

SELL MORE

WITH

SALES COACHING

▼

**PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR
EVERYDAY SALES CHALLENGES**

P E R I S H A W N

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Praise for *Sell More with Sales Coaching*

"If salespeople had to be certified to sell, this book would be part of the licensing process! Practical, specific, solid advice."

—Dianna Booher

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"I love practical, how-to strategies! The real-life examples demonstrating both the good and not-so-good sales practices in this book simplifies the guidance process. This is a wonderful guide for sales coaches to get better results from their efforts."

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"If you would love to increase your sales, read Peri's Shawn's newest book *Sell More with Sales Coaching* and learn from a master coach of coaches. Her book is both inspiring and informative."

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"The wisdom contained in *Sell More with Sales Coaching* will help your sales team 'grow their wings' so they can soar to success. Learn from Peri, one of the best sales coaches in the industry."

—Joseph Sherren

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"I'm very impressed with the practicality of Peri's work! The application of her sales coaching ideas will make a huge difference to your sales. Take the ideas and run with them for the sake of your sales results."

—Warren Evans

HoF, Futurist

"While there are numerous books on selling, Peri Shawn's is by far the most useful blueprint for *coaching* your team to extraordinary sales growth. This is a must-read for sales managers."

—Jeff Mowatt

Best-selling author of *Influence with Ease*

"*Sell More with Sales Coaching* provides great insight on how to coach while making your sales team feel valued, knowledgeable and an important part of the organization and its sales growth. *Sell More with Sales Coaching* is practical, easy to use, and relevant for today's sales environment. Peri Shawn uses great analogies not only to make it an enjoyable read, but also to drive the sales coaching point home."

—**Suzanne F. Stevens**

Chief Edge Optimizer, Ignite Excellence Inc. Group

"This book delivers a proven blueprint to foster a quiet confidence to shift activity to productivity. Your team will close more sales, more often for more money".

—**Tim Breithaupt**

Author of Canadian best seller, *Take This Job and Love It:
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"Peri has taken her vast experience and made it immediately accessible. This is a very practical resource for sales managers."

—**Adrian Davis**

Keynote Speaker, Consultant;
Author of *Human-to-Human Selling*

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"Attention Sales Managers – read this book! – Sales Coaching demystified and a step by step coaching plan revealed to help teams catapult sales and leave self-imposed sales barriers in the past."

—**Richard Peterson**

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Canada's Sales Coach;
First Inductee in the Canadian Speaking Hall of Fame

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*I dedicate this book to my son and daughter.
Scott and Amira, I'm blessed to be your mother.
You both inspire me to live life to its fullest.
Thank you for sharing your lives with me.*

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And to you, the reader, thank you for helping your team members. As much as business is measured by the numbers, business is really about people.

INTRODUCTION

Sales coaching can be the lifeblood of an organization. When done effectively, sales coaching is the catalyst that improves sales results, team morale, and employee retention.

You might appreciate knowing my sales and sales coaching biases, as they color the approach and focus of this book.

I see sales activities as a series of individual, customized conversations where the salesperson's responsibility is to help clients with their buying decisions. Salespeople start committing mistakes when they act inconsistently with this philosophy, and shift from focusing on the client experience to manipulating a sales transaction.

Use this book to more effectively coach your salespeople to help their clients with their buying decisions. As a by-product, your team members will sell more, better, sooner, and more often.

Sales coaching involves influencing your team members' *thinking*, which, in turn, improves their sales behaviors and results in greater sales. It's a cause-effect dynamic. If you try to take a shortcut, and only focus on coaching sales behaviors, you make your team members dependent on you for reinforcement. When you focus on shifting the thinking behind their sales behaviors, your sales coaching has lasting effects. Your team members are able to use the best of their thinking to solve their clients' issues and feel more confident in their growing sales abilities. And you'll feel more secure knowing how capable they are.

Coaching is both a right and a privilege for your team members, not a penance for poor performers, as some leaders mistakenly use it. Coaching is a right for every salesperson on your team, no matter what their level of sales success. And it's a privilege they earn by acting on the insights they gain from coaching.

When you effectively coach all your team members, you'll notice their sales will increase. This book is a comprehensive overview of sales coaching and its application to the most common sales mistakes. Adapt what you learn in this book to fit your team members, their clients, and your industry.

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As you learn about how to apply sales coaching practices, keep in mind that effective sales coaching is much like baking a cake. The individual ingredients aren't all that enticing; the magic happens when you put them together. Imagine eating the ingredients of your favorite cake separately—two raw eggs, two cups of white flour, one teaspoon of baking powder. It doesn't sound very appetizing, does it? It's similar when it comes to sales coaching. The separate ingredients of listening, asking questions, providing information, and building trust seem quite flat to many, but when you mix them together, you have a profitable combination.

The magic of sales coaching happens when you match the coaching ingredients to the needs of each salesperson. There's a common structure to the conversation, but each sales coaching session is customized to the individual's unique needs. Imagine that each sales coaching conversation is a different kind of cake, depending on the needs in the moment. And each cake is flavored by the personality and sales skills of each team member.

You'll find I've included true stories where sales mistakes have been committed. I have changed names and identifying details to protect the salespeople (and their companies) from judgment, since most everyone is worthy and capable of rehabilitation. In some of these stories, I have included e-mails from the guilty salespeople. I couldn't have asked for better examples of what *not* to do. The sad part is: I didn't have to look hard. The stories came readily from personal sales interactions.

Today's prospects and clients are sophisticated. The ease in which product information and customer reviews and complaints can be accessed is a big contributor to how people buy things. Disgruntled clients are no longer fully satisfied by filing their complaints with the perpetrating company, but instead they often vent their complaints in social media, where they live on for posterity. This makes it more necessary than ever for you to become an outstanding sales coach.

Here's to you helping your team members sell more!

CHAPTER

1

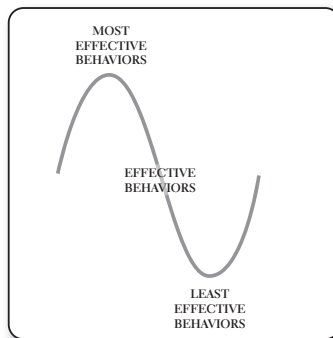
Ensuring Your Sales Coaching Gets Results

Salespeople sell more when they're coached effectively and regularly.

Results prove sales coaching increases sales, the *Harvard Business Review* has reported on it, and the Sales Executive Council documents it. Yet, you may be wondering how it works in your world.

Picture this: You have a new salesperson on your team. Joe's an average-performing sales guy, and you're about to have your first sales coaching session with him. He's just finished a sales interaction with a potential client, Susan. He's done some things well, and he's done some things that need improvement (like most salespeople).

Here's what the line graph of his sales behaviors with Susan looks like:



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The high point on Joe's sales behavior curve represents the most effective behaviors he engaged in with Susan. These include:

- Asking some great discovery questions.
- Providing relevant information at the ideal time in the conversation.
- Remembering to set the agenda for the next time they meet.

The low point represents the least effective behaviors Joe demonstrated with Susan. These involve:

- Forgetting to ask Susan which product solutions her company had tried unsuccessfully.
- Agreeing the product he suggested was expensive without illustrating its valuable ROI.
- Not sharing the success story of a client with a similar issue to Susan's company.

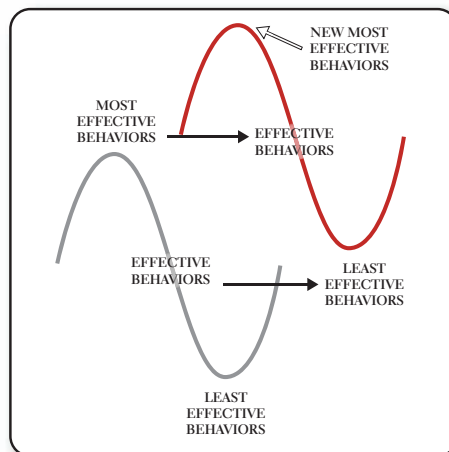
Despite Joe's efforts, Susan decided not to buy during their sales interaction.

The magic happens after you coach Joe and he sells to the next potential client with an issue similar to Susan's.

During the call with that next client, Maria, Joe does not repeat the ineffective behaviors from the low point of his interaction with Susan. His techniques that, on the graph, were labeled "Effective Behaviors," become his least effective behaviors, while the most effective behaviors from his interaction with Susan now represent his average performance. Overall, the standards of Joe's sales behaviors trend upward.

And here's the most exciting benefit of sales coaching with Joe: He engages in new, even more effective sales behaviors with Maria, so his most effective sales behaviors are stronger than they were previously. Therefore, Joe sells better and sooner in his sales conversation with Maria than he did with Susan. As proof of his success, Maria decides to buy during the interaction.

Here's what the improvement in Joe's sales behavior looks like:



The line graph to the left shows his sales interaction with Susan, and the line graph to the right is his interaction with Maria. Imagine the sales results Joe will get when you coach him on an ongoing basis. He'll incrementally continue to sell better and sooner. *Translation: He'll sell more.*

This kind of improvement is typical for salespeople who are coached regularly. I call this the Quantum Coaching Effect. If you maintain a coaching relationship with your team members, they'll continue to reach new sales heights. You'll find they'll let go of their least effective sales behaviors and engage in more and more effective ways to help potential clients with their buying decisions.

Sales coaching can be very rewarding for sales leaders and their team members when they experience this level of improvement. It starts with your coaching focus. It's not about you being the source of all answers; it's about coaching your team to improve sales behaviors. The following story illustrates this:

With an added glint in his eye from his blade's reflection, my brother finished off his third victim. And I was his accomplice. (*A melodramatic start, yes. Yet you'll find this holds an essential sales coaching lesson for you.*) You see my brother, Brad, was different. At the age of eleven, he was an entomologist (*translation: a very serious bug guy, into beetles, butterflies, moths, and spiders*).

Among the many creatures he nurtured, were monarch butterflies, which he bred in his bedroom. I remember watching in awe as dozens flew from one end of his room to the other. *Orange never looked so beautiful.*

Brad would get the monarch butterflies as caterpillars and let them mature. Every year, he and I would watch them go through their metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly.

When the caterpillars would reach their chrysalis stage, which is when they are in cocoons, we would patiently wait for the chrysalides to hatch. We'd watch the growing butterflies inside move around and struggle, and struggle, and struggle. Then finally each one would break free with beautiful wings and hang there before eventually flying off.

One year, Brad and I decided we wanted to help and make the metamorphosis easier on the butterflies, so when the next butterfly started to struggle to emerge from its chrysalis, Brad took out his X-Acto knife and very carefully cut open the side of the cocoon.

We waited and watched.

No struggle. Yes!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

We shared the kind of smile only co-conspirators can understand. I felt like a superhero in the world of nature. We had single-handedly saved the butterfly. I was so proud that I wasn't prepared for what happened next.

The butterfly fell out of the chrysalis with crumpled wings. It sat there and sat there, and sat there. And then, *flop*, it died.

I hate to admit this, but did it three times before we figured out that the butterflies' deaths had something to do with us. Brad went to the books, and discovered

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this: The butterflies' struggle gives their wings the strength to fly, and when we took away their struggle, they couldn't fly and they died. So much for being the heroes of nature.

How This Relates to Sales Coaching

Just like Brad and I enjoyed watching the butterflies mature and fly, you probably have wanted your sales team to fly; and just like we wanted to help and make it easier for the butterflies, you probably have wanted to help and make things easier for your team. Just like we thought it was better for the butterflies not to struggle, you may have thought it was better for your team members not to struggle. Just like we had good intentions when we cut open the butterflies' chrysalides with an X-Acto knife, you probably have good intentions when you give your team members all the answers because you thought you were making it easier for them. Just like we learned that taking away the struggle for the butterflies kills them, you might have discovered that telling your team members the answers doesn't necessarily improve their thinking or their sales skills.

What No Struggle Means

For the butterflies, no struggle means no strong wings, which translates into no flying. For your team, no struggle means no new neurological connections, which means the same old thinking, which translates into no flying and the same old sales results. *Not good.* Each time you tell your team members what to do, recognize you're just like Brad and me. You're killing your team members' abilities to think and sell better.

The OSF Cycle

As you've probably already discovered, it's easy not to sales coach. It's far easier to fall for the struggle and resort to providing answers. If you fall for their struggle, you create the OSF cycle. What's the OSF cycle? It's the *Oh-So-Familiar* cycle of:

- A problem arises.
- Your team comes to you for the answer.
- You give them the answer.

And next time they have a problem, they come back to you for the answer and you give them the answers. Then you are officially trapped in the OSF cycle.

Consequences of the OSF Cycle

If you get caught in the OSF cycle, your team members' thinking and sales skills don't usually improve. They become dependent on you, taking up more of your time than you would like, and they continue to get the same sales results. *Not very productive for either of you.*

Transforming the OSF Cycle

Avoiding the OSF cycle positively influences your team members' thinking and sales skills. They take up less of your time in the long run. They become more self-reliant. *They get better sales results.*

Your role as their sales coach is to help your team members make new neurological connections so their thinking is stronger and, consequently, they yield better sales results.

Sales coaching is about helping your team make new neurological connections.

Academic research indicates that struggle is essential for improved performance. I won't bore you with citing the details, but suffice it to say, it's similar to a light switch. You don't need to know why electricity in the light switch works. You just use it *because* it works. The same holds true for the use of struggle in sales coaching. You don't need to know *why* struggle works; integrate it into your sales coaching *because* it works.

Struggle is essential for improved sales results.

Telling Them What to Do

Does this mean you never tell your team members answers? No. I'm not talking about leaving your team members out to dry and never giving them a helpful piece of information. There are times when it is appropriate to share and provide guidance. We'll touch more on this shortly.

I'm talking about helping your team members develop their mental strength (as the butterflies developed their physical strength) so they can fly with the best of them—and surpass their sales targets.