

Why do we still call it “management”?

BY WAYNE ENS

When I was asked to do a column on sales management, I didn't quite know how to say that “management” was quite far down the evolutionary scale of organizational performance.

The old joke “A manager is someone who comes in early to see who the heck comes in late”, still defines how some people view management.

In our sales management workshops, we begin by challenging the belief that managers can motivate. We assert that managers can only create an environment in which people can motivate themselves.

We ask the sales managers in attendance to think back to an environment where they felt they were the most productive. Without exception the top high-productivity environment they identify is “When I was in control”. Phrases like “When I felt empowered” or “I did it my way” or, “When I wasn't micro-managed” always rise to the top.

Let's contrast this with the dictionary definition of manage: to exercise control over, to handle or manipulate. Now think



about it, how well do you perform when you are feeling “controlled, handled or manipulated”?

Let's examine the evolutionary scale of management by dictionary definitions:

- **Boss**—to order about in a domineering way. Post depression and pre World War Two, we were happy to have a job, and we showed up every day for our “boss”.
- **Manage**—to exercise control over; to handle or manipulate. As the economy improved “bosses” needed to exercise diplomacy in the way they issued their orders. Lou Grant, the gruff old boss on the Mary Tyler Moore show, exemplified this style when he told Mary “Don't think of me as a boss, think of me as a friend who's always right”.
- **Lead**—to show someone the way by accompanying them. As the workforce became better educated and we had more job opportunities, we wanted to be “led” by competent peers, not pushed or ordered.
- **Coach**—a team member who advises other team members; to train or to give private tuition. Career professionals, especially in creative fields like radio and TV sales, want to work with equals, team members, who can help them achieve their goals.

The people in your organization with the most intelligence, experience and skills will resist “control, handling and manipulation”. Paradoxically, those who do respond to old-style management will never take you to the same heights as those who have the passion to motivate and manage themselves.

The old school of “sales people do what we inspect not what we expect” was predicated on the premise that we didn't have career professionals on staff. With professionals, we have to show our people how they can achieve their own personal goals by doing what we “expect”.

So why do we take our top sales people and promote them to managers, as if coaching, leading and mentoring require the same skill sets as prospecting and closing?

Can you imagine a construction company taking their best carpenter and making him or her their engineer or architect? Unquestionably the skilled carpenter would make a better engineer or architect than a person who had no front-line experience, if they were trained.

Effective managers today are trained in the two keys to productivity;

1) **Recruiting.**

Lord Thomson of Fleet, the once-leader of the world's largest newspaper empire, understood the concept of hiring right in the first place. As he was handing the reigns over to his son, Ken, he was asked, “What would you have done if Ken was born incapable of handling such a key position?” He instantly replied, “Exactly what I've done now. I'd surround him with geniuses so that he could not fail.”

Management's job is to surround themselves with people who feel and perform like geniuses. Genius can not be felt or performed under controlling or uninspiring conditions.

2) **Coaching.**

Coaching requires training and mentoring skills. Very often new managers who have not had any Train-the-Trainer training think they can teach by showing. “Look, this is what worked for me,” they pontificate.

Training professionals today use a “guided discovery” method to help professionals uncover their own wisdom and experience.

Recruiting, leading, coaching and training are professions unto themselves. We owe it to our industry, our company, our customers and, most importantly, to our managers and staff, to train our managers in new-age “management” skills.

Wayne Ens is a Canadian management and sales consultant and a principal with Noll & Associates, Sausalito California. He can be reached by e-mail at Wayne@wensmedia.com.