

## Sales Performance Group Philosophy

This paper defines the sales problems and challenges we continually see in companies all over the world. It also defines how we help our clients respond to these challenges to dramatically improve and sustain superior sales performance.

Perhaps more of an epistle, this document reveals our mind and heart—what we believe and what we do. We invite you to read about our philosophy and core beliefs. We also invite your feedback.

### The Missing Link—Why Companies Most Often Fail at Generating and Sustaining Sales

Clearly, all facets of an organization are systemically involved in delivering revenues. However, few things contribute as directly to the bottom line as a company's sales organization.

Without detracting from other components of revenue enhancement (innovation, marketing, production, delivery, financing, etc.), how can companies dramatically improve and sustain superior sales performance?

We in the Sales Performance Group (SPG) start with the assumption that companies have hired intelligent, competent professionals at all levels, who are working at full capacity and who are doing the best they can with their available resources (physical, mental, emotional, etc.). In this type of environment, significant sales increases are not usually produced by working harder.

The temptation to just hire more or different sales people often produces dramatic and sometimes catastrophic increases in costs without the desired effect of increased revenues and margins. So how can sales forces work more efficiently and effectively? Few companies would say that their sales force does not have room for substantial improvement. Yet, the means for that improvement remain elusive. Otherwise, those solutions would be in place, and the improvement gap would be closed.

Instead, the usual levers (compensation, restructuring, CRM tools, training, etc.) are pulled in various combinations in the hope that something will work. When things seem to be going well, it is hard to know why; when they are going poorly, it is hard to know what to change.

### Sales Management Failure—Most Used Buttons: More & Panic

Sales management approaches are often reduced to two buttons—the “more button” and the “panic button.” The more button includes various penalties and rewards managers use to induce sales people to produce more.



The panic button resorts to drastic actions (firing, restructuring, etc.) when pushing the more button isn't working.



The major observable differences in sales philosophies are how many times and how many ways management will push the more button before they press the panic button.

### The HOW (Execution) Button—the Missing Link

What is missing is the “how button” —*how* will people who are already working hard and doing the best they currently can know *how* to produce more?



Ram Charan, co-author of *Execution—The Discipline of Getting Things Done*, states: “Execution is the great unaddressed issue in the business world today.”

Because the how button remains, to varying degrees, unknown, intelligent people take defensible actions that still fail to produce sustainable differences in productivity. This situation is predominant and pervasive, so it is accepted as normal and the pressure to change is reduced. As a result, the opportunities for companies to achieve a competitive differentiation with their sales force are momentous—and elusive.

The situation is compounded by extensive dysfunctionalities that exist on both sides of the table between sellers and buyers. As sales quota pressures build and the More button is pushed harder, sellers apply pressure to buyers in ways that reduce trust and motivate buyers to protect and defend. In response, buyers reduce access to people and information; force sellers to guess, tell, or accept; and attempt to codify and commoditize purchases so the decision can be made on price alone—even when the buying processes almost guarantee a sub-optimal decision for the client.

Dysfunctional selling/buying processes clearly result in bad decisions, which, in turn, reinforce the dysfunctional behaviors. Unfortunately, many sales approaches try to work more effectively with dysfunctional practices rather than go the tougher yet more productive route of changing the nature of the game.

### **Execution Is the Differentiator and Path to Sustained Superior Sales Performance**

Companies that define their sales execution process (or How button) and who are relentless in their execution at all levels of their organization are the few who achieve sustained, superior performance. Especially in a marketplace where products, services, and pricing are competitively similar or commoditized, the differentiator is how well a company can consistently execute through the organization.

Ram Charan states, “Execution is a specific set of behaviors and techniques that companies need to master in order to have a competitive advantage. *It is a discipline of its own.* In companies, big and small ones, it is the critical discipline for success now.”

### **Making the Leap to Dramatic Improvements and Sustained, Superior Sales Performance**

We in SPG specialize in helping companies master the How button, or sales execution. By helping clients assess their sales capabilities and execution gaps at the individual, leadership, and organizational levels, we help them align and develop their sales to execute for sustained, superior sales performance.

We use a common-sense approach that promotes a universal sales process with four essential components:



We also use a process of Assessment, Development, Execution, and Measurement. We help clients specifically to:

- *Assess* client performance, needs, and opportunities to match solutions that exactly meet their needs.
- *Develop* leadership and sales force capabilities, process, strategies, and plans.
- *Execute* down to the tactical level to win deals.
- *Measure* lead and lag measurements and create feed back loops for continuous improvement.

This provides a holistic process that's simple, yet powerful. It's an approach that helps clients know what to do and how to do it, so they can adopt the mindset, skills, and tools to actually execute new, improved behaviors. With their own How button, they are prepared to make dramatic improvements in their sales performance: they're able to create and institutionalize a disciplined sales culture, and they're able to make their numbers quarter after quarter, year after year.

### **It's All About Getting Real and Helping Clients Succeed™**

At the core of our philosophy is “getting real” and Helping Clients Succeed™.

Getting real and helping clients succeed is a mindset, skillset, and toolset for becoming maniacally client-centered. It is a way of thinking, being, and behaving. It removes the stigmas that come with sales and removes the all-too-common adversarial and dysfunctional interplay between sellers and buyers. It's also a process for creating candid dialogue, fresh thinking, innovative collaboration, insightful decision-making, and robust execution—with clients and within an organization.

We've helped our clients adopt a get-real mentality through our Helping Clients Succeed™ sales methodology, which integrates IQ (solid business thinking), EQ

(mastery of dialogue and relationship building), and XQ (sales execution). The end result is dramatic success not only for our clients but for *their* clients.

### **Can We Help You Succeed? We Won't Know Until We Talk.**

After reading this paper, you may be wondering if our solutions can help you increase your sales success. It's too early to tell because solutions have no inherent value. Solutions *only* derive value from the problems they solve or the results they produce. Right now we don't know you, your sales issues, or your desired results.

So, our sales solutions can't realistically offer much value or meaning until we start talking, exploring, and understanding what matters most to you and how you define success. Our end in mind—always—is to craft solutions that exactly meet your needs. If we can't do that, we'll simply say so.

If you're willing to give us a call, we can start exploring possibilities. Our passion is helping you help your clients succeed and dramatically improve your sales performance.