

# Three Sales Coaching Mistakes

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## Three Sales Coaching Mistakes

There are three primary mistakes that sales professionals and sales organization make when choosing or implementing a sales coaching program. In this white paper, we will explore those mistakes and outline the simple steps a sales person or sales organization can take to avoid them.

### Mistake 1: Waiting too long to implement a coaching program

There are many challenges to succeeding in sales, and becoming an effective sales person today is harder than any time in history. No one denies the fact that the skill sets required are changing more rapidly than at any other time in history, and that to succeed a sales person needs to continue to educate themselves and improve their individual skills. Sales people also need to address the areas they need to improve, focusing first on those areas that will bring them the best results in the shortest amount of time.

However, many sales people and sales organizations wait far too long to implement a coaching program. Often sales people and sales organizations decide to act on their desire to improve only when it is too late to save the quarter, to save the year, or to save the sales person. Calling a coach with two weeks left in the quarter, a shallow pipeline, and missed opportunities is a recipe for failure and there is a little coach can do other than help prepare the sales person or organization for the next quarter.

**This first mistake is easily remedied by committing to improving your sales effectiveness long before opportunities are lost and goals are missed.** Coaching is one tool that, if implemented early and committed to fully, can generate a constant steady financial improvement over time.

### Mistake 2: Failure to Seek the Employer's Financial Assistance

Many sales people and sales managers recognize the need for a program to improve their sales effectiveness or that of their team, but fail to act upon the recognized

needs for financial reasons. In some cases, the sales professional or sales manager may fear that asking for the financial support of their company is an indication of some personal or professional shortcoming. In most cases, this is incorrect. Companies spend literally billions of dollars annually to improve their sales force's effectiveness, sending them to seminars and implementing training programs. While many of these programs provide excellent content, their effectiveness is limited by the sales person's ability to retain the information and by their ability to independently implement what they may have learned.

Investing in sales force effectiveness has the potential to generate a return that impacts the entire organization. Many companies recognize an improvement in their sales force's effectiveness in the way of increased revenues, increased profit and increased market share. As such, organizations are often willing to invest their sales forces improvement.

Asking for financial assistance in paying for a coaching program demonstrates that you recognize a need to improve your results or the results of your team. It also demonstrates a deep commitment to dedicating your time and efforts to improving the results for your company.

In order not to make this mistake, a sales person or sales manager should investigate potential coaching offerings, in order to have some idea of the financial commitment they are seeking from their employer (many of these programs are more cost effective than training seminars and have the potential to deliver better long-term results). **Then, as a sales professional, the request should be delivered like any proposal delivered to a prospective client, with a value proposition and a return on investment analysis that can be used to demonstrate its value.** It is our experience that the financial support is often available to those who seek it and who are willing to commit to improving their own results, their sales team's results, and their company's results.

### Mistake 3: Choosing the Wrong Coach

In a separate paper entitled *Choosing a Sales Coach*, we outlined the different types of coaches and coaching programs, including Life Coaching, Franchised Coaching, and Individual, Private Coaching. Many coaching programs fail to improve sales effectiveness because they are too broad in their focus (Life Coaching), or too general in their approach (Franchised Coaching). In *Choosing a Sales Coach* we outlined some of the ways that one can decide upon which type of coaching may benefit them most. We wrote this paper because a common mistake is simply choosing the wrong coach.

While it is not necessary that a coach have experience in the industry of the coaching participant, it is necessary that they have they have experience with a similar sale. For example, if the sales person being coached sells to consumers where there is typically a single interaction with the prospect, a coach with experience in managing the complex sale may not be the appropriate fit.

There also must be a personality match between the coach and their style, and the personality of the person being coached. The relationship between the coach and the coachee is a critical success factor, and it is based on a foundation of trust and the ability to communicate honestly about performance. This trust and communication underlies the coach's ability to move the participant out of their comfort zone, to explore alternative possibilities and behaviors, and to take the action necessary to make improvements.

**This mistake is easily avoided by exploring the possibilities for the coaching relationship prior to choosing a coach. We strongly suggest that those seeking a coach insist upon a sample coaching session to explore the relationship, and to ensure a match between the coach's offering and the participant's goals and needs.**

## Conclusion

The three primary mistakes regarding sales coaching, waiting too long to implement a program, not seeking the financial support, and choosing the wrong coach can be avoided with a little upfront effort.

As a sales person or sales manager seeking to improve their effectiveness or the results of their team, it is beneficial to implement a coaching program before missing opportunities or missing commitments. It is also important to seek your company's financial results by delivering a value proposition and a return on investment that can be used to gain support and against which to measure the results of the program. And finally, when choosing a coach, it is important to choose a coach from the right segment, as well as a coach who can develop the necessary coaching relationship to deliver results.

If you are considering a professional sales coach to improve your personal effectiveness or the results of your sales team, we can help. Please contact us directly at (614) 212-4729 or at [anthony@b2bsalescoach.com](mailto:anthony@b2bsalescoach.com).

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