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## SENSATIONAL SALES MANAGEMENT

THE KEY TO A WINNING SALES TEAM

by SELESTE LUNSFORD, Product Manager, Sales Performance Portfolio, and MARK MARONE, Ph.D., Senior Research Manager

*With a knack for being able to see the “big picture,” Jane is regarded as an excellent strategist, constantly reassessing the market and identifying new customer segments.*

*Her colleague John, on the other hand, prefers to focus on short-term goals and work one-on-one with his salespeople, even joining them in the trenches when times get tough.*

*Frank, another sales manager, sees his role as an advocate, communicating his team’s concerns to senior management and translating corporate directives for them.*

Which of these three is likely to be the more successful sales manager?

Surprisingly, the successful manager does not fit any one of these profiles alone. In fact, an effective sales manager might be described as a mix of all three... a rare individual indeed!

Gone are the days of numbers-driven dictators who motivate staff through intimidation or elaborate incentives. Instead, the most effective sales managers are multi-faceted—drawing on a number of diverse competencies to optimize their sales teams’ performance.

Highly successful sales managers can recognize and develop individual abilities and efforts while at the same time promoting a collaborative and cooperative team atmosphere. They encourage autonomy by delegating responsibility, yet continually track and monitor individual performance. They are visionaries with an ability to see the big picture, all the while keeping a sharp eye on details. They are intermediaries for upper management and champion employee causes. In other words, being an effective sales manager means balancing numerous—and often conflicting—demands of the role.

Contrary to popular belief, the success of any given sales team does not depend on sales incentive size. Research conducted by AchieveGlobal in 2000 and 2001 indicates that leading salespeople worldwide attribute their success to much more than the offer of a trip to Jamaica.

Instead, they require the support of sales leaders who are not only eager to commit themselves fully to the success of the organization, but also are committed to developing their salespeople.

Hoping to discover how today’s most successful sales managers optimize team performance in a changing and challenging marketplace, we asked salespeople, sales managers and executives about



the key competencies of a successful sales manager. They provided detailed responses, sharing insightful examples of those best practices in action.

While much of the previous years' sales research concentrated on the daily observable behaviors of successful salespeople, the importance of the sales manager's role in creating these sales superstars cannot be ignored.

Through interviews with decision-makers, the collection and analysis of more than 2,000 incidents of actual sales behaviors, and a review of the literature, we uncovered three key roles played by sales managers poised for success: *Coach*, *Strategist* and *Communicator*.

#### THE THREE ROLES

The most successful sales managers have a unique skill set balanced between a number of diverse competencies — allowing their salespeople to build on individual strengths while addressing their weaknesses.

For the best chance of success, sales managers must simultaneously encourage and develop their people, strategize markets and accounts, and

serve as liaisons between the sales team and other parts of the organization. Without such support, employees are unable to accomplish and exceed their goals.

#### 1. Coach

This role is about instilling high-performance behaviors and processes within the entire sales force, from advice on specific instances to the development of long-term career paths.

The sales manager is a role model whose attitude and actions wield great influence—whether negative or positive. Unfortunately, while coaching is the role most often mentioned by salespeople as key, it is usually the one most often neglected.

Key attributes of good coaches and examples of how they affect positive behaviors within their sales teams include the ability to:

*Build cohesive teams.* Regardless of whether a sales team is built from the ground up or inherited from a predecessor, chances are it will be comprised of individuals with a range of talents—veterans and newcomers, superstars and poor performers. The challenge in this situation is to conduct activities, facilitate meetings and execute tasks in a way that builds collaboration and cooperation.

Sales teams should be greater than the sum of their parts by demonstrating the ability to rally around critical projects and share information among members.

Effective sales managers ensure return on investment by recruiting the best and brightest talent, utilizing the most current tools, setting performance standards through instruction and constructive feedback, and recognizing and capitalizing on performers with the greatest potential for success.



*It's every manager's nightmare: mending a broken staff from a previous administration. But one vice president of a Seattle-based financial services firm did just that, building a cohesive team by respecting employees' different styles and allowing the sales force to build their own businesses within the context of the company's overall guidelines and incentive structure.*

*Now, says one delighted salesperson, "He compliments people for their success and innovations. Morale and productivity are up like never before. There is no sense of fear in the air, only fun and cooperation."*

**Develop professional skills of individuals in the sales organization.** Effective sales managers recognize that teams are comprised of individuals. To maximize efforts, the performance of all members—not just lesser performers—must be improved. This can be done through behavioral observation, skill assessment, and targeted coaching and training such as skill- and knowledge-based instruction.

When training ends, sales managers should reinforce these skills through modeling and ongoing coaching and reinforcement activities.

*"We prepared a course on how we should sell our product, which strategies were appropriate and how to negotiate," reports a Mexico City-based sales manager. "As a consequence, we achieved amazing sales."*

*A sales representative in San Francisco reported similar results when his sales manager brought guest speakers in from different disciplines to talk about selling. "Everyone," he reports, "got their bonus that month."*

**Motivate individuals in the sales organization.** Effective sales managers

motivate performance in ways that extend far beyond incentive programs and quota plans. They use motivational methods such as verbal recognition, performance management and communication to encourage the team and evoke enthusiasm.

They are fluent in these initiatives and are able to apply the appropriate motivators to particular team members and situations. Part of successfully implementing such tactics is remembering that what motivates the recent college graduate, for example, may not appeal to the tenured, single mother of two.

*"A fellow manager who was new to my company came up with an outstanding recognition system that rewarded salespeople not only for production, but for every aspect of their job," said a telephone sales representative in Seattle. "On a weekly basis, we hold a meeting and award a prize to each salesperson who meets specific criteria. Sales performance improved, and quickly the office began to recognize these people as the elite, the best of the best."*

**Assist in sales activities.** One of the most effective methods a sales manager can use to gain respect from the sales team (and model skills for its members) is to jump into the trenches. Salespeople tend to judge their managers not so much by what they say, but rather by what they do.

Successful sales managers support activities throughout the sales cycle by using their network of contacts to identify prospects; leveraging their understanding of the bigger picture; drawing on their depth of experience to strategize account plans; and, ultimately, helping to close business.

Effective sales managers skillfully intervene in contentious customer interactions, targeting conflict resolution in a way that satisfies the

customer and preserves the salesperson's account relationship.

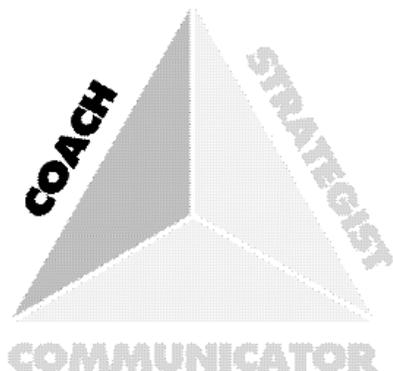
However, sales managers must be careful not to "take over" on sales calls, contradict their salespeople or in any way undermine their credibility. The manager's role is to support the sales team, bringing experience to the table to win the customer.

*"The afternoon before the pitch, I'm completely unraveled and concerned that I won't get an opportunity to rehearse," said one advertising account executive. "In walks my sales manager with a pizza. We took a break, and he jumped in and*

#### **Potential Pitfalls in the COACH Role**

Sales managers who devote their time to coaching but do not fulfill the other roles can be successful, but they may not unleash the full potential of their staff. They are generally well liked, consistently model the selling skills needed by their employees and are diligent about developing individuals and teams through training.

While such managers may be able to manage a mature market, they are likely to experience difficulties expanding their region beyond organic growth and are frequently out of touch with corporate objectives.



*helped me finish, acting as my sounding board as I rehearsed until midnight. My presentation was flawless, and I got the business – all of it! My relationship with my boss reached a new level."*

## **2. Strategist**

This role requires the manager to simultaneously see the big picture and keep close watch on the details. A balanced thinker — one who considers grand strategies while managing expectations and actual performance — contributes heavily to establishing direction and building sales team confidence.

It is in this role that the sales manager most often acts as the decision maker — the final authority — regarding resource decisions, proceeding with sales activities, penetrating a market or agreeing to the terms of a sale.

Specific attributes of a good strategic thinker and examples of how such managers affect positive behaviors within their sales teams include the ability to:

***Create, communicate and execute a vision for the sales organization.*** The best strategists are leaders, policymakers and visionaries. They provide clear mission and vision statements to their teams in an effort to provide context for sales activities.

Successful sales managers ensure their salespeople comply with the organization's overall policies and procedures. They also create and, if needed, modify these procedures to further provide direction, reinforce an appropriate balance of short- and long-term thinking and facilitate the satisfaction of organizational goals.

*As one sales representative notes: "The team manager provided a vision and explained the purpose of the group. He clearly communicated how decisions were going to be made.*

*He valued everyone's input and kept the environment open and trustful."*

The lack of this quality, on the other hand, can result in severe consequences.

*Another sales representative reported turnover and confusion as a result of a sales manager who "was never clear in the duties that he expected from employees. Each day he changed procedures and what he wanted you to do!" After a period of high turnover, "the company eventually went out of business."*

**Develop and maintain a strategic approach to the marketplace.** Effective sales managers provide market expertise. This requires in-depth market analysis, including segmentation, purchasing behaviors, competition and trends.

Effective managers use this information to formulate an approach to the market, recommend and execute business development initiatives and determine how to best position products and services in a particular market. Depending on the company's infrastructure, this may be a distinct task or one that is shared with the marketing department.

*"I initialized a long-term market development plan after taking over the management of the branch," said one Shanghai-based sales manager. "Market research was conducted in an attempt to gain insight into the market situation, including market segmentation and distribution channel. As a result, our salespeople approached the market better, and we improved and stabilized sales performance."*

*According to a sales manager in the transportation industry, "I recently came up with a good marketing campaign in our office. It gave us the exposure and ability to acquire new clients. Our mass mailing and follow-up tracking combined with a quality product put us in a position of increasing sales over our projected quota in the fourth quarter. The campaign's accompanying field competition*

*resulted in a positive shot in the arm and a doubling of quota."*

**Manage resources effectively.** Meeting supply and demand requirements with regard to sales staff, financial resources, channel partners and suppliers is a key element of this function. Using powers of persuasion and communication to obtain needed resources is imperative.

Perhaps most challenging of all is taking responsibility for the team's contribution to the organization's bottom line. Sales managers are accountable for managing budgets and expenditures as well as ensuring that sales contracts are constructed to meet team goals, mine client opportunities and ensure organizational profitability parameters are met.

Members of the sales team are probably the most critical resource a sales manager has.

*"Success for us is achieved in our daily activities," noted one Japan-based sales manager. "We hire better people. In selecting potential employees, we perform two interviews and hold three career information programs to make sure that we hire employees with qualities we find essential."*

**Maintain a current knowledge base.** When a salesperson is promoted from the field to management, the temptation is to focus on new administrative and management tasks and rest on the laurels of previously acquired market, product and competitive knowledge. Unfortunately, such information becomes outdated quickly.

Successful sales managers devote their time to maintaining the knowledge to assist in sales call activities and developing well-founded strategic planning initiatives.

It cannot be overemphasized that listening to salespeople in the field is one of the best ways to keep market knowledge current.



*A South Africa-based sales manager reports, “My ability to understand the specific issues relating to an industry, as well as the specific issues relating to sales, allowed me to assist in negotiations at the most senior level of the [client] organization. As a result, we changed the customer’s purchasing decision, closing on a short-term commitment as well as convincing the client to standardize his company’s equipment on our platform.”*

#### **Potential Pitfalls in the STRATEGIST Role**

A common profile is of a sales manager who is almost exclusively a strategist. This person excels at planning and is often referred to as a visionary.

While such sales managers possess a clear understanding of their market and their product’s current and future place in it, they sometimes find themselves disappointed in their team’s inability to make this vision a reality. In fact, more often than not, the sales team doesn’t even understand what the vision is and is prone to view this manager as “sitting in an ivory tower,” disconnected from the salesperson’s reality and hard to approach.



### **3. Communicator**

One of the most important roles a sales manager performs is acting as liaison between top management and the sales staff.

This role describes the characteristics that ensure the flow of information throughout the sales organization is timely and accurate. A good communicator will not accept missed opportunities due to misunderstandings and the lack of infrastructure and technology.

Attributes of a good communicator and examples of how such managers affect positive behaviors within their sales teams include the ability to:

***Communicate to other parts of the organization.*** Effective sales managers are able to work closely with other parts of the organization to ensure team success. They are diligent about providing progress report details and communicating the factors – both positive and negative – that impact the team’s ability to not only meet, but also to exceed expectations.

Superior sales managers are viewed by their teams as conduits to upper management, responsible for representing their views.

*“Our TV station has embarked on some major changes,” said one sales manager in San Jose. “Jobs are changing, people are coming and going, and a great deal of direction has been lost. Our local sales manager has made it her main goal to communicate our concerns to the vice president. Without her persistence to guide us through all the changes, our group would have disbanded.”*

***Communicates information from other parts of the organization to the sales staff.*** Nothing is more counterproductive than organizations acting at cross-purposes. For example, the marketing department has invested in a campaign program to push

product A, while the sales force is sending out direct mail pieces promoting product B. Effective sales managers prevent this situation from happening by ensuring that the staff is communicated to and understands the corporate market and product strategies.

The ability to view actions as they relate to the bigger picture promotes an increase in supportive behaviors. Even more important, effective sales managers ensure that their people are informed of changes.

Providing sales staff with timeframes and rationale for a process or technology change guarantees greater adoption and less confusion and distraction from sales activities.

*A Waltham, MA-based national sales manager in the services industry said, “Recently our organization went through a realignment of sales teams. My manager did a fantastic job explaining to all concerned in one-on-one interviews about the details behind the changes and why they were necessary.”*

*“My national sales manager did an outstanding job of dealing with management concerns (over sluggish revenues), yet built up his sales team at the same time,” said an Irvine, CA-based sales representative. “He was able to sell management on the benefits of keeping programs in place.”*

**Solicit and value feedback from their sales teams.** Effective sales managers create an environment where the sales team perceives that input and feedback is valued.

Communication should never be a one-way street from the manager to the team. Sales representatives know better than anyone what their customers are saying and what they want. In fact, the sales rep is closer to most customer interactions than any other person in the organization.

Managers must encourage their teams to communicate important information about

clients as well as their individual needs, problems and concerns. It’s critical that managers not just pay lip service to valuing feedback; rather, they need to actively incorporate their team’s input when making decisions.

*“Our manager conducted one-on-one meetings with each sales rep to go over every aspect of selling situations and problems,” said one Boston-based sales representative in the tech industry. “This really created a strong connection with each rep, resulting in a trusting and open atmosphere.”*

*A real estate executive in the Stamford area noted: “The sales force frequently missed mandatory meetings. Finally, the sales manager took the time to listen to individual salespersons’ needs and adjusted company meeting requirements accordingly. As a result, there is better attendance and an overall increase in morale and productivity.”*

**Facilitate communication among team members.** Successful sales managers not only communicate effectively with their teams and upper management, but they also actively promote open and honest communication among and between sales teams.

Because sales professionals spend a lot of time in the field, often working remotely, they sometimes require formal practices or structures to promote both professional and personal communication with their colleagues.

Managers can actively encourage the sharing of information, problems or concerns among the sales force by providing frequent opportunities to network, holding cross-team meetings, requiring collaboration for certain activities or creating mentoring programs.

Encouraging sales professionals to share their experiences, observations and ongoing challenges with colleagues results in stronger and smarter teams.



*A salesperson in Tokyo reaped tremendous benefits when his sales manager designed a process to leverage the experiences of his team members as well as those of other sales teams. "In order to face the intensifying competition, we built a nationwide network connecting all branches, so that our salespeople can share information on customers and products as well as successful sales examples, thereby enhancing their sales skill and abilities."*

### *Potential Pitfalls in the* **COMMUNICATOR** Role

A manager totally devoted to fulfilling the communicator role is fully focused on collecting and sharing information. This person is diligent about completing progress reports and consistently uses call reporting and tracking systems.

Unfortunately, this manager is viewed as an administrator and is often unable to move his territory beyond status quo. To quote one of the research participants, this kind of person "can be great with details but misses the big picture."



### **MANAGEMENT STYLE: ENABLER OR INHIBITOR?**

In addition to the three roles outlined in this report, we discovered that salespeople attribute a certain "style" to managers they perceive as being most successful.

Based on the reactions and comments of those interviewed, an enabling management style facilitates the sales manager's ability to execute the three roles, enabling salespeople to perform at their peak.

While the indicators that point to an enabling management style cannot be specifically linked to success, respondents perceive their importance in fulfilling the three key roles.

Although the sales professionals we surveyed often characterized sales managers on a continuum between polar extremes, it should be noted that these descriptions were usually based on the relative success of the manager.

Those identified as having an enabling management style were more successful in meeting quotas, while those with an inhibiting style were reported to have turnover and revenue problems.

Even though this style of management does not emerge as a requirement, it is safe to say that it *does* make things easier. Respondents described some key attributes of this management style as:

- consistently considering different perspectives
- listening to the concerns of individuals with compassion and patience
- keeping promises and leading by example
- exhibiting enthusiasm, confidence, commitment and honesty

These behaviors more than likely create a loyal staff committed to satisfying and even surpassing the organization's sales goals.

Here are some specific examples of what salespeople had to say:

*According to a retail sales professional from San Jose, poor morale and performance emerged after their manager began a “hot seat approach to quiz the reps... bullying and embarrassing them (in front of peers), as well as threatening to take away clients.”*

*A Chicago area sales executive reports having to terminate a sales manager after his region experienced poor performance and high turnover. “He lacked empathy for his customers and his people. He often criticized (salespeople) after sales calls without participating in them or offering any reinforcement.”*

*On the other hand, an effective sales manager in Massachusetts was able to reenergize a sales team that had been floundering for more than*

*two years. One of his employees had this to say: “His presence was excellent—confident and compassionate. People picked up on this and fed off his energy. He was a strong leader who led by example.”*

#### ASSESSING YOUR SITUATION: WHERE ARE YOU?

Not all competencies, or even a high level of proficiency in each, is required in all cases. In fact, there are instances when a sales manager only needs to draw on one or two of the roles.

Ultimately, however, all three roles are required to optimize the performance of a sales team. Even a team of “superstars” needs a manager who can successfully navigate all three.

The chart below is a thumbnail assessment that provides some high-level insight into the extent to which you (or your sales manager) portrays the three roles. Review the roles described in the

Sales Manager Roles and Competencies		1 = Extremely Ineffective 5 = Extremely Effective				
<b>COACH</b>	Build a cohesive team	1	2	3	4	5
	Develop professional skills of individuals in the sales organization	1	2	3	4	5
	Motivate individuals in the sales organization	1	2	3	4	5
	Assist in sales call activities	1	2	3	4	5
Total _____						
<b>STRATEGIST</b>	Create, communicate and execute a vision for the sales organization	1	2	3	4	5
	Develop an approach to the marketplace	1	2	3	4	5
	Manage resources effectively	1	2	3	4	5
	Maintain current knowledge base	1	2	3	4	5
Total _____						
<b>COMMUNICATOR</b>	Communicate effectively to other parts of the organization	1	2	3	4	5
	Communicate information from other parts of the organization to sales staff	1	2	3	4	5
	Solicit and value feedback from the sales team	1	2	3	4	5
	Facilitate communication among team members	1	2	3	4	5
Total _____						

previous sections, and rate yourself (or your sales manager) on your ability to be effective in each area.

Our research found that while sales managers typically excel in one of these roles and demonstrate strengths and weaknesses in others, few managers have mastered all three roles.

To evaluate your strengths and weaknesses in each role, find your total score for each role, and refer to the key below to see where you fall.

#### Total Points

17-20: *Extremely effective in this role*

14-16: *Demonstrate sufficient skills in this role*

9-13: *Need to work on improving skills in this role*

4-8: *Focus efforts on acquiring skills in this role*

#### **WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

Depending on your position, there may be a lot you can do to further support the selling process. The table on facing page is a starting point.

- The first column brings together the types of organizational support sales managers need to excel at each role.
- The second column provides space for you to evaluate the effectiveness of this support.
- The third column is for notes about things you and others might do to improve the situation. Think about focus, information, useful tools and understanding.

<b>Organizational Initiatives to Improve Sales Management Results</b>		<i>Effective?</i>		<b>What improvements can I make?</b>
		Yes	No	
<b>COACH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to training programs, knowledge and resources</li> <li>• Provide tools to help sales managers evaluate individuals on their sales teams</li> <li>• Provide access to incentive and non-monetary rewards</li> <li>• Ensure the entire organization understands what coaching entails and its value to the organization</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give managers the autonomy to conduct regional marketing and local market channel strategy activities</li> <li>• Facilitate the integration of information among marketing and sales departments to keep market information current</li> <li>• Facilitate communication and idea exchange between sales and product development to keep product knowledge current and product development plans aligned</li> <li>• Provide a corporate mechanism to track and evaluate sales performance</li> <li>• Produce and communicate a channel strategy that addresses potential for conflict (e.g., Internet &amp; inside sales vs. field) and impact on commission structure</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a clear vision that can be communicated to the field</li> <li>• Engage in frequent two-way conversations with your sales managers to better understand the factors that positively and negatively impact sales performance</li> <li>• Create channels for sales managers to procure resources and assistance from other departments in the organization</li> <li>• Develop an infrastructure for lateral communication</li> </ul>			



## APPENDIX

*An overview of key research studies that laid the foundation for this report.*

### Interviews With Decision-Makers

The main purpose of this study was to identify broad sales trends:

- how the market is changing
- how organizations are responding
- what strategies are being employed

The study focused on the following types of organizations and interviewees:

- organizations with as few as 100 to more than 10,000 employees, with reputations for superior sales and marketing
- all business sectors, including heavy manufacturing, high-tech manufacturing, financial services, health and social services, business services, retail and distribution, transportation and utilities, government and education
- vice presidents of sales or human resources

A total of 33 interviews were conducted from mid-February to mid-April 2000: 24 in the United States and nine in Italy, Switzerland and Great Britain. Interviews lasted about 45 minutes and were conducted by phone, although in a few cases interviewees chose to write their responses and return them by e-mail.

### Critical Incident Study

To get at the competencies that make up a good salesperson, AchieveGlobal conducted a critical incident study in 2000 and 2001.

“Competencies” refer to the behaviors people actually use—not the behaviors they think they should use, or which have traditionally been taught—to perform a given job or set of tasks, in

this case selling. The purpose of the study was to develop current and future modes of sales performance and sales management. These modes could then be used to develop assessment tools and sales performance and sales management programs.

To determine the competencies of effective selling, AchieveGlobal followed the critical incident methodology, which has been used in thousands of studies since it was first developed in the 1950s. The critical incident methodology is well suited to establishing a baseline set of tasks, a “real-life” definition of selling.

In each organization surveyed, researchers randomly selected two people – one manager or supervisor and one nonsupervisory employee. Without being given any definition of selling, these respondents were simply asked to recall recent examples of both good and bad sales behavior.

### Who Participated in the Study

**Organizations.** Organizations were selected based on their reputation for superior sales and marketing, as identified in the United States by *Sales and Marketing Management* magazine. Internationally, AchieveGlobal affiliate partners and an independent research firm were asked to identify the leading sales and marketing organizations in their respective countries.

The study focused on organizations ranging from 100 employees to more than 10,000 employees. They represented all business sectors, including heavy manufacturing, high-tech manufacturing, financial services, health and social services, business services, retail and distribution, transportation and utilities, government and education.

Organizations from Brazil, China, France, Japan, Mexico, Poland, South Africa, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States were represented.

**Respondents.** More than 470 people responded to the study. Participants in the study were all sales managers or salespeople, usually identified by a key contact within each organization. In some countries, interviewers contacted sales managers and salespeople directly.

**Study Method.** For the sales professional model, respondents were asked to think of four separate occasions:

- Think of a recent time when you or someone else made an important sale.
- Think of a recent time when you or someone else exceeded expectations in sales performance.
- Think of a recent time when you or someone else failed to make a sale.
- Think of a recent time when you or someone else failed to meet expectations in sales performance.

For each of these, the interview probed using the following questions:

- What did the person do?
- What was the situation?
- Who was involved?
- How did the customer react?
- What were the results of this behavior?
- When did this happen?
- What was this person's title and position in the organization?

**Analysis.** The study generated more than 2,100 critical incidents. These were entered into a database, along with information identifying participant characteristics. The analysis followed the guidelines set forth by Flanagan (1954) and Russ-Eft (1995).

As a result of the analysis, these incidents were aggregated into a set of 16 selling competencies, and then further divided into the five key roles of effective salespeople. Based on feedback from these salespeople, the three roles of an effective sales manager emerged.

The critical incident methodology does not involve a statistical analysis of a representative sample. The purpose is not to identify the most frequently mentioned sales performance or sales management attributes, but rather to uncover the full range of critical attributes that make up such performance.

This study builds upon and updates previous AchieveGlobal research on sales performance and sales management (Sales and marketing trends, 1987; Roles of a sales manager, 1987; Sales force turnover, 1989; Service excellence, 1990; Sales productivity, 1990; Customer loyalty, 1989, 1991-1992; Roles of the salesperson, 1987, 1990, 1994; Sales leadership, 1991-1994; Driving issues, 1998-1999; Coker, Del Gaizo, Murray, & Edwards, 2000; and Del Gaizo, Corcoran & Erdman, 1996).

**Validation.** The assessment tools based on the U.S. and international critical incident studies have been validated extensively.



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**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

**Seleste Lunsford** is a product manager for AchieveGlobal's Sales Performance portfolio of products and services. She manages the identification, design, development and maintenance of foundational and advanced products for sales professionals.

She has worked with organizations in a wide variety of industries, including financial services, training and IT services. Citibank, Diners Club International, Dime Bancorp and several large South American credit card issuers are among the customers she has consulted with.

Seleste's professional experience includes positions in sales, product management, marketing and management consulting. Her responsibilities in these positions led her to become proficient in strategic planning; market analysis and business case development; process redesign; and product design & development.

She earned an MBA degree from Florida State University, where she also earned a B.S. degree in physics.

**Mark Marone, Ph.D.**, is AchieveGlobal's senior research manager. He has more than 13 years of academic and private sector experience in research and consulting on issues such as economic development, corporate strategy and business policy.

His career includes being a senior analyst with Nielsen Media Research, where he was responsible for analyzing market data for key national media accounts. He also served as director of research at the Global Business Information Network, a research firm that provides international consulting to businesses in the Midwest. In addition, he spent several years as a management consultant with KPMG, LLC, and as a client services manager for Sterling Research Group, Inc.

Mark has written extensively on topics such as high technology industries, economic development and corporate strategy in the telecommunications industry. He has been the featured speaker and presented research findings at numerous international academic conferences.

He earned a Ph.D. from Indiana University, where he has held several academic posts. He currently is an adjunct professor of management at the University of South Florida.

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**ABOUT ACHIEVEGLOBAL**

AchieveGlobal is the world leader in helping organizations translate business strategies into business results by developing the skills and performance of their people. We are a single resource for aligning employee performance with organizational strategy through training and consulting solutions in sales performance, customer service, leadership and teamwork.

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