He travelled by train, bus, motorcycle and even on camel-back in Rajasthan. And he took a keen interest in studying the topography, the most convenient and economical modes of transport and the concentration of potential and existing customers in each territory. Sitting in his office room in Mumbai, he could give a profile of each town in India with a mastery that his subordinates found disconcerting.

Woods could, therefore, work out a complete territory coverage plan for each of his 82 salesmen and, more importantly, could spot any errors in plans made by his subordinates, or deviations made by his salesmen.

His team knew that Woods was more knowledgeable than they were. They knew that they would have to give very strong justification for any suggestions they may make on territory coverage. That was how Woods ran a tight-knit team, which helped to make his company, Glaxo, a leader in the field.

Questions to Ponder Over

1. How will a sales manager balance the need to increase the sales of existing products and the need to establish new products? Is there a conflict between the two?
2. What approach will you adopt to identify why people buy?
3. Increasing costs of territory coverage will always act as a brake to optimum call frequency. What solutions can the sales manager find in these circumstances?
4. Will you choose to have a large sales force where the salesmen receive low emoluments, or would you chose to have a smaller number of salesmen who are well paid?
5. What is the role of salesmen’s reports—daily and weekly—in ensuring the success of the planning process?

6. What are the advantages/disadvantages of: product-, geographic-, functional- and market-oriented organizations? Which will you choose and why?

7. List out examples where you have used the BCG Growth–Share Matrix and the ACS Model?

8. Can sales potential ever be the same as sales forecast?
‘Quality is never an accident; it is always 
the result of intelligent effort.’

John Ruskin

Dear Roy,

SELECTING AND RECRUITING SALESMEN

There are times when sales managers do not take the job of recruiting salesmen seriously. They think it is a chore, or low in priority. However, this is a very important aspect of a sales manager’s job. The salesman selected could be a future manager of the company and hence it is imperative that the right candidates, who have the potential to be future managers, be selected. Most of the time the salesman is the only contact between the customers and the company. To most customers, he is the company. As he is going to project the image of the company, it is necessary that great care be taken to ensure that a proper selection is made.
Selecting and Recruiting Salesmen

Figure 12.1

*May I Have a Job, Sir?*
To be certain that the right candidate is selected, the sales manager must be clear in his own mind about the profile of the salesman. He can only be clear if he first writes a job description (JD). This JD will specify what the salesman is expected to do.

From the JD he will then be able to derive a job specification (JS). The JS will specify what the salesman is expected to know in order to do what is written in the JD. Once the JD and JS are written exhaustively, fitting candidates into the profile does not present any problems.

The JD and JS also have other purposes. They serve as a guide and reference for supervision in the future when the person is employed. They provide the framework for the sales training programme.

In a less important way, they serve as an outline of the salesman’s job for other managers (non sales) to help them to understand the sales function better. Sometimes non-sales managers have the notion that salesmen are a privileged class who travel on company account, in general have a ‘good time’ and make little contribution to the company.

The salesman recruiting programme should be a continual one. It is not a one-time project. Ideally, the sales manager keeps a ‘black book’ where he writes the names, addresses and other details of salesmen he meets in the field, who could be assets to his own company, if a vacancy does arise.

Vacancies will always arise. A sales manager has to foresee this. He has to assess the average rate of attrition of his salesmen. How many leave every year? Which are the territories that regularly lose the most salesmen? How many salesmen are or will be ‘passengers’? How much will recruitment and training of new salesmen cost? Will this cost and the work benefit that will be gained from new salesmen be less than the cost of carrying passengers? All this will have to be studied and decisions will have to be taken.
The sales manager can use different sources for the supply of candidates. Some advertise in newspapers. Some use an employment agency, or recruit candidates on college campuses. One could find prospective salesmen among other cadres in the organization. Sometimes candidates may be recommended by buyers, or the company’s own salesmen, or by competitor’s salesmen.

Screening is the process of examining the applications. Candidates who do not meet the requirements of age, qualifications, or other specifications already laid down, are rejected. So screening only helps in elimination. It tells you which candidates are unsuitable. It does not identify the candidate who will be suitable. But it takes you to the next step of selecting the right candidate, which can be done through the medium of a personal interview.

It is preferable to give a standard bio-data form to all candidates. Then all the material is in the same format and comparisons become easy.

The sales manager is now clear in his own mind about what he is looking for, because he has started with a:

job description
then derived: job analysis
then derived: an advertisement for the job
then derived: a standard bio-data form

There are three stages to be followed in a personal interview.

Stage 1 Where you judge more superficial aspects, namely, health/appearance/speech HAS
Stage 2 Where you go deeper to analyse the candidate’s personality/intelligence/progress/experience PIPE
Stage 3  This stage is the most difficult. Here you probe even deeper—and this is the most difficult to assess—the candidate’s persistence/attitudes/motivation  

It may not be possible to cover all three stages in one interview. The sales manager may need to have two or even three interviews to do this successfully. The three interviews also give the sales manager an opportunity to check on the consistency of answers given. The candidate might give different answers to questions repeated in earlier interviews and such deviations are a bad sign.

You could also use the interval to make references to his previous company, or get in touch with the referees he has indicated. Only make sure that it is not improper to do so at this stage.

A sales manager should develop the habit of taking notes during an interview. If this seems embarrassing then write them immediately after an interview. This habit helps the sales manager to make clear comparisons and thereby make a more rational choice rather than be swayed by emotion.

Sales managers should avoid talking too much during the personal interview and should, therefore, observe a few simple rules.

• Put the candidate at ease. Make it a meeting, not an ‘interview’.
• Get him to talk.
• Ask questions and listen. Ask such questions whose answers will reveal specific abilities required for the job.
• Don’t ask leading questions.
• Don’t be carried away by your own prejudices, or by first impressions. For example, don’t let the fact that the candidate has a sharp nose, or large ears, detract you from his qualities.
Figure 12.2

Lost Control?
If you follow all these steps and all the rules, you could still be wrong 30 per cent of the time, and this is a good record. It is never easy to select the right candidate. But one can do one’s best to reduce the margin of error.

The personal interview is not only a time to get an exposition of the candidate. It is also a time to sell the company—the opportunities it offers and the security it provides. The job interview can be a very effective public relations exercise. It is a pity that it is used so little, or so ineffectively.

Yours sincerely,

\[Signature\]

---

**Box 12.1**

**Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About**

He was my boss at one time—a sales manager who had manoeuvred his way to the top. He was short and fat and hated exercise of any kind. He had no hobbies except an inordinate fondness for eating (if that can be called a hobby). He worked long hours, from nine in the morning to eight at night—not because he needed to, but because he had nothing else to do. It was only natural that a person so introverted should have a highly biased mind. He lived in a world of his own, which made it dangerous for those who lived outside it.

This biased attitude and pettiness made Tim an unpredictable interviewer. Every time he interviewed candidates, he concentrated more on the shape of their fingers, the size of their nose, the length
of their eyebrows than on what the candidates said. 'I didn't like his stubby fingers', he would say, after the candidate had gone.
Which meant that he wouldn't get the job!

Over a period of time, Tim built up a countrywide team of mediocre yes-men among whom his own mediocrity assumed a grade of superiority. And in the long run he did incalculable damage to the company. But it would be a long time before this would be noticed, and it would take even longer to remedy it later.

Questions to Ponder Over

1. Why are job description and job specification so important?
2. What is an acceptable ‘attrition rate’ for the sales force in your company?
3. What is the percentage of the sales force that your company can afford to carry as ‘passengers’?
4. Are there situations where the rules of screening can be bent?
5. Do past employers/references give honest and objective opinions about candidates? If not, how can you overcome such a disability?
6. What are the critical characteristics and behaviour patterns of sales recruits?
7. Would you or would you not prefer to recruit salesmen with similar past experience in a job/s similar to his new job? What are the advantages in each case?
8. Is it right and ethical to use the ‘black book’ system to recruit salesmen?
9. What are the advantages, or disadvantages, of having other managers, for example, from the human resources department, also interviewing the candidate?
10. Can you add any other precautions to be taken to make the personal interview a success?
### A Checklist for Preparing a Salesperson’s Job Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sales Activities</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make regular calls.</td>
<td>Estimate customer’s potential needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sell the product or product line.</td>
<td>Emphasize quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle questions and objections.</td>
<td>Explain company policy on price, delivery, and credit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check stock; identify possible product uses.</td>
<td>Get the order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret sales points of products to the customer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Servicing Functions</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Install the product or display.</td>
<td>Handle special orders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report product weaknesses and complaints.</td>
<td>Establish priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle adjustments, returns, and allowances.</td>
<td>Analyse local conditions for customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle requests for credit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territory Management</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrange route for best coverage.</td>
<td>Balance effort with customers against the potential volume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain sales portfolios, samples, kits, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sales Promotion</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop new prospects and accounts.</td>
<td>Train personnel of wholesalers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selecting and Recruiting Salesmen

Distribute literature, catalogues, etc. 
Make calls with customer’s salespeople.

Executive Activities

Develop monthly and weekly work plan.

Present survey reports, and proposals.

Each night make a daily work plan for the next day.
Organize field activity for minimum travel and maximum calls.
Prepare and submit special reports on trends and competition.
Prepare and submit statistical data requested by home office.
Investigate lost sales and reason for loss.

Build a prospect list.

Prepare reports on developments, trends, new objectives met, and new ideas on meeting objectives.
Attend sales meetings.

Collect overdue accounts; report on faulty accounts.
Collect credit information.

Analyze work plans to determine which goals were not met and why.

Goodwill

Counsel customers on their problems.
Maintain loyalty and respect for the company.
Attend local sales meetings held by customers.

The job specification of a salesperson who will do the job adequately as described will be as follows:

**The Profile:**

- **Education:**
- Knowledge of product, competition, market, selling process.
  Experience in the Industry.
- **Age:**
- **Stability in earlier jobs:**
- **Success record:**
- **Appearance:**
- Work habits—especially if he has worked when in school.
- **Motivation:** to earn more.

In additional we might need some critical characteristics:

- **Intelligence.** Evident in verbal expression, depth of response, analytical thought process.
- **Decisiveness.** When asked, makes definite choices, let you know where he or she stands on issues, is not tentative.
- **Energy and Enthusiasm.** Is animated, positive, spontaneous, fast-paced.
- **Results Orientation.** Gets to the point, emphasizes achievement; responses are relevant to interview objectives.
- **Maturity.** Shows poise, self-confidence, and maturity in dress, general demeanour, and degree of relaxation.
- **Assertiveness.** Takes charge, is forceful, convincing, persuasive.
- **Sensitivity.** Is sincere, friendly, tactful, responsive, not aloof.
- **Openness.** Responses are not canned and superficial.
- **Tough-mindedness.** Discusses persons and events critically; doesn’t allow emotions to cloud perceptions.
Guidelines for Questions for a Sales Position

Work Experience

Factors to Consider

1. Is the information you’ve obtained based on the objective observations that can be verified?
2. Is the information consistent with the bio-data and/or the application?
3. Did each new job logically build upon the previous work assignment leading to increased responsibility? Is there a pattern of progress?
4. Did the applicant have positive relationships with previous supervisors and customers?

Suggested Questions

1. Tell me about your previous sales experience.
2. With each job, what did you like most? Least?
3. What has contributed most to your career so far?
4. What setbacks, or disappointments, have you had in your career so far?

Administrative Ability

Factors to Consider

1. Did it appear that the candidate had done some background work on your company?
2. Was the candidate punctual?
3. How has the applicant organized the coverage of his present market?
4. Was the candidate prepared with questions?
5. Tolerance for paperwork.

*Suggested Questions*

Organizing/Time Management

1. How do you set up your week or month?
2. How many prospects are available now (in your territory)? How many can you cover weekly, monthly, annually?
4. If you were given a sales assignment with X number of accounts, what would you do?
5. How/when do you set aside time for writing reports? How much time do you set aside for your family? When?

Planning

1. How do you organize your sales day in your current job, or your last job?
2. How do you plan for a sales call?
3. What do you plan for an emergency, for example, tender submission?

*Sales Qualities*

*Suggested Questions*

Competitiveness/Need for recognition

1. What was your ranking/performance in your previous position(s)?
2. Do you have sales bulletins where you are mentioned, or letters of commendation?
3. Tell me about your outside activities.
Innovation

1. Tell me about two situations where you have made a difficult sale.

Energy level

1. Describe a normal workday.
2. How many calls do you make in a day?
3. How do you spend your free time? (check this against candidate’s answers about time management)

Goal orientation/Desire to excel

1. What goals have you set for yourself and have you met them?
2. Did applicant talk about taking charge? About being number one?
3. How do you measure your success and your growth?

Initiative/Self-starter

1. What are your outside interests?
2. How did you get this interview?
3. What suggestions for improvement have you made to your company?

Self-discipline/Self-worth

1. How well do you work with others?
2. How effectively do you work on your own?
3. Have you studied and worked at the same time? Explain.
5. Assess how well the candidate deals with disappointment.
Money motivation

1. What have your earnings been? Give gross salary earnings for the past four years.
2. What is the break-up of your salary (base/commission/bonus)?
3. Is the applicant motivated by money? Mainly/Partly/Not at all?

Achievement motivation

1. What was your greatest contribution in the last three years?
2. What was the second?
3. Why do you consider these as great challenges?

Communication/Persuasiveness

1. What were the candidate’s non-verbal skills like? Did he/she lean forward?
2. Did the applicant participate by asking questions, ask for feedback, elaborate on answers?
3. Is the applicant persuasive?
4. Is he/she too soft spoken?
5. Is the candidate assertive?
6. Are the candidate’s general communication skills effective?

Ethical standards

1. Do you think it is wrong to save on allowances if it does not affect work?
2. If you were to get a higher paid job a month after joining us, would it be right to resign?
3. If you needed to pay a bribe on the instruction of your boss, what would you do?
4. What are the new product launch plans of your present company?

Other Factors

Suggested Questions

Positive or negative?

1. Anything positive/negative regarding your previous employers?
2. How do you handle difficult people, colleagues, or bosses?
3. How do you cope with last minute changes in your assignment?

Willingness to accept responsibility

1. How much responsibility do you have now? Is it enough?
2. How much responsibility can you handle?

Management potential

1. Have you ever managed people?
2. What are the management characteristics of a boss that you thought were effective? Ineffective?
3. Tell me about your best/worst boss.
‘Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.’

Theodore Roosevelt

Dear Roy,

**Focused Salesmen Training**

After the salesmen have been selected, they have to be *trained*, or *coached*. There is first a *break-in training* programme, which is a classroom session. It could be anything from two days to six months in duration, depending on the kind of products, number of products, size of company and the complexity of the operation. The duration of the programme will be the shortest in consumer product companies where little technical knowledge is involved for the salesmen. It will be longer for sales engineers, or medical representatives, as a lot of technical knowledge has to be imparted to them.

Various relevant subjects are covered during this initial training apart from technical knowledge. You will need to:
• Explain to the new recruit the essence of salesmanship: You will have to make him understand that salesmanship is an honourable profession. It is not just a passing phase to be gone through before becoming a sales manager. In rare cases, it may be just that, but it need not necessarily be so. Companies must give sufficient emphasis on the ‘career aspect’ of selling, right in the beginning, otherwise they later pay a heavy price in terms of having many senior salesmen in their teams who have either lost interest, or gone stale and do the job by rote. Or, they are very depressed that they have ‘not made it’ while some others who started out as salesmen at the same time have perhaps become sales managers, or even marketing directors. You will need to outline the history of the company, that is, how it started and grew, the sacrifices made by the founding fathers, the vision and foresight they showed, the contribution made by the company to the community, to the country and perhaps, to the community of nations.

• Explain to the salesman the policies of the company and the reasons for these policies being adopted.

• Help him develop confidence in himself—in his own individual abilities and what he can achieve with these abilities together with the company’s support.

• Motivate him to listen to and learn from his seniors by showing him how he will benefit and the opportunities that would be available to him, if he makes it.

• Demonstrate to him the personal qualities required to make a successful salesman.

• Give him an opportunity to see how the product is made, used and serviced. Explain the advantages of your product, the strengths and weaknesses of competitors and the characteristics of the market.

• Outline the selling techniques used by your company.

• Reassert his duties and responsibilities.
Clarify to him the *methods* that will be used to *appraise his work*.

When this is all done and the salesman has ‘graduated’, then the more important part of ‘in the field’ coaching can begin. This is a ‘career-long’, never-ending process. Even the senior-most salesman can keep improving. Coaching is not restricted to greenhorns in the profession, although the type and quantum of coaching could differ with the seniority of the salesman.

The primary purpose of all *field coaching* is to develop the salesman’s *self-confidence* and this can be done more easily by following the basic coaching sequence (BCS).

**Basic Coaching Sequence**

- **Prepare the salesman.**
  Put him at ease. Let him be relaxed and in a mood to learn. Get him genuinely interested in learning and improving himself.
- **Explain to him.**
  Avoid jargon when you are doing this. Use simple language. Concentrate on key points rather than covering too large a spectrum.
- **Demonstrate to him.**
  After you have told him, show him how to do it. Cover one thing at a time. Don’t confuse him by showing too many techniques at once. Explain why certain methods are followed. This will give him an idea of the reasoning behind each procedure and he will not feel that everything is done in an arbitrary manner.
  You will also have to *set high standards of performance*. This will be a good example and will motivate the salesman to always strive to do better.
Figure 13.1

*The Unprepared!*
• Let him experiment.
   You have to be certain that he is ready to do it. He will never
   be perfect before he is ‘pushed into the swimming pool’. Perfection will only come with practice.
   When he is conducting the sales interview himself, you have to resist the temptation to interfere constantly. Ignore minor
   errors and let him carry the ball.
• Appraise the interview.
   After the interview is over, do an appraisal. Look at all the facts objectively. Don’t be quick to blame the salesman. There could be other factors, which pushed the interview the wrong way. The ideal situation is where you analyse the interview in such a manner that the salesman is able to correct himself. However, if direct correction does become necessary, then the salesman should be complimented before correction. The correction should be done in private and direct criticism of the salesman should be avoided.
• Repeat the process.

Coaching is a continuous process. When one aspect has been corrected, then another will have to be started with and the sequence would need to be repeated by preparing him, then telling him and so on. It could even be the same aspect for which the coaching cycle may have to be repeated many times.

**At What Point of Time Should You Correct a Salesman?**

This is always a difficult question for the sales manager. There are times when the correction has to be done immediately, if a blunder has been committed during the interview and you may lose a customer if you do not intervene. This intervention should
be pleasant and may be even apologetic, starting with seeking the salesman’s permission, ‘John, if you will permit me to further clarify what you have said…’.

It is possible that such a situation has arisen because you allowed the salesman to take charge of the interview without being certain that he is ready for it. Or, it could just be that it was an extraordinary selling situation. Or, that your non-verbal communication during the interview was such that it encouraged the customer to want an answer only from you. It is important that when accompanying the salesman to visit a customer, you do not project yourself so much that it forces you to conduct the interview and the salesman becomes a spectator. You could say that you are here with Mr John and ‘if you do not mind I will sit through because Mr John had wanted to visit you to specially talk to you about the new product the company has introduced…’.

This is not easy to implement, Roy. You will be greatly tempted to show off to the customer and the salesman what a great salesman you are. The customer also is tempted to talk to a peer—to someone higher up in the organization rather than the salesman whom he sees every month. But if you really want to coach your salesman in the field, you will have to find ways and means of keeping yourself out of the mainstream of the selling interview in a pleasant way and certainly not as a detective, or fault finder, waiting in the wings to pounce on the most minor flaw.

A good time to correct a salesman is between interviews. This is also called a kerb conference, because it takes place on pavement kerbs. Kerb conferences are used to plan the next call and also to review the last call. These are timely because the analysis can be done when the memory of the call is still fresh. It can be done in an informal manner while casually walking to the next appointment. It does not have the serious air, or weightage, of a real meeting. However, care must be taken to:
Figure 13.2

Please, Allow Me...
• Not to make a ceremony of a kerb conference.
• Sometimes give the salesman a break from corrections otherwise as soon as the salesman comes out after a meeting he will expect a lecture on ‘what went wrong’ as a routine and switch off mentally.
• Focus only on major errors.
• Concentrate on just one or two errors at a time and ignore the others even if there were more.
• Compliment before you correct.
• Never correct in the presence of others, particularly customers, so that his ego is not hurt.
• Give him justifiable praise occasionally in the presence of his customers.

Use the kerb conference method only if the next interview can be improved upon by this immediate discussion. Otherwise, avoid even this system and keep the correction for the evening.

The evening review method is the best and most preferred if the discussion can be kept for the evening without in the meantime hurting the day’s work as it goes along. You can take the salesman to your hotel room, Roy, and over a cup of coffee, in a relaxed mood, go over the day’s work in an unhurried manner. In addition to the points made earlier about the way in which the salesman has to be corrected, you should also develop the ability to criticize the event and not the person. For instance, the right way would be:

The closing of interviews can be improved much more, John. One needs to look for buying signals and then close at the ‘high interest’ points. Let me give you an example of what happened this morning when we were with Mr Sam.

This is different from:

Your closing of interviews is very poor, John. Let me show you how you failed in this respect when you were with Mr Sam.
Figure 13.3

A Time... and Place
Make notes of the strengths and weaknesses and the decisions taken for areas of improvement. You can then use the notes as a benchmark to see what progress has been made by the time of your next visit. These notes can also be used at the time of the annual appraisal. The salesman then knows that you are being helpful and fair, that your visits have a purpose and a continuum and that the appraisals are done on the basis of written and mutually-known records, rather than based on a hunch, or a vague memory, or by the latest impressions, or just feelings.

It is a good idea to end the evening review by changing the conversation to something light and not directly connected with business. This will help to change gears and help end the review on a pleasant and friendly note. It will also help you to understand the salesman better—his hopes, dreams, aspirations, ambitions. You should remember that surveys conducted in the past have shown that a person will listen better (70–80 per cent) if the subjects are of direct interest, for example, the job, a hobby, or family; it is 60–70 per cent if the subjects concern personal well-being like local or company news and it is just 40–50 per cent if the subjects are of general interest like world and national news. If you keep this in mind, you will be able to choose subjects that are of interest to him and this will help you get a little closer to members of your team.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
This was Swami’s sixth job in 14 years of selling. He had started as a salesman and in eight years had reached the level of a regional sales manager. In the first four years of his career as a supervisor, he seemed to manage well. Sales were on target and he had built a strong team.

Then Swami began slipping. He developed diabetes and felt tired easily. His wife was also ill, she suffered from recurrent bouts of asthma. Problems with his health were compounded by problems at home. Swami began taking short cuts. He spent most of his time at home. He seldom worked in the field, or went on tours. And he wrote exhaustive reports to the office narrating his work with his salesmen, market conditions, competitors’ activity and so on.

But sales kept skidding downward. His salesmen got very little coaching or guidance from him. They felt like rudderless ships, floundering along, because Swami had become a ‘little seen’ boss, whose presence was felt only through his memos. And the memos did not have much substance either.

When the general sales manager visited the territory and worked with these salesmen in the field, casual conversation indicated that Swami had never worked with some of them, although he had reported that he had. Naturally, Swami had to pay the price for such dishonesty. He was summarily dismissed. Belatedly he realized that one can’t fool all the people all the time.
Questions to Ponder Over

1. Which do you feel is more important—break-in training, or in-field training?
2. Can action-oriented sales managers really become good coaches? What are the qualities required in a good coach?
3. Why do many salesmen look upon their present job only as a stepping-stone to managerial jobs and not as a career?
4. What can be the limits of patience in the coaching process? When do sales managers give up with slow-learning salesmen?
5. Apart from kerb-side conferences and the evening review method, what are the other situations in which coaching can be imparted?
6. Why is it difficult to focus on the event rather than on the person?
'I do not believe in that word fate. It is the refuge of every self confessed failure.'
Andrew Soutar

Dear Roy,

**Planning the Itinerary**

From what I have seen, most times the coaching process *fails* because the *sales manager himself has not planned his itinerary well*, or not gone out with any definite purpose. Before he leaves on tour he does not bother to ask himself why he is going, what is he going to do there and what will he achieve.

Few sales managers make a proper calculation of the strengths and weaknesses of their salesmen. Generally, 70 per cent of the team are average producers, 15 per cent above average and 15 per cent are below average. Sales managers invariably make the mistake of spending too much time with either the above average or
the below average producers and end up *neglecting* the average producers, who actually generate the major quantum of sales for the company. The concentration of development and motivation should, therefore, mostly be on this centre flank—the steady producers who will do an adequate job of their assignment.

Another problem that generally arises, Roy, is that many sales managers go on tour without having a plan. The system they follow is simple. The sales manager has to work with each salesman two days a month. He has eight salesmen in his headquarters. It is a humming bird tour. Constantly moving, never planning, not listing objectives and never stopping to think. The tour becomes a routine and consequently, in many ways, a waste of time and money.

This is why I thought I will emphasize to you, the need for a *tour plan*. Make this before you leave on tour. Decide whom you are going to visit and why and how many days you will spend with each salesman. It need not be a standard of two days with each person. It could be four days with one and one day with another. Estimate your point of departure and destination. You must rely on your own past experiences, common sense, intelligence and training. Adequate supervision is based on sound logical thinking, consideration of others and a kind understanding of their problems.

Please *circulate your tour plan* to other departments in the office. If the finance, production, or quality control people want you to discuss some of their issues with any of the salesmen, they must have a chance to tell you. A lot of unnecessary correspondence can be avoided if full advantage is taken of your tour to have personal discussions.

An efficient itinerary *shows your location at all times*. It is worked out so as to be economical in terms of time and travel costs and allows for unforeseen eventualities and variations.
Figure 14.1

The Gold Rush
As I said earlier, your visit must have a *definite objective*, it must be *worth the cost involved*. It should combine trips to nearby territories if this is called for and you should try and get results at the time of the visit. Don’t keep matters for later, or next time, unless this just cannot be helped.

You will be able to do all this well if you allot your time sensibly. This will depend on the number of people to be supervised, the frequency of visits required, the size of the territory to be supervised, the kind of transportation available, the intensity of supervision necessary and the funds available for sales supervision travel.

In essence, Roy, you *should always know where there is a problem* and go there. You can investigate *why there is a problem* once you get there. Many a times, the sales manager gets to know *where* the problem lies only after he gets there and then he has no time to probe further on the *why* aspect. Please guard yourself against this danger.

Once again, you should be a sales manager with ‘foresight’.

Yours sincerely,

---

**Box 14.1**

**Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About**

The managing director of a large chemicals company was complaining bitterly, ‘I never see my sales manager at the head office.’
I can never get him to sit down here and discuss plans, progress, or reviews. He is travelling all the time. Every time I buzz his office on the intercom, he has just arrived or he is going somewhere. Do all sales managers operate this way?’ he asked.

Later in the week when I did get to meet Tim, I could have laughed. He was just leaving for the airport. He had a bunch of airline tickets in his hand, which if spread out, would have looked like Christmas bunting. He said he was extremely busy. He was doing a run of all the major towns in the south and east of the country in the next 10 days. Had he not been there just a month ago?’ ‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘but the sales boys need chasing! And there seem to be some problems which I need to sort out quickly’.

Tim did not seem capable of delegating these assignments to his area managers. At the same time, it was doubtful what he would achieve with visits of half a day to each town. All he did was go from airport to hotel to airport. He tried to find solutions through brief meetings in hotel rooms. And he evolved into a sales manager who really had not visited the markets in any town for some years. A busy bee, flitting from flower to flower, but collecting no honey, or anything else!

It was not long before Tim stumbled and fell career wise. He would not change. Unplanned and continuous travel without a specific objective only made him an ineffective sales manager.

Questions to Ponder Over

1. If the sales manager has 10 salesmen reporting to him who follow the mix of effectiveness discussed, how should he spend his time of 25 working days every month?
2. Why do sales managers feel tempted to spend more time with above-average salesmen? And what are the reasons they generally give for doing so?
3. Should the general manager, or marketing director, impose a discipline about tour plans being approved, to ensure that sales managers work according to a system? What norms should they lay down?
‘First learn the meaning of what you say, and then speak.’

Epictetus

Dear Roy,

**Effective Communication**

Now that you are a sales manager, there is a greater need for you to understand the functions of communication, both verbal and written. Much has been said about communication, but little is done about it in the daily workday life. The absence of an understanding of the communication process is probably the greatest problem in business today. I keep hearing comments and snatches of conversation that reflect on the amount of confusion that exists—‘He told me he understood’, or ‘but your report said’, or ‘I thought you had said’, or ‘I thought you had meant’, or…. .

The sales manager has a dual responsibility, which makes it even more important for him to master the art of communication. One, he has to interpret the views of his customers and salesmen to the
company. This is *upward communication*. Two, he has to *interpret the company’s thinking for his salesmen and customers*. This is *downward communication*. The field sales manager is, therefore, the connecting link; if this link is weak, the chain can snap at this point.

The biggest problem with most sales managers is that they talk down to salesmen. They forget that they were themselves salesmen once. They adopt the schoolteacher approach and this, naturally, is resented by the salesmen. A sales manager must talk and write to salesmen as he would to intelligent adults—which is what they are! If the sales manager does this, he will automatically ensure high receptivity from the salesmen.

The sales manager must tailor his message in such a way that the salesmen feel it is worth listening to. He should take the trouble to find out what they want to know and, if possible, then tell them. He should be clear about what he wants them to achieve and why he wants them to do so. They should constantly be kept informed of important developments so that they get the feeling of being active participants in a team. The sales manager should avoid using high-pressure tactics, which will only put off the salesmen. Finally, it is a good principle to *live in the present, look to the future and forget the past*.

The ability to communicate effectively and sincerely lies on four cornerstones, which sales managers generally ignore.

- Knowledge of oneself: If you are afraid to look at yourself squarely, you will maintain a smokescreen of big talk and little accomplishment. Your salesmen will see through you. You may be effective, but you will not be sincere.
- Get to know others: Have empathy. Develop the ability to put yourself in their shoes and then speak. Empathy means not only seeing the problem from the salesman’s point of view, but also getting him to see the problem from your point of view.
• Prepare and organize: Try to clarify your ideas before you start communicating. Identify the purpose of your communication. Is it a social function, or to give information, or to influence the people he is communicating with, or to help take a decision? Preparation can be a lengthy process. Good communication is both a science and an art. The art is 1 per cent inspiration and the science is 99 per cent perspiration.

• Know how to listen: Too many people think communication means only talking. But listening is even more important than talking. The higher you go up the management ladder, the more you will have to develop the art of effective listening. This is not easy. Personal discipline is the key to improved listening. Most of the time, people are only hearing, not listening. They are busy with their own thoughts, or they are busy thinking what they will say next.

If these four cornerstones are strong, the sales manager can be confident about the effectiveness of his communication. His ability to plan, organize, coordinate, motivate and control will largely depend on his ability to communicate. In both verbal and in written communication, there are a few simple rules that one must follow:

• Tell enough: Make sure you tell the whole story. Don’t leave any blanks and question marks. At the same time, there is no need to tell too much and add a garnishing of the unnecessary and the trivial.

• Be on the same wavelength: Since communication is a very personal process, both must be tuned to the same wavelength and speak the same language. Your wavelength will, therefore, have to be different when you are talking to customers, salesmen and management. This does not mean that your opinions will change. Only your style, presentation and language of communication will change.
• Avoid fuzzy words: Be precise. Sales people are very prone to being vague in their communication. Sales are ‘bad’, or ‘improving’. There are ‘few’, or ‘many’, or ‘some’ customers. The receiver just does not get a clear picture of what is happening when fuzzy words like these are used.

• Watch your tone: Many a time it matters more how something is said rather than what is said. You should be brief, but brevity should not give the impression of curtness and lack of tact.

• Clear the air: Don’t let false rumours gain ground. Your people should hear about any changes from you first. Otherwise, they may hear an incorrect version from a non-authoritative source, which may upset them, especially if they feel that this will affect their jobs. Your team must always be shown how the new decisions will benefit all or most of them. Even your initial communication must counteract opposition, which may arise from feelings of insecurity.

• Tell all concerned: Don’t miss out anyone who should be part of the communication process. People are very sensitive. They even look to see how high their name appears on the list. Any unwitting omission can cause great damage.

• Be brief: Condense your message into as few words as possible. But take care that you do not appear curt. Say ‘no’ rather than ‘the answer is in the negative’. Don’t hide your thoughts in a surfeit of words.

• Consider the total physical and human setting: Don’t communicate in isolation. Assess the course of your communication, the physical setting, the social climate, customs and past practice. You also have to consider that some salesmen will absorb all the information passed on to them while some don’t even look at the information. But then you have to deal with all kinds of people—across the entire spectrum.

• Support your communication with action: You will need to do this otherwise you will be perceived of just as a preacher, who does not practice what he preaches. Your communication will then appear hollow.
Follow up your communication: Communication is not an end in itself. It has to be a continuum. The dialogue goes on, carrying on from where you left it. And this is where most sales managers fail. Their communication comes on like a coughing spell, followed by a long silence, then another spell. Such communication is not really effective.

You will understand the importance of communication when you look at these figures someone has worked out. They say that 70 per cent of our waking moments are spent in communicating:

- 9 per cent in writing.
- 16 per cent in reading.
- 30 per cent in talking.
- 45 per cent in listening.

Therefore, the time spent in developing communications skills is time well spent. Communication is the only way to get things done in an interdependent world.

Yours sincerely,

Box 15.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

Colonel Dan had retired prematurely from the army and took up an assignment in a large company in the pesticides business.
He adjusted himself well to the new environment and over the next eight years moved up rapidly to become the general manager of the company. And there he showed the colours of the general he might have been, had he stayed in the army!

No executive from within the company could call Colonel Dan on the intercom. They could not even call his secretary. Only the colonel could call them, if he thought it was necessary to talk to them on any matter.

Every manager reporting to the general manager was allotted a specific time—15 minutes every morning. They had to come prepared with all matters for discussion with the colonel. If they finished in 15 minutes, good luck! If they could not, too bad; it would have to be postponed to the next day.

It was a strange system for a modern day, commercial organization. And it was a strange experiment in corporate communication. Certainly an anachronism in this day and age! You can imagine the damage such a communication process did to the organization.

Questions to Ponder Over

1. Would you agree that the ability to communicate is central to a sales manager’s competence? Why?
2. What would you prioritize as the three most important rules in effective communication?
3. How will you evaluate if a piece of communication was effective?
4. What can you do to:
   - Improve your listening skills.
   - Increase your reading speed.
‘There can be no happiness equal to the joy of finding a heart that understands.’

Victor Robinsoll

Dear Roy,

**Beyond Words**

Many a time, it does not matter as much what you say, but how you say it and, of course, who says it. That is why it is important to understand ‘paralinguistics’ parallel to language. *Paralinguistics adds colour and flavour to the meaning of words.* And even meanings of words can change depending on the kind of paralinguistics applied.

The six dimensions of paralinguistics are volume, tone, pitch, quality, speed and stress. You could use a high volume, or a low one, and this can indicate emotions like anger, or even great joy. It is the same with tone. A high pitch comes into play in an emergency. And quality is something we could be born with, or how we have trained ourselves. The greater the nervousness, the greater
will be the speed of our speech. And stress is the emphasis that we lay on words. There is a big difference between ‘I told you not to do it!’ and ‘I told you not to do it’, or ‘I told you not to do it’.

Communication can also be considerably influenced by body language. What is said by the body may be far more than what is said by words. Someone passing down the corridor stamps my foot and says ‘I’m sorry’, but his face does not show any sorrow! Here there is dissonance between the spoken words and the body language.

There are nine dimensions to body language, all of which individually, or in combination, can communicate beyond and in addition to words. These are head nods, eye movements, facial expression, hand gestures, body posture, body contact, body proximity, dress and appearance, timing and synchronization.

Thus, paralinguistics and body language may be used to reinforce words used in verbal communication, or sometimes to negate what has been said in words.

Many books have been written on verbal communication and there are many exercises that you can do to improve your effectiveness as a communicator. It is said that ‘Meanings are in people—not just in the words you use’. It is worth spending time and effort to practice and improve in this area to become an effective sales manager.

Yours sincerely,
Questions to Ponder Over

1. Is it easier to mask real feelings in words, in paralinguistics, or in body language?
2. Can you give examples of positive and negative body language signals?
3. Why is timing and synchronization included as an aspect of body language?
4. Are there aspects of physical proximity that can attract, or distance those with whom you communicate?
Dear Roy,

**Written Reports**

I know that as a sales manager you cannot be snowed down with too much report writing. Even as a salesman your argument used to be—‘Am I paid to sell, or to write reports?’ However, in your present assignment, a certain amount of *report writing is essential*. Wherever a job can be accomplished with verbal communication, please do so. However, when written reports are necessary, make them more incisive, more analytical and packed with more information than a salesman’s report, naturally!

It will not be difficult for you to write a good, organized report if you ask a few basic questions to yourself before you write the report.

‘Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of intelligent effort.’

John Ruskin
What exactly is this report I write every week?
Is this report really necessary?
Where in the company is it sent?
When is it due?
Who uses it? Who gets copies and what is the protocol?
How can I improve its readability?
Why do I have to write it and not someone else?

If you answer these questions, you will have a guideline to improve your report writing.

Sometimes, reports are written without a heading, or date, or without being addressed to anyone (all it says is ‘to head office’). To avoid these errors in the future, I am listing a few simple rules.

A good report should have precise statements of:

- The objective of the study.
- Data which has a bearing on the problem and methods used for its collection.
- Conclusions including action already taken and (only then) action recommended.

The last will show that the sales manager is a self-starter, that he does whatever he can with the resources available, rather than only waiting for instructions from above about what to do.

A good presentation pattern is given next.

- Specify to whom the report is addressed and with copies to whom.
- Specify from whom the report originates.
- Date and place of the report.
- Heading or subject.
- Introduction.
- Body data.
- Conclusions.
Written Reports

• Recommendations: (i) action taken, (ii) action recommended.
• Discussion of the conclusions.
• Discussion of the recommendations.
• Summary.
• Appendix if any.

If you follow this pattern, it will make a very readable report. For any effective presentation whether writing a report, or a memo, or even a salesman’s appraisal, the elements remain the same:

• Clear-cut identification of the problem.
• Careful organization of the subject matter, giving required weightage to major and minor points.
• Careful consideration of the background, tone and interest of the audience.
• The use of the best possible and feasible visual aids.

You need to train yourself to write in a format, which makes for easy reading by the receiver. Headings and subheadings help. Use separate paragraphs for each thought with short sentences of not more than eight words. The paragraph should ideally not be more than six–eight sentences long. The language should be direct, with simple words, projecting the right meaning. There is no need to show off your vocabulary. You can just say that ‘I don’t think what you are saying is true’ rather than saying ‘There is no need to indulge in terminological inexactitudes’, or putting it too directly and simply as ‘You are telling lies!’

I am sure your written reports and memos will be more meaningful and interesting to your salesmen and to head office personnel if you follow these guidelines.

Yours sincerely,
Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

Dutta was the field manager of an organization for the state of Bihar in India with headquarters in Patna. He was a man with his own individual style—a man of few words, but tough and capable of a lot of hard work. Sales in Bihar were on target and Dutta led a reasonably cohesive team.

All seemed well, except that the head office never really knew what was going on in Bihar until the beginning of the month when they would get the sales figures of the preceding month. Dutta would seldom send reports and never sent them on time. Only his expense statements were received which were soon followed by frantic cablegrams to send remittances urgently.

His sales manager worked with him for a fortnight and set an example by sitting up with Dutta in the evenings, completing reports for the day and ensuring that they were posted immediately. He followed this up by reminders after returning to the head office. He encouraged him, coaxed him, cajoled him and finally threatened him with termination to no avail. Finally, Dutta’s services had to be terminated because though the sales were adequate, the systems were wrong. In the long run, the wrong systems could tell on the sales.

Due to sheer pigheadedness, Dutta had ruined an otherwise successful career in sales management.

Questions to Ponder Over

1. Do you agree with the length of sentences and the size of paragraphs for easy reading, as recommended?
2. Where will you use a comma, a colon, a semicolon, a hyphen and an exclamation mark?
3. Two memos written by a sales manager to a salesman are given in the following page. How should these be modified to adopt the rules of good communication?

(a) Memo to: Sunil Mehra

From: L.S. Chopra

Sunil,

It has been a terrible performance in September 2005. This cannot go on. We have gone through the whole year with promises of improved performance. It has been of no use. You must improve from October onwards. No excuse will be tolerated.

(b) Memo to: J. Saxena

From: L.S. Chopra

Jagdish,

Received your note asking for leave. I’m surprised that you are asking for leave right at the beginning of the year. But I am forwarding your application to headquarters with my recommendation.

Do see to it that you achieve your target this quarter.
‘Everybody loves to find fault; it gives a feeling of superiority.’

William Feather

Dear Roy,

**Making Meetings Work**

One of the important coaching techniques you will be using, Roy, is meetings and conferences. I know you are familiar with them and must have attended many of them in the past. But you have attended them, not conducted them. And this is one of the significant differences in the roles of a salesman and that of a sales manager.

All meetings must have the objective of increasing the effectiveness of those attending it, for the benefit of the organization, or the cause they are espousing and for the individuals themselves. Meetings should bring about a change in people—either improve their skills, increase their knowledge, change their actions or attitudes, or raise morale.
Figure 18.1

Anyone Listening?
Meetings may also be held to plan some specific action, resolve a conflict, solve a problem, or develop or exchange ideas.

Meetings are important because group discussions are always better. If people participate in the decision-making process, they are also enthusiastic about the implementation. Through group discussions, people get a feeling of belonging, of camaraderie; they are able to relate to other people, get ideas from them and at the same time test their own ideas in the group.

That is why you must adopt a professional approach to meetings, whether they are small meetings like an appraisal meeting, a larger meeting like your monthly team review meeting, or a large meeting like an annual sales conference.

You will have to plan meetings, run them and then implement the decisions.

When you plan a meeting, Roy, you should:

• First decide what you want to accomplish. Is it to improve skills, or impart knowledge, or for any other reason?
• Analyse the group who will attend—what is their knowledge level, their interests, needs and desires?
• Plan the agenda of the meeting based on these two factors.
• Plan how you will present each part of the programme for maximum effectiveness, that is, whether you will use slides, charts, blackboards, or films.
• Plan what you will do after the meeting to make the results last longer.

When you organize a meeting, you will have to take care of even the minor physical aspects. This will distinguish a well-organized meeting from a poorly-managed one:

• Be certain that someone is there early to receive the participants.
• Ensure that there is enough room and seats, that the seats are comfortable, that the light is adequate, with no glare and the microphones are working well. Flowers should be placed around the conference room. There should be enough notepads and pencils that work. Ash trays and drinking water should be provided. The seating arrangement needs to be appropriate to the meeting (a round or rectangular table with chairs around, or an audience seating with the stage in front, etc.).
• Ensure that lunch and tea arrangements are done in advance and in a manner that the setting of the table or the serving of the food does not disturb the meeting.

You will now be the chairman at most meetings, Roy, and you will, therefore, have to master the technique of conducting meetings.

• Have a written agenda in front of you as a guide.
• Try and get the participants’ agreement to the agenda. This can be done earlier, or at the start of the meeting.
• Use good human relations.
• Keep the meeting moving forward. When the discussion wanders, bring it back to focus tactfully and ensure that the participants discuss the issue at hand within the stipulated time.
• Encourage participation from as many participants as possible. You must develop a style of controlling the compulsive talkers, while at the same time drawing out the quiet members.
• Summarize the discussion from time to time.
• Generate a team spirit during the meeting.
• Know when and how to wind up. Close on a positive note. If you feel that the meeting is not going anywhere, or serving any purpose, then close early.

To be able to do all this well, Roy, you will have to develop the qualities of a good conference chairman. He not only has procedural
Figure 18.2

*Friends, Romans, Citizens…*
know-how, but also a certain confidence in himself. He has to have the ability to motivate others, make them interested and enthusiastic about the issue at hand. He must have thorough knowledge of the subject. He must also have the ability to persuade others, have mental agility, a sense of humour, empathy and the vision to distinguish major issues from the trivial ones.

You should know your own style, Roy. Don’t try and imitate someone else. You may have a directive style, or a permissive one, a style that suits your temperament and personality. But you should know what it is. It should not be a default style!

I do hope that with this background, the meetings and conferences you conduct as a sales manager will be interesting and purposeful.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Box 18.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

I had come from another firm to take over as marketing manager of this company. I first met Seshan, the south zone sales manager, when I attended a regional sales conference for the south division in Chennai. Seshan set an example of how to plan and run an effective sales meeting.

The meeting was in a modest hotel with a large, well-equipped conference room. The seats were arranged in a ‘U’ shape to facilitate discussion. There were notepads and pencils and drinking water. The blackboard was ‘writeable’ (not shiny and smooth)
with an array of white and coloured chalk. The blackboard held a
large welcome to me and in a corner was a request to refrain from
smoking during the sessions. The lighting was adequate without
glare and the toilets were clean with soap and hand towels pro-
vided. The distance between the seats enabled the salesmen to
sit and write comfortably.

But what made the meeting particularly interesting was the
way Seshan conducted it. A brief initial introduction and then
it was down to business. He encouraged discussion, politely
scorching the compulsive talker, drawing out the quiet salesman,
evolving decisions through consensus, chalking out a plan of
action, working out details in quantitative terms, laying down
systems and procedures and jointly hammering out the meth-
odology, setting time periods for achievement and fixing dates
for review.

It was like a demonstration of a lecture on 'How to run con-
ferences'. It was the finest sales conference I had attended.

Mild and quiet, Seshan had some basic problems in becoming
an outstanding sales manager. But he more than compensated for
these drawbacks by mastering the art of conducting conferences.
That is why Seshan and his team always achieved their targets
in a planned and systematic manner.

Questions to Ponder Over

1. In your experience, why do many meetings fail to achieve
their objective?
2. Why do many participants abdicate and leave it to a few to
discuss issues and become their spokesmen?
3. Are chairmen sometimes justified in being ‘dictatorial’ in
ensuring that the meeting keeps moving?
4. Can you add any other qualities to the list given, to be an
effective chairman?
5. How far should visual aids be used at a meeting? Are visual aids a distraction or an aid?
6. What are the situations under which meetings have to be adjourned?
7. How many topics can a group handle at one meeting? Can having too many topics be a distraction?
8. Will smoking, snacking and drinking be major distractions at a meeting? How far can this be controlled?
‘If you can’t do anything else to help along, just smile.’

Eleanor Kirk

Dear Roy,

**Morale and Motivation**

A great deal has been written about morale and motivation in recent times. But in spite of the tomes on this subject, the *art of motivating still remains an elusive pursuit* for many sales managers.

You may wonder at the real meanings of the terms morale and motivation. Morale is an individual’s feelings, attitudes, or emotional stance towards work. Motivation is the ability to make people drive towards a certain objective.

There are two distinct phases of motivation: *total* and *promotional*. Your selection procedure will determine whether the candidate *can do* the job, but whether he *will do* it depends on total motivation. Promotional motivation, on the other hand, is the
ability to be stimulated for short bursts of extraordinary effort (like a sales contest).

Understanding the elements of morale is a painful process and requires effort in three directions:

• Understand yourself as a manager.
• Understand why people work.
• Understand how people work together.

In essence, to build morale, you need to tap the power of positive motives. There is the classic example of a soldier who trudges along grudgingly on a forced march and yet would have happily covered the same distance if he was on a hunting trip. All employees need self-respect. They can be satisfied only when they have assignments, which allow them to achieve a high level of personal effectiveness. That is why you, as a sales manager, need to have a people-centred management approach.

Strange as it may seem, Roy, the first prerequisite of good total motivation is discipline. In the absence of firm discipline and fair treatment, you cannot have total motivation. Once the foundation for motivation is laid with discipline, other factors that play a role are:

• Good working conditions.
• The toughness of the sales calls (if sales calls are too easy, they don’t motivate, or give satisfaction).
• A sense of achievement on orders obtained.
• Closeness of supervision.
• Growth opportunities.
• Earnings potential.
• The treatment and service a salesman gets from his head office.

Experts have listed out several factors in motivating individual salesmen:
• Make him want to improve.
• ‘Sell’ him the idea. Make him receptive to your talk.
• Tell him why it will matter to him and how he will benefit.
• Talk about his wants.
• Appreciate his good points.
• Suggest, ask questions and listen.
• Appeal to his emotions and offer him emotional security.

However, it is important to remember that:

• Nothing can replace the *personal example* you set. If you set a good example of character, diligence in work, perseverance in the face of strong odds, that is the best motivating factor.
• No two salesmen are identical. Each has his own individuality. Therefore, you must know your salesmen well. You must study the kind of person they are and *tailor your methods* accordingly.
• There is an interesting classification of salesmen, which is amusing but true:

  Wheel barrow—has to be pushed.
  Canoe—has to be paddled along.
  Kite—has to be kept on the string and given sufficient freedom.
  Kitten—has to be petted and cuddled.
  Football—has to be kicked around.
  Balloon—has to be flattered.
  Trailer—has to be tagged along.

It is possible that a salesman will be a mixture of two of this classifications, or his profile might change with the environment. For example, a salesman may be a ‘balloon’ when sales are high and be a ‘kitten’ when sales are low.
Figure 19.1

Relevant Training
The whole theory of motivation can be summarized in this inverted triangle.

I’m sorry I made a mistake.
I am proud of you.
What is your opinion?
Will you please?
Thank you.

‘I’ is the least important word.

If you base your motivation on just these five sentences, keeping the ‘I’ as low profile as possible, you should have no trouble in motivating your team.

These five sentences should be used:

- Sparingly.
- Appropriately.
- Sincerely.

If you do so, you will be the team’s Pied Piper.

It may be interesting to see how ‘Maslow’s’ hierarchy of needs is matched to Salespersons’ needs and the Sales Managers’ task by Rolph E. Anderson, Joseph F. Hair, Jr and Alan J. Bush’s *Professional Sales Management* (1988).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs</th>
<th>Salesperson’s Needs</th>
<th>Sales Manager’s Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-actualization needs</td>
<td>Self-development</td>
<td>Provide greater job control, freedom, self-development workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-fulfilment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
Figure 19.2

*To Be or Not To Be*
(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs</th>
<th>Salesperson’s Needs</th>
<th>Sales Manager’s Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esteem needs</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Provide greater job responsibilities, promotion opportunities, public recognition for achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social needs</td>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>Maintain close relationships with sales force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Sales meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>among peers and superiors</td>
<td>Newsletters, memoranda, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety needs</td>
<td>Freedom from worry about security of jobs, incomes, medical expenses, etc.</td>
<td>Provide a balanced package of fringe benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>↑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological needs</td>
<td>Food shelter, overall health, etc.</td>
<td>Be aware of general health and living conditions of sales force</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The basics given here will determine whether you are a leader of your team, or just the boss.

A boss drives his men, a leader coaches them.
A boss depends on authority, a leader on goodwill.
A boss inspires fear, a leader inspires enthusiasm.
A boss says ‘I’, a leader says ‘we’.
A boss says ‘get here on time’, a leader gets there ahead of time.
A boss fixes the blame for the failure, a leader fixes the failure.
A boss knows how it is done, a leader shows how it should be done.
A boss says ‘go’, a leader says ‘let’s go’.

Go ahead. Get your men to do what you want done and don’t interfere while they are doing it.
At all times please remember that the days of being a boss are long over. You are now only the first among equals.

Yours sincerely,

Box 19.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

Don was with a British company in India—a salesman for 12 years and then a sales supervisor for eight years. He had only finished high school. He was a practical person with no ability for any conceptual thinking. He was a good salesman and when promoted became an effective supervisor. He was warm, but firm with his salesmen. He set a good example with heavy work schedules and the ability to demonstrate how it was to be done. He built a fairly good team and sales were on target.

However, over the years, promotion to the regional manager’s position eluded Don. In fact, some individuals who were junior to him in years of service had gone past him up the organizational ladder. He could not dispute the fact that they were as effective as himself. But they were better qualified, all graduates from
well-known universities and some even had degrees in business management. Don felt differently—he felt that the number of years with the company should be an important, if not the most important, criterion.

That is where Don fell into an emotional trap. He gave vent to his bitterness towards the company and spoke irresponsibly to his salesmen about the ‘higher-ups’ in the company. He tried to deliberately distort the company’s image in the eyes of his salesmen. Yet, he could not resign and leave, because where else could he go?

Most of his salesmen saw through his mental make-up. During his visits to their territory, when he harangued about the company, they nodded to keep him in good humour. But they pitied him and gradually lost respect for him.

Finally, Don was moved to a job in the distribution department at the branch office, where no one took any notice of him until, mercifully for him and the company, the date of deliverance—retirement day—dawned.

**Questions to Ponder Over**

1. What is more important—total motivation, or promotional motivation? Why?
2. Why is it difficult to understand why people work and how they work together?
3. Can there be high morale with low motivation, or vice versa? Why?
4. Can the classification of salesmen change with current times? Can a salesman have multiple classifications at any one time?
5. What environmental factors have made the transition from boss to leader necessary?
6. Where and when does the inverted pyramid, as discussed earlier, not work?
‘What lies in our power to do, lies in power not to do.’

Aristotle

Dear Roy,

**Effective Control**

Probably the most important aspect of sales management and, in fact, all management is *effective control*. Many sales managers are superb in planning and organizing perhaps even motivating. But they somehow lose sight of the control function, or purposely ignore it because they equate it with ‘policing’. The result is that they don’t know how they are faring. Moreover, since they don’t have a direction, they are apt to take any road, which will lead them anywhere, not necessarily where they had expected to go. What counts in business, Roy, and determines how rapidly you will get ahead, is the final score—the results you are able to get.

Many managers have learned, quite painfully, that results don’t just happen. They *have to be planned and managed*. There are two keys to success in this area. One is, the ability to use work records
and performance appraisals to keep your people motivated and working up to expectations; the other is the ability to use correct methods to evaluate work. Without the controls, you cannot do a complete job of either managing or developing your people.

What is control? It means following up, checking, evaluating and ensuring that the plans and goals of your team are being met through tangible results. Control represents the difference between what was done and what should be done. Controls help you to:

- Spot a problem in the early stages so that you have time to take corrective action.
- Spot poor employee attitudes resulting in a discipline disturbance.
- Delegate more effectively to your salesmen.
- Bring about an improvement in the direction and understanding of the work to be done.

In your new job, Roy, you will need to control your salesmen in three ways:

- Through feedback reports and records.
- Through personal visits in the field.
- Through sales conferences.

You must develop the ability to glance through a salesman’s report and immediately pinpoint the problem area. Some sales managers never develop this ability with the result that they come back from a field visit to an accumulated pile of reports, which they either just file or read every detail of.

And what will you be looking for, Roy? Significant indicators like:

- The daily average number of calls made.
• New prospects identified.
• Type of outlets or customers visited.
• Adherence to the journey plan.
• Average value of orders per call.
• Average expense per call.
• Sales–expense ratio.
• Distribution of samples done and the sales–sample ratio.

Apart from the salesmen’s reports, you will need the standard list of customers, the tour programme and the journey plan, the daily plan of work, the daily work report and expense statement, the general market report and any other special reports. You will also have to rely on records, quantitative data that you can use as a pointer to help improve performance.

From these records you will know the sales as compared to targets, product-wise and value-wise per customer and town, the total territory sales against target, the town-wise sales–expense ratio, the comparison of sales against the same month and same cumulative period in the previous year. All this quantitative data is very useful in identifying where the problem lies.

At the end of the book, I have given some formats of reports to be submitted by salespersons. I have found these formats very useful and perhaps you can use these yourself, with some amendments as may become necessary.

You can then confidently move into using the field visit as a control method to identify why the problem exists. Is it due to:

• Wrong attitude towards the customer, or the superior, or the company?
• Lack of knowledge?
• Lack of selling skills?
• Inadequate training?
• Personal problems?
• Wrong notions and preconceived ideas?
• Lack of planning?
• Lack of empathy or over-friendliness with the customers?
• Poor quality of merchandizing and sales promotion?

All this can be observed only during a personal visit. These problems cannot be identified through reports and records. The data is a pointer so that you know what kind of qualitative analysis is required during your field visit.

A sales conference is another forum that can be used to evaluate and appraise salesmen. You can assess the salesman’s:

• Product knowledge.
• Selling skills.
• Attitude.
• Ability for creative thinking.
• Ability to communicate.
• Leadership potential.
• Ability to cooperate.
• Listening skills.
• Capacity for logical thinking.
• Ability to convince others.

Again, this will give you qualitative data, for which the pointers would have come from the quantitative data you have already analysed.

If you sieve through all this data quickly and efficiently, you can compare the actuals against the objectives set at the beginning of the year. You then know at regular intervals how well or poorly you are doing, why and what remedial measures you need to adopt to set things right before they go out of your control. You can also use all this objective data, quantitative or qualitative, in the annual appraisal interview with your salesmen so that they can correct their weaknesses and further improve on their strengths.
There is then a smooth transition from control to appraisal as a development process, rather than it becoming a judgemental system. You will really be in command of the situation without exercising a ‘command and control’ system of management.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Box 20.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

It never ceased to surprise Kotan’s colleagues how he had got where he was, marketing director of medium-sized multinational, after 25 years in sales administration. He was a graduate who had started as a sales assistant and over the years through a series of lucky breaks moved into line functions to become a regional sales manager.

Kotan disliked field work. He was a poor speaker and lacked empathy, two major drawbacks for anyone specializing in sales. He felt very insecure and lacked the confidence to meet major customers and avoided them as much as possible.

But he was a good control man—one who could spot a problem in a sheaf of report papers and then get someone more competent than himself to set it right. This was one quality that took him far up the executive ladder when he was at a disadvantage on all the other fronts as a sales manager.
Questions to Ponder Over

1. How can you ensure that keeping control is not mistaken for ‘policing’, which can create resentment instead of improvement?

2. How will you prioritize the importance of reports, field visits and sales conferences? Why?

3. What are the techniques of rapid reading with comprehension that you can follow in scanning reports?

4. What other significant indicators will you look for in a field visit besides those already listed?

5. What are the qualities of a good chairman of a sales meeting, which can help to evaluate and appraise salesmen? What format will you follow for the meeting?
'We are afraid of truth, afraid of fortune, afraid of death and afraid of each other.'

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Dear Roy,

**Appraising and Developing Salesmen**

I had written to you about controls and control data. Much of this control information, however, is useless unless the sales manager uses it to continuously appraise, educate and develop his salesmen. And this control data should be translated and transferred into what are called appraisal forms. An appraisal form is to a sales manager what a speedometer is to a car. Though many sales managers view the whole concept of the appraisal form with grave reservations, it serves some very useful functions:

- It gives facts which guide you in controlling your men, not just opinions or worse still, the most recent opinion.
Figure 21.1

*The Honest Scale*
• It helps you in *praising* your men.
• It encourages your men to be their *own critics* and to assess their own progress.
• It helps to *educate* and *develop* your men.
• It helps you to *distinguish reasons from excuses*.

It is very important to be *objective* in filling up the appraisal form, Roy, because if it is coloured by impressions and prejudices, the appraisal form will do more harm than good.

You can restrict your evaluation of salesmen to four broad areas. These are:

1. **How is his performance?**
   • Look through the quantitative criteria that we have talked about under ‘controls’.

2. **What are the obstacles beyond the salesman’s control?**
   • Is the territory too large?
   • Is the geography such that travel becomes difficult and a lot of time is wasted in between calls?
   • Are the economic conditions in the area difficult?
   • Are the promotional inputs in his territory inadequate?

3. **What are the skills which the salesman has developed and which can be used by him, and you, for greater sales results?**
   • He may be excellent at productive journey routing.
   • He may be highly knowledgeable about the company’s business.
   • He may have a high level of technical knowledge.
   • The salesman may be adept at getting large government contracts or institutional business.
   • He might be friendly with his customers.
• The salesman may have an analytical mind and orientation towards market research.

4. What are the obstacles within the salesman’s control, causing a lower level of performance?

• Is he disorganized?
• Does he takes the job too lightly?
• Does he have marital problems or a serious illness in the family?
• Does he have some irritating habit?
• Does he have any problem like offensive body odour or bad breath?

Having assessed all this, you should then judge whether the salesman is so good as to be worthy of being promoted. Such salesmen will necessarily be few. Those whom it will not be appropriate to promote will fall into three categories: those who are doing a satisfactory job; those who could do a satisfactory job if trained; and those who are not doing a satisfactory job and will not be able to improve even if trained. This does reflect, perhaps, on an error in the initial selection, but such errors do occur in spite of all care that might have been taken. After all, Roy, sales managers are not omnipotent.

It is also important to note that the appraisal time for salesmen is also an appropriate time to appraise yourself. You will have to ask yourself the following questions:

• What have you done to help him since the last appraisal? Have you just stood around as an interested bystander?
• What has he done to help himself? Is he just leaning too heavily on you and your company?
• What further training is needed and what will be the time schedule to do this?
In this appraisal and development process, both the salesman and the sales manager play an equal role. They are partners. And, perhaps, this is the most satisfying part of a sales manager’s job.

Yours sincerely,

Box 21.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

Kelly had been a successful regional manager for a large American toiletries company for five years when the Bota Company headhunted him through a firm of consultants and recruited him as regional manager for the south zone. He was a very effective regional manager who over a period of 12 months brought the south region to the top among the four zones in the country. The sales of Class A (most profitable) products and total sales were the highest in the south, and the quantum of outstandings was the lowest. Before Kelly came on the scene, the south region was at the bottom of the league.

It was at the year-end conference at the head office that the company hosted a dinner party for the regional sales managers and area sales supervisors. Kelly had helped himself to a fourth drink and was in a gay mood, though he certainly was not drunk. And the successful regional manager had a crowd of admirers around him, whom he was regaling with stories and jokes.

The new sales director, Hansen, was not amused (Kelly had been selected by his predecessor). Hansen was a teetotaller
who also seemed to dislike those who enjoyed a drink. Perhaps there was also an element of envy—that this Johnny-come-lately should have worked his way up so fast and so confidently. This could be no ‘threat’ to the sales director, but Hansen was jealous.

Over the next few months, Hansen made life miserable for Kelly. He would be nit-pick at the slightest provocation, or even if there was none. The sales and profits continued to be the highest in Kelly’s area, but Kelly was the most criticized regional manager in the company. Hansen even ensured that his dislike for Kelly was noticed by Kelly’s team.

Finally, Kelly found another assignment and quit. The morale of his team plummeted. Sales in the south once again reverted to the ‘status quo ante’. Hansen’s personal prejudices had damaged one career, general team morale and the company’s reputation and progress.

An interesting postscript, three years later, Kelly was the general sales manager in his new company, which was larger than the earlier one, and Hansen was being nursed back to health after a serious heart attack!

Questions to Ponder Over

1. Can salesmen ever be objective about their own performance considering that they are generally emotional people?
2. Can praise create a sense of complacency in a salesman? How much should the sales manager restrain himself?
3. At what stage should salesmen who cannot be trained be dropped from the team?
4. How would you appraise yourself in the area of providing support to your salesmen?
5. What can a sales manager do to retain steady outstanding performers?
‘You can’t escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.’

Abraham Lincoln

Dear Roy,

**DISCUSSING THE APPRAISAL**

I have already emphasized the need for preparing a proper *objective appraisal* of work. Now you will have to get into the mechanics of *discussing* the appraisal with the salesman. Some sales managers are reluctant to do this and prefer the system by which they can *fill the evaluation privately* and file it away with the personnel department. This is not fair and not what modern management is all about.

It is important to:

- Give the salesman adequate notice of the meeting.
- Disclose the purpose of the meeting.
- Arrange the meeting at a time when neither of you are under pressure.
Figure 22.1

I Hereby Pronounce...
• Meet at a place where you will not be disturbed.
• Prepare yourself mentally by reviewing all the facts that went into your evaluation.
• Have a straightforward plan for conducting the discussion without beating about the bush.

The discussion can go well and without any misunderstanding if the salesman sees from your attitude, speech and manner, that you mean to help and not just sit in judgement.

It is, therefore, important that you create a friendly and warm atmosphere; that you show a sincere interest in his work and work problems; that you are honest and frank without being severe or patronizing; that you are calm and unemotional and take care not to put him on the defensive.

A good approach will be to:

• Let him review his own work to begin with.
• Let him speak frankly.
• Restrict yourselves by mutual agreement to only those aspects which are above or below average.

You should also take care to:

• Highlight the good points first.
• Criticize the work rather than the person.
• Avoid putting him on the defensive.
• Have specific examples ready with dates and places to illustrate any point.
• Give him a chance to save face.

The appraisal interview runs best when the approach is one of joint problem solving and when the sales manager adopts an attitude of humility.
Always focus on the future, Roy, don’t harp on the past. Use the past only to identify the mistakes that have been made and the lessons that can be learned from them.

*Ending* an appraisal interview is an art. You have to learn to end the appraisal on a positive and helpful note. Make notes of decisions taken. Jointly work out a time schedule for corrective action in areas that may require improvement.

You will thus be able to upgrade your men over a period of time and the appraisal system will have been developmental rather than judgemental. Appraisal interviews are a blessing not just to salesmen, but to sales managers themselves, Roy. These interviews compel the sales manager to sit down with each salesman on his team from time to time and tell him how he is getting on. Without an appraisal interview, this might never happen! And that would be a great pity!

Yours sincerely,

Box 22.1

**Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About**

Rohan is an FSO with an organization in Gujarat and is tired. He has been FSO for 10 years and, in spite of his excellent performance, there seems little appreciation for his work in the head office.
In 1986, the sales in Gujarat were Rs 2.4 million with two salesmen in the sales team. In 1991, with only 10 salesmen, the sales rose to Rs 9.5 million. In 1995, the sales went up to Rs 16.8 million with 12 members in the sales team.

Rohan had increased the sales considerably over a nine-year period, while the total market had increased by only 10 per cent every year.

Besides this, some of the company’s products are behind the times and difficult to sell. In spite of this, the head office is not happy. They feel that the growth is not sufficient.

What do you think?

### Questions to Ponder Over

1. How can you project an ‘attitude of helpfulness’ in your speech and manner during an appraisal interview?
2. Should you interrupt when a salesman is reviewing his work even when he may be wrong or misleading, or should you let him go on. Why?
3. Are there any other points you can add to the list of precautions to be taken while conducting an appraisal interview?
4. Could an attitude of humility adopted by the sales manager be mistaken for meekness, or weakness?
5. What other points would you add to the guidelines discussed earlier for ending an interview?
‘Show me a thoroughly satisfied man, and I will show you a failure.’

Thomas Edison

Dear Roy,

**THE SALESMAN WHO WON’T IMPROVE**

Most times when a salesman realizes his shortcomings he will be keen to improve and also keen that you show him the correct way. We have talked earlier about in-field coaching. In addition, you may use other training techniques like playbacks of recorded sales talks, role-playing at sales meetings, general conferences, group discussions and films.

However, when correction does not work, you will have to resort to *disciplining*. And when disciplining does not work, there is no alternative but to *terminate* the services of the salesman.

When a corrective interview has not yielded results, then interview again. But don’t interview too often, because then it ceases to have any effect. Also, a salesman may have failed, even
Figure 23.1

The Outstanding Salesman
after trying, in which case you must exercise some patience and resist the temptation to nag him.

In 95 per cent of cases, Roy, **good human relations can obviate the need for disciplining.** Human relations problem solving requires that four basic steps be consciously used:

- Get the facts, the whole story.
- Weigh and decide, don’t jump to conclusions.
- Take action, don’t pass the buck.
- Check results, has sales efficiency increased?

The single most important human relation tool is an **order.** This is not necessarily a command as is generally understood. It is an **instruction,** oral or written, regarding the performance of a task. It is through orders that work is assigned and accomplished. The manner and the clarity of the orders given will largely determine whether they are understood and executed.

There are six elements to an order:

- **What**  
  What is to be done?  
  Are all physical facilities provided?
- **Why**  
  Why is this development aspect important?
- **Who**  
  Who is to do the job?  
  Who is to get the results?  
  Who has been given sufficient authority?
- **How**  
  How is the development to be done?  
  Is sufficient flexibility in judgement allowed?
- **Where**  
  Where is the development to be done?
- **When**  
  What is the time schedule?  
  Is any flexibility provided for?  
  Is it being unnecessarily rushed?
Orders may be in the form of a demand (use this only in an emergency and in great haste); request (especially for timid salesmen, or new salesmen), or suggestion (especially for older salesmen).

It is best to give written orders whenever possible, especially if they are directed to a group, or if the instructions are complicated, or the sequence needs to be clearly spelled out. Written instructions also help in case future reference becomes necessary.

Clear orders are a reflection on the sales manager’s ability, Roy. If you master the what, why, who, how, where and when of orders, your salesmen will know that you know what to do and morale and teamwork will improve.

After a few corrective interviews, if you find that the salesman does not want to improve himself and this is due to his own negligence rather than due to any other external factors, he will have to be reprimanded and given a serious warning. Here again you will have to follow the same procedure. Get the facts, weigh these and decide, and take action by informing the salesman of your decision. At the same time, show him how to avoid future difficulty.

Make sure to keep a record of the interview, because if no improvement takes place, you will need the data to dissociate him from the company. Whether you reprimand, or you dissociate him, you must try and handle the situation yourself. Don’t delegate this function. It won’t get any easier that way; it will only get worse. Control your emotions and, therefore, your language and your temper. Don’t indulge in idle threats and have a clear understanding of his rights under union rules. In no circumstances should you hurt the salesman’s pride and dignity. It is best to part as friends.
Figure 23.2

*On Deaf Ears*
I am ending this letter by asking you, Roy, to think about how you will handle difficult salesmen. They can be put in various categories:

- The *stale salesman*, who has been with the company too long.
- The *discouraged salesman*, who feels depressed.
- The *lazy salesman*, who doesn’t care.
- The *overaggressive salesman*, who pushes on irrespective and is completely task-oriented.
- The *good starter and poor finisher*, who tries in vain; he tries hard, but does not produce the results.
- The *time waster*, who gets caught in social conversation.
- The *rumour carrier*, who creates stories from fanciful imaginings, which arise from his own fears.
- The *grudge bearer*, who is never happy and will never blame himself.

Naturally, each kind will need a different treatment. It may be worth our having a dialogue on how to deal with these types, because there can be more than one way of handling and developing them.

And develop them we must. Or you must terminate their services. Otherwise, this small minority may spread the contagion to the others in the team, a repetition of the story of a rotten apple in a basket full of good apples.

Yours sincerely,
Arun is one of the best representatives of an organization in Madhya Pradesh. He has been with the company for eight years and although academically not as well qualified as salesmen more recently employed (who are all graduates, while he only has a senior secondary certificate), he is very task conscious and result oriented.

Arun is the sort of salesman who needs to be given only general guidelines of what is to be done, the rest can be left to him. He will find ways and means of achieving the objective—and he has an uncanny knack of hitting upon solutions that will involve the least effort and yet give maximum returns.

For over five years now, Arun has been consistently ahead of his annual sales targets. However, over the last two years he seems to be a little disappointed with his career. He has seen his colleagues, some junior and with less achievements to their credit, being promoted to the level of supervisors.

Arun would have been promoted also except for one problem that consistently gets in his way. Ever since he joined the company, he has been most irregular with his reports, expense reports included. All these years he has had to be reminded, coaxed and cajoled into sending his reports in on time. There was once a situation where he sent three months’ reports at one go.

Ravi, the sales manager, feels he owes it to himself and to Arun to correct this one flaw in Arun’s working schedule. He has to think of ways and means of correcting it and ensuring Arun’s progress.

Ravi does succeed over an 18-month period. What plan do you think Ravi followed to help bring about an improvement in Arun?

Box 23.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

Arun is one of the best representatives of an organization in Madhya Pradesh. He has been with the company for eight years and although academically not as well qualified as salesmen more recently employed (who are all graduates, while he only has a senior secondary certificate), he is very task conscious and result oriented.

Arun is the sort of salesman who needs to be given only general guidelines of what is to be done, the rest can be left to him. He will find ways and means of achieving the objective—and he has an uncanny knack of hitting upon solutions that will involve the least effort and yet give maximum returns.

For over five years now, Arun has been consistently ahead of his annual sales targets. However, over the last two years he seems to be a little disappointed with his career. He has seen his colleagues, some junior and with less achievements to their credit, being promoted to the level of supervisors.

Arun would have been promoted also except for one problem that consistently gets in his way. Ever since he joined the company, he has been most irregular with his reports, expense reports included. All these years he has had to be reminded, coaxed and cajoled into sending his reports in on time. There was once a situation where he sent three months’ reports at one go.

Ravi, the sales manager, feels he owes it to himself and to Arun to correct this one flaw in Arun’s working schedule. He has to think of ways and means of correcting it and ensuring Arun’s progress.

Ravi does succeed over an 18-month period. What plan do you think Ravi followed to help bring about an improvement in Arun?
Questions to Ponder Over

1. Do you agree that salesmen are born not made? Can the failings of some salesmen be due to their not being ‘born’ salesmen?
2. Would you agree that most sales managers take hasty decisions? Can you think of some real life situations and analyse why this happened?
3. Do written orders make the process too formal and, therefore, disturb the relationship between the sales manager and the salesman?
4. Sometimes salesmen can be so aggravating that it is very difficult to keep your cool. What techniques will you use to keep your temper in check in difficult situations?
5. How will you deal with each of the different kinds of salesmen listed earlier?
‘We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake . . . and infinite expectations of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavour.’

Henry David Thoreau

Dear Roy,

**Common Errors**

This letter is an afterthought, Roy, but it will probably help to focus on some of the common problems that sales managers face. It contains a few words of advice based on over 30 years of my study of sales managers.

- **Be friendly, but don’t get too intimate** with your subordinates. You must know where to draw the line. Having an occasional
Figure 24.1

Beware! Potholes Ahead
drink with your salesman is alright. Getting drunk with him every night for three nights in a row is not.

- *Don’t stint* to the extent of losing the respect of your subordinates. Dress in good taste, not necessarily expensively. Don’t live off your salesmen all the time for cigarettes, drinks, or meals. You should bear the major share of the day’s expenses rather than the other way around.

- *Don’t react as soon as an error has occurred.* Investigate, weigh the facts, decide and then act.

- *Don’t pass judgement* without investigating the situation. Follow the same system as discussed in the point given earlier.

- *Don’t focus on the person.* Focus on the act, or the performance. Remember what we discussed about the appraisal interview.

- *Don’t hold grievances* until they are magnified beyond control. Clear the air as fast as you can—of course, after you have investigated, weighed and decided on the issue.

- *Don’t exaggerate your salesmen’s errors.* Keep a proper perspective.

- *Don’t generalize.* Be specific. This is a good quality to have in life and is a very important quality for sales managers to have. Remember, every individual salesman is different and has to be dealt with differently.

- *Don’t rely on pep talks.* Talk facts and appeal to the emotions. Show a sincere interest in your people and be honest. Don’t make promises of promotions and large increments to solve a passing crisis.

- *Don’t assume the role of a psychiatrist.* And don’t get over-involved and offer advice on personal matters.

I know we have covered all these issues in earlier letters, but I thought I would reiterate them.
Walk the right rope, Roy. It is both a challenge and an opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Box 24.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

Sales manager, Abe, had written to his salesman, Joe, a month ago before his visit, asking him to select a dealer in Jaga Town to be appointed as a stockist.

The company had a set of requirements which needed to be fulfilled before any dealer could be considered for appointment as stockist. All sales representatives were informed of these criteria, which were part of the ‘sales manual’.

Joe informed Abe a week before Abe’s visit that he had identified a prospective stockist and Abe could now visit Jaga Town and finalize the appointment.

Joe met Abe on arrival and took him straight to the shop of Kuno and Sons. Abe asked Joe a few questions on the way to the shop. Joe’s replies did not seem entirely satisfactory. In fact, they were vague.

On arrival at Kuno and Sons, Abe met Mr Kuno. On talking to him about his resources of men and money, Abe found that Kuno did not meet even the basic criteria that had been laid down by the company. What was worse, Joe had evidently not gone
through the drill of briefing the prospective stockist and investigating his background completely, as required and set down in the sales manual.

This put Abe in an awkward situation, because Joe had apparently promised Mr Kuno that he would be appointed the company’s stockist. This was a very awkward situation indeed!

How should Abe react to this situation and how should he deal with Joe, so that the present predicament is overcome and such a problem does not arise in the future?

Questions to Ponder Over

1. Can you prioritize the 10 most common errors based on your own experiences?
2. Can you add any more common errors of sales managers to the ones already listed?
3. What are the circumstances that lead sales managers to meddle in salesmen’s personal affairs?
'My mother’s menu consisted of two choices—take it or leave it.'

Buddy Hackett

Dear Roy,

A Focus on Ethics

As we move into the 21st century, there will be an increasing focus on ethical behaviour in all professions, including the selling profession and sales management. Gone are the days of the glib talking salesman, who patted customers on the back, told them some stories and got orders signed. Customers will now demand accountability before, during and after the sale. The community will demand accountability for what is sold.

There will be the question of not only what is legal, but what is legitimate. Sale of cigarettes may be legal, but is it legitimate? These questions will be asked increasingly.

There are at least four levels of ethical behaviour in all companies.
Level 1  Obeying the law
Level 2  Meeting recognized public expectations
Level 3  Anticipating new social demands
Level 4  Leading the way

Sales managers in the 21st century will need to ensure that their companies reach at least Level 2.

There are, of course, many norms already set for companies in most countries. These norms cover price discrimination among different customers; collusion among sellers on prices or territories; price fixing; exclusive dealing; reciprocity, that is, you buy from me so I will buy from you; despatch of unordered goods; tie-in sales to push non-moving products with fast-moving products; misleading descriptions of the company, or product, during presentations, or in written material; secret rebates and business defamation.

Therefore, it is recommended that sales managers—

- Review all promotional material and sales correspondence to check for defamatory material, or false claims.
- Tell salesmen to avoid making statements that may be interpreted as damaging to the reputation of a business.
- Ensure that they avoid making inaccurate comparisons about a competitor’s product.

The sales manager will have to be ethical in his dealings externally with customers and with competitors, and internally with his team members. As discussed earlier, he will have to be firm, but fair.

It will no longer be enough to be successful. He will have to be successful and ethical. The ends will not justify the means. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, the manager should be a trustee who manages resources and relationships for optimum (not
maximum) results for the corporation and the good of the community.

Yours sincerely,

Questions to Ponder Over

1. Can you work out two examples each of companies that have fulfilled corporate social responsibility at each level of ethicality?
2. Are there any other areas beyond those mentioned where norms need to be set for companies?
3. Can you give examples of companies that have flouted the norms listed?
4. Can you add to the list of duties of a sales manager to ensure adherence to ethical norms?
5. In what areas do sales managers fail to be ethical with their team members and colleagues within the organization?

Box 25.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

The company was generous with facilities for the sales force. Salesmen were allowed to travel first class and were given a daily allowance with which they could afford to stay at comfortable hotels.
However, some salesmen travelled in a lower-class compartment and charged the company first-class fares. They saw nothing wrong with this. They felt that they accepted some discomfort so that they could increase their indirect income. They insisted that this discomfort did not affect their work.

The company did not look at the situation in the same way. If first-class fare was given, then salesmen must travel by this class! There was a big rift between sales management and the salesmen and this was beginning to affect their work.

Questions to Ponder Over

1. As a sales manager, how will you present the case to your salesman?
2. What advice will you give the top management in the company?
3. Is there a way you can bridge the gap and ensure that both are satisfied?
‘Worship changes people; we become like whatever it is we worship.’

Wes Hart

Dear Roy,

VALUES AND THE SALES MANAGER

I come across so much skepticism whenever I discuss executive life and basic values, that I am reminded of the story of the preacher who ended his sermon with the words, ‘Remember, my brothers and sisters, there is no buying and selling in heaven’. A bored executive in one of the last pews got so fed up that he yelled back, ‘That’s not where business has gone anyway’.

Yes, ‘business has gone to hell’ is the refrain heard from executives everywhere. But we cannot sit back and passively accept this state of affairs. We need to do something about it. And the best summary that I have come across is the one put forward by Vance in his book Manager Today, Executive Tomorrow. Vance gives eight basic attitudes. These are:
1. From Birth to Death We are Alone

There is no one in the entire world who can help us, or be with us all the time. One’s parents are there through infancy, childhood and perhaps a part of adulthood. One may have brothers and sisters and friends. They will all be with you some of the time through the course of your life.

And again, your spouse and children will be with you part of the time. But the permanent company you will keep is yourself. Because from birth to death, you are alone, only interspersed with periods of togetherness.

That is why you have to learn to enjoy your own company, to convert the concept of ‘loneliness’ to a concept of ‘aloneness’. Loneliness is negative, depressing, sorrowful, stark. Aloneness is positive, enjoyable, rejuvenating.

There seems to be a lot of sense in this guideline. It makes you less dependent on other people, on the movies, TV programmes, or video films. It is important to face up to the reality that from birth to death you are alone and adopt a positive attitude towards this inescapable truth.

2. No One in this Entire World Owes You Anything

This is a very difficult attitude to adopt because we are all brought up to believe that everyone should do things for us. We all have expectations, some very high and some totally divorced from reality. This is because we do not understand and accept the positive success-generating attitude that ‘no one you meet in your entire life owes you anything’.

If anything is given to you, it should be graciously accepted. If it is denied to you, it is pointless being annoyed. There are no rights or favours that are done for you.

Much of the unhappiness in the world today is not because people have less than in the earlier generation. It is because
expectations have changed and increased, and when these expectations are not met, people get annoyed and revolt.

3. The Word ‘Progress’ Means Different Things to Different People
Most people measure their own progress based on where they stand in relation to those friends who have perhaps gone places and are apparently very successful. So, because my friend who graduated with me 25 years ago is now an assistant director with World Bank in Washington, I am unhappy. Because another friend of mine is now a cardiologist in London, practises at Harley Street and stays in a large five-bedroom mansion near London, I feel unhappy.

This is because I am measuring my own progress by the achievements of others. Vance suggests that we measure progress by the objectives we have set ourselves in life and how far we have achieved these objectives. It’s like the basic rule followed in athletics and racing: ‘Always look forward. Keep your eyes on the finishing line. If you look back to see where the others are, you may slip up in that brief moment and lose the race’.

Never mind about what other people are doing or have done. Let them do their own thing, as you are doing yours. Let them follow their own star, while you follow yours. Because progress means different things to different people.

4. In Life Accept that You are Going to Win Some, Lose Some
Some people get so spoilt as children because their parents give them everything they ask for, from ice-cream to clothes to expensive toys. Later, they cannot face a situation where they cannot get everything they want. They do not realize that life is like a one-day cricket match and only one side can win; sometimes you win, sometimes you lose.

The really complete person faces up to failure with some disappointment, but without the depression bordering on wanting to
commit suicide because he knows that in life: ‘You win some, and
you lose some. You don’t win all the time’.

5. A Life without Problems is Impossible
Most of us are looking for an ideal life, where we will encounter
total happiness and contentment without any clouds of sorrow.
But this is a dream. It never happens. Perhaps it happens in novels,
in unrealistic movies and in short stories. But not in real life.

Life is always a graph of high and low points, of peaks and valleys.
Some may have longer periods of peaks and smaller intervals
of valleys. For others it may be the other way round. But we all
have our due share of both, whether we are born rich or poor,
intelligent or dull, handsome or ugly, brown or white.

6. No Matter What Others Say, You Never Stop Learning
There will be the pessimists and cynics who keep telling you
that the world is a cruel place. That merit really gets you nowhere.
That everywhere it is now a question of how you can buy your
way through with either money or influence, or both. That the
boss goes by how many favours you have done for him rather
than by how well you have done your work.

There are others who will tell you that there is nothing new
in the world. That you can’t teach an old dog new tricks. That all
supposedly new knowledge is ‘old wine in new bottles’. But the
world is changing so fast. Technology is being updated everyday,
not just every year. New concepts are being put forward and old
theories disproved. It is a fast-changing world. At least 70 per
cent of the products you buy today were not available 50 years
ago. Unless you keep learning and keep abreast of what is going
on, both in your own field as well as in the general environment,
you will be outdated and soon become obsolete.

7. Change is Taking Place All the Time and You Must Welcome it
Most people don’t. They prefer the familiar, standard routine with
everything in its place. People don’t like to change their homes to
bigger houses and better surroundings because of the fear of the unfamiliar. It is only the positively oriented who welcome change and enjoy it. They do not wait for everyone else to change and then join them. They are amongst the first. They are ‘the change agents’. They realize that ‘the only permanent feature of life is change’.

Change also involves learning or relearning, which most people resent. But the change agent does not resent it in spite of the trouble it involves. He understands and accepts the fact that he must welcome change.

8. You Must Choose Optimism Instead of Pessimism

It is so easy these days to be pessimistic. The examination papers are leaked out and sold. There is cheating at examinations. You can’t get admission into professional colleges even with 90 per cent marks. Jobs are only obtained by influence. Fast progress in one’s career needs a godfather. The country is going to pieces. There is corruption everywhere. The old sense of ethical values has totally vanished. The price of necessities is spiralling!

All this is enough to depress any normal human being. But it can’t be allowed to happen. As Henry Thoreau said, ‘Men were born to succeed, not to fail’. A person with a positive attitude looks at the bright side of things and moves forward. He looks for ways and means to bring about changes and improve the environment. Instead of being totally influenced by others, he makes an effort to influence others. All the time he asks himself, ‘What can I do about it?’

These eight basic values can help the executive go through life as a ‘living’ human being, instead of becoming a zombie!

Yours sincerely,
Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

When I worked with Glaxo, all salesmen were expected to post an ‘arrival notice’ card as soon as they arrived at a new town. This would confirm to the office that they are following the standard tour plan as approved. It was a good system as a measure of control—and it worked.

One day I faced a strange situation. I received two arrival cards from the same salesman, with the same date, from two different towns, which were 100 km from one another. And he had seen 10 doctors in one town and another 9 in the other. The salesman had to be an angel to have been to both towns and covered 19 clients! It was truly a superhuman feat!

As the sales supervisor, my gut feeling was that he had, in fact, worked only in one town and for the day he had taken off, he had given the card to someone else to post, who had forgotten to post it on the right day and had posted it two days later. That is how two cards were received on the same day.

This was a case of cheating. It was inexcusable in a profession where so much emphasis is laid on ‘trust’.

I was in a dilemma. What should I do? Issue a severe warning? Dismiss the salesman as per the rules? Ignore the situation and move on—especially since he was a high performer?

Questions to Ponder Over

1. If you were the sales manager in this situation, what would you do?
2. Are there any values of Vance that you consider redundant? If so, why?
3. Are there any values that you would like to add to those given? If so, why?
4. Human resource experts now talk about going beyond IQ to EQ and further to SQ. Do you agree? If yes, why? If not, why?
‘If you have knowledge, let others light their candles at it.’

Margaret Fuller

Dear Roy,

AGE OF NETWORKING AND COOPERATION

In order to be successful in the 21st century the sales manager must not only know how to deal with his sales team, as a group and as individuals, and with his customers, but must know how to deal with the different departments within an organization.

Sales management must have empathy with marketing management. Marketing management generally takes care of product planning, market planning, pricing and communications. Sales take care of reaching and developing customers and getting orders.

The marketing department may want to maintain higher prices, greater margins, more money for communications, to create
‘demand pull’. The sales department may want ‘lower prices, greater budget for a bigger field-force, more discount schemes.

What is the solution? To have sales people participate in the marketing planning process and to have marketing people work in the market at regular intervals.

Sales management must directly and through the marketing department ensure contact with research and development and engineering so that they can contribute their deep market knowledge early enough in the placing of new products so that they have the right design at the right price and with the right communication.

We cannot understand many of the instruction manuals when we buy our mobiles and our digital cameras because these are written by engineers for engineers, not for lay customers.

Sales must understand manufacturing and that production schedules cannot be changed at short notice—upwards or downwards. That any change has a cost (overtime? downtime?). If the increased sales will pay for this cost and more then that is fine. Otherwise, let the schedule stay!

The sales and accounting departments often have problems with delayed expense statements from sales people, with unreasonable disallowables from the accounts department, with errors in invoices from the accounts department for which the sales department has to take the flak. And when some customers delay payments, the accounts department put them in the ‘box’. And does the accounts department help the sales department with useful and timely studies of profitability, by geographical areas, products, market segments, customers and channels? Do you make sure that they are helpful to you and do you try to be helpful to them?

Sales must understand the finance department—that it wants accountability for the financial implications of marketing expenditures. The sales department will retort that it is never possible
to know which 50 per cent of the expenditure will bear results. Setting credit limits, especially for new customers, is again always a contentious issue.

Sales must also relate to the *logistics* department. When salespeople promise to deliver and logistics cannot keep to that deadline, you create an unsatisfied customer, perhaps even lose a customer! The fault could be of that of the purchasing department, of the manufacturing department, or any other department—but it is the logistics department which pays the price! We all know the anxiety of getting an order, but succeeding by promising the moon is not going to help!

It will take a lot of empathy to deal with all these departments directly, or through the marketing department. But this will be a key to your success as a sales manager and as a professional!

Yours sincerely,
‘Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, 
the mind can achieve.’

Napoleon Hill

Dear Roy,

**The Sales Manager in the 21st Century**

The marketplace of AD 2007 and beyond will be quite different from the marketplace of AD 1997. Just as the marketplace of 1997 was quite different from the marketplace of 1966. Yes, the changes in the next few years will be more significant and greater in range than the changes over the last 30 years.

There are many megatrends, which will affect sales managers and make the job even more complex.

- There will be *intense foreign competition*. Import duties in most countries will be reduced. Imported products having
advantages of high quality (because of the latest technology) and low price (because of economies of scale) will sell against locally-made products of lower quality and higher price. This will happen across a whole range of products from textiles to aluminium and steel.

- **There will be rising customer expectation.** Customers will be less tolerant of product and service limitations. When they get dissatisfied with a product, or service, they will shift to better products, or services. Sales managers will have to be the eyes and ears of the company, be always vigilant and provide honest feedback. They will have to encourage head office staff, as also production and research staff, to visit markets at intervals to get first-hand information, be in touch with the ultimate customers and understand their problems and satisfactions.

- *The salesman is in greater danger of being overtaken by his customer* rather than by his competitor. His customers are now better educated, better informed, widely travelled, looked after by more competent salesmen. Many companies have purchase committees with operations, engineering and purchasing managers. The salesman has to know more about the products he sells than any of them. He must be a consultant to his customers and know a great deal about their business. He must be able to present the proposition convincingly to a group, which is different from a one-to-one situation. And it requires a different kind of sales manager to recruit, train and motivate salesmen who have to manage customers with this new profile.

- *The profile of the salesman has changed.* The profile of persons who are now joining sales is different from the profile of those who joined 20 years ago as salesmen, and who may now be sales managers. These young people today come in with
dreams, aspirations, visions and expectations that are different and grander than what their team leaders had come with. They are products of a different set of values and have been exposed to a wider range and more intensive media beyond newspapers like financial journals, radio, television and even the Internet. They want faster progress and greater autonomy in working. Leading a group like this can be difficult and challenging.

- Rapid progress in technology will change the way sales operations are conducted. Pagers and mobile phones have made communication so much easier. Computers and laptops have increased the speed with which information can be sent to the head office and from the head office to the field. The days of Bradma machines and mechanical typewriters are over. Speedy information and speedy action is the order of the day. Planning, communication and control will become much easier with the increased use of modern technology in selling and sales management.

- The line between sales and marketing will dissolve. The sales manager can no longer be just a ‘sales’ manager. In some ways, he has to be a ‘marketing’ manager. He has to go beyond sales to understand product management and the elements of packaging, pricing, physical distribution and promotion and advertising.

The new sales manager must work closely with product management, distribution, market research and advertising. He has to give feedback from the market and guidelines for future action based on his in-field experience and knowledge. Increasingly, there will be interchange in assignments. Sales managers will serve terms as product managers, or marketing managers, and vice-versa.
The sales manager in the 21st century will have to deal with this new scenario, Roy, and come out a winner. The basic principles will not change, but the methods and styles will change and you will have to fit into this new mould.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Box 28.1

Sales Managers I Have Known, Met, or Heard About

Put yourself in the position of Sam Halbe, vice president for consumer sales, who spent 26 years with one of the largest appliance manufacturers in the nation. No one in the company knew as much about the distribution and sale of the company’s products as Sam. His office showed it. He used the latest in charts and graphs, and maps in his office were marked with pins and symbols. He broke record after record, month after month and he didn't have a problem in the world as he saw it. He ran his sales department like a football coach. He knew his men, their strengths and their weak flanks, a football expression that Sam loved to use. A self-made man, Sam was respected and loved by all his team, from the division sales managers down to the men who called on retailers around the country.

But Sam was out of date. His company had three exciting new assets:

1. It had the largest cash surplus in its history.
2. It had hired a team of ex-consultants, researchers and a few Ph.D.s to build up its executive ranks.

3. It had discovered a new concept—statistical control.

The president of Sam's company had been one of the relatively few men who had seen the logic of transplanting control skills as used in business schools to business needs and had hired a six-man team. The six men had between them two Ph.D. degrees, six masters degrees and specialized course work at many of the nation's leading universities.

The new control men had moved, as a unit, to the large headquarter of Sam's company. For the first year, they were never in anyone's way. Their offices were in a new section of the headquarter building, away from the main office area and often brightly lit till late at night. But Sam had little time to be curious about their activities; he was too busy building sales.

At the end of the first year, the company president asked Sam to spend a day with him and a few of the planning and control people. The meeting was scheduled in the company boardroom. Sam found a slow Friday on his calendar and having set the date, actually looked forward to a change of pace with the boss. He hardly thought about the 'few planning and control people' his boss had said would be attending the meeting.

Throughout the meeting, Sam was forced to think, answer questions and fence with the experts at a rate never before achieved in his career. Perhaps, most importantly, Sam was asked questions never before demanded of him in all his prior business experience.

Sam, who knew more about the sales team and products and competition than anyone else in his company, now realized how little he knew. Try as he might, he was unable to find a villain. While he didn't like the six eggheads, they were nevertheless
Likewise, the company, Sam’s entire life, could not be blamed for adopting new methods, nor could the boss be blamed.

Sam wondered how, at precisely the moment when the company was growing faster than ever before in its history, he could have permitted himself to become as obsolete as he had appeared in the meeting.

Should he have sensed the new direction of things in his company earlier? How could he have kept himself in touch with the methods of these new men? Had he missed signs that his boss was beginning to look beyond the old way of doing things … and maybe beyond him?

Questions to Ponder Over

1. What other developments do you think will have an impact on the way sales managers will have to work in the future?
2. What are the other developments in technology that will change the way sales managers work?
3. How can sales managers ensure that they are ahead of the changes that are taking place?
4. List out all the modern gadgets that sales manager can now use and correlate how these will make work speedier, or easier.
Dear Roy,

**Ten Commandments**

In this letter I am going to be brief, but I am also going to repeat myself. We have covered all these points before, but they are so important, Roy, that they bear repetition. They are the ten commandments of sales management.

1. **Be objective.**
   Keep looking at your team’s goal and the path to get there. Avoid having a coloured mind. Only then can you be fair. And a fair boss is the greatest motivation.

2. **Be consistent.**
   A wavering leader is no leader. If you don’t know where you are going, all roads lead there! Salesmen want to be sure that their leader knows the path. And follow this consistently.

3. **Be honest and sincere.**
   Even if the sales manager is wrong, or the salesmen don’t agree with him, at least they will know that he means well. That he is honest with others and, more important, that he is honest with himself.
4. **Be positive, not dogmatic.**
The sales manager can be candid, but need not be blunt. He must use tact and a certain amount of discretion so that he does not just stampede through a team of hurt egos.

5. **Be kind, but tough minded.**
There are situations where the sales manager can be and needs to be kind. There are also occasions where he has to be tough minded in the interests of the organization and his team targets. He must then know how far he can go.

6. **Know what motivates each salesman.**
Each salesman has different motivations. In any situation, unless the sales manager puts his finger on the right chord, he will not be able to elicit the right response. He must know what makes each salesman tick.

7. **Analyse performance, not personality.**
Only in doing this can the sales manager prove himself to be a guide and friend, rather than a judge. Yearly or monthly appraisals of the salesman’s performance are not resented, but looked at as guideposts towards progress in their careers.

8. **Be enthusiastic.**
And let this enthusiasm show. It then gets transmitted to the salesmen. An enthusiastic sales team can do far more than a lackadaisical one. It is the army going into battle with a war song on its lips.

9. **Be a good example.**
The sales manager must demonstrate the virtues he advocates. A bit of example has much more value than loads of preaching. Salesmen must watch and take mental notes. The leader has to set the pace.

10. **Treat salesmen as intelligent adults.**
Most sales managers talk down to the salesmen. They stand on a pedestal. They have a schoolteacher–pupil relationship. But in a
Figure 29.1

*Yes Teacher!*
working adult group, this does not work. Most problems would never arise in the first place if the sales manager were to treat his salesmen as intelligent adults.

Nearly everything else in this book is mere detail, Roy. The ten commandments embody the total ‘religion’ of sales management. Everything else is secondary.

My best wishes to you and to your team for all success in your critical role as sales manager.

Yours sincerely,
# Monthly Tour Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Markets</th>
<th>Target Qty. MT</th>
<th>Achieved Qty. MT</th>
<th>Price Realization</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*To be filled on 25th of previous month by
Duplicate for approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Submission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Daily Plan of Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Result/Remarks</th>
<th>Next Visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0900 hrs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Copies of DPW will be the Weekly Report to Area/Regional Office)

To be filed by

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date of Submission</th>
<th>Name of Supervisor</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Report 2
### Monthly Customer Call Analysis Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Productive</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Productive</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Productive</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Productive</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Productive = When orders are booked during the visit.

To be filed by [Name] and submitted by 5th of next month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date of Submission</th>
<th>Name of Supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Report 3
# Field Work Analysis

| Month | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Jan   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Feb   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Mar   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Total |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

**Legend**

Put initials of person worked with or write 'self' if worked alone.

To be filled by ___________ and submitted to immediate supervisor by 5th of next month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of Submission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Supervisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Monthly Review Meeting Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Territory Coverage</th>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Realization</th>
<th>Uplift</th>
<th>Call Avg</th>
<th>Told O</th>
<th>Selling Q</th>
<th>Total Marks</th>
<th>Remarks (Actions for Improvement)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reporting**

| Signature | Date of Submission | Name of Supervisor | Designation |
|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
If

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don’t deal in lies,
Or being hated, don’t give way to hating,
And yet don’t look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master,
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you’ve spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build ’em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it all on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breath a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: ‘Hold on!’

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds’ worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it,
And—which is more—you’ll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936)
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Walter Vieira is President, Marketing Advisory Services Group, Mumbai. He started the first marketing consulting firm in India in 1975. His company—MAS Group—does marketing consulting work and provides executive training across cultures—in the US, Africa, the Middle East, South East Asia and India—and across a wide range of industries. Vieira was among the first to be made a Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants (FIMC) and was conferred the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award of the IMC of India in 2005.

Vieira has written 11 books covering management, marketing, sales management, selling and retirement. He has also published over 700 articles; written a monthly column for Business World for a record 19 years; and is on the advisory board of the US journal, Consulting to Management (C2M). A popular speaker at conventions, he has lectured at many business schools in the US and schools in Spain, Singapore, etc. He now also spends considerable time on pro-bono work for the WWF, Consumer Education and Research Council, The Asian Institute of Communication and Research, Workshop for Disabled Women and other causes.