



WHERE DOES ORGANIC SALES GROWTH COME FROM?

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FIRST LINE MANAGERS ARE
“FORCE MULTIPLIERS”

TOP-PERFORMING MANAGERS
DIVIDE THEIR FOCUS BETWEEN
SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND
RESULTS

FOCUSED COACHING PLAYS
AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN DRIVING
ORGANIC SALES GROWTH

In today’s hyper-competitive, closely regulated healthcare marketplace, the ability to drive organic growth is an issue on the mind of a lot of sales leaders.

For many organizations, the “solution” has been to invest - in territory realignment, a new selling model, coaching skills workshops, Situational Leadership, The Challenger Sale, etc. These solutions, though well intended, often end up having little to no lasting impact on business results.

The reason for this disconnect is simple: these “solutions” do not address two core drivers of sales productivity - managerial **focus** and coaching **quality**.

First-line Managers are Force Multipliers

First-line managers (FLMs) are the force multipliers for any commercial strategy or strategic investment. When enabled (i.e., feedback is focused on components of strategy and coaching quality is high),

FLMs drive growth. The opposite is also true. When not enabled, FLM coaching lacks focus and execution falls flat, leading to limited impact and diminished results.

Today, FLMs are, by nature, overwhelmed and often overworked. Most FLMs struggle to keep their coaching priorities straight.

So, when their organization provides them a new approach, it can feel more like another “rock in their backpack” than a solution.



5,400

Coaching Conversations



86%

Feedback from top managers included coaching to skills and behaviors



30%
Level
1 & 3



50%
Level
2



25%
Level
4

As a result, new skills are never embedded and managers default to the way they've always done things. This approach - often referred to as "flavor of the month" - is based on two long-held misconceptions:

1. "New" = "better." Introducing a new model or coaching platform to an already overworked manager is a recipe for disaster. Most managers, when polled, would rather focus on mastering existing tools and skills than adopt a whole new approach.
2. "It's impossible to measure quality." One of the biggest misconceptions that leaders have today is that coaching quality cannot be measured. They rely on a "sense" that coaching is subpar without ever asking, "Just how good - or bad - is our coaching?"

As a result, leaders invest in solutions that fail to address the core issues (i.e., coaching focus and quality). Though some investments produce an initial "lift," momentum is short-lived, and no lasting impact on growth is achieved.

Defining Managerial Focus and Coaching Quality

For 10 years, our researchers have identified and refined the criteria associated with effective coaching. In that time, we have reviewed more than 5,400 coaching conversations and mapped the focus and quality of coaching to overall performance. "Effective" coaching is defined as:

- **Specific** - Includes a detailed description of skills, behaviors, and impact;
- **Immediate** - Includes feedback and coaching focused primarily on the current field visit;
- **Actionable** - Provides a contrast between the current and desired level of performance and facilitates a sense of ownership on the part of the coachee;

FLM ABILITY TO FOCUS ON SKILLS AND BEHAVIORS ASSOCIATED WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IS CRUCIAL TO DRIVING SALES GROWTH.

- **Balanced** - Addresses areas for development while affirming progress;
- **Continuity** - Creates momentum in the development process by providing ongoing coaching on a small number of skills or behaviors;
- **Alignment** - Aligns to the individual employee’s development plan, goals, and needs.

The Role of Focus

As noted above, today’s managers are often overwhelmed and overworked. The reason for this is that most strategies - brand, sales, effectiveness, and learning/ development - require the FLM to play a central role in their reinforcement and execution.

Faced with a large number of loosely defined and shifting priorities, many managers opt out; they default to “the way they’ve always done things” or simply coach to the numbers.

In a recent analysis, we found that 86% of coaching and feedback from top-performing managers was focused on skills and behaviors aligned to strategic imperatives and business results.

Moving the Bell Curve & Driving Organic Growth: A Case Study

In our experience, FLM coaching is most often categorized as either Level 2 (i.e., coach to the numbers) or Level 3 (super rep). This deficiency is a byproduct of the “overwhelm” state described above.

An actual example of this baseline can be seen in Fig. 1. In this analysis, we reviewed field coaching from 198 FLMs from one specialty sales team. At baseline, nearly half of coaching conversations from these managers were found to be ineffective (Level 2). Another 30% were categorized as either Level 1 (no coaching) or Level 3.

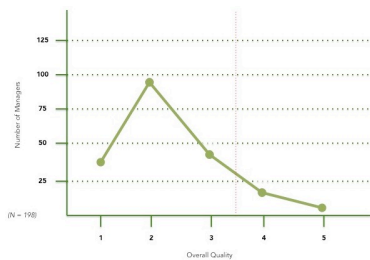


Fig. 1 Quality/Focus Baseline

Though these results were likely disappointing, this organization achieved a critical first step in terms of improving coaching quality: they successfully quantified their current level of coaching and avoided making an investment based on a “hunch.”

Once this organization established a quantifiable and actionable baseline of quality, we leveraged a three-step process for creating a measurable and sustainable improvement in coaching.



Step 1:

Engage senior leadership. Sales VPs and second-line managers (“RDs”) were equipped with the tools, skills, and insights needed to reinforce expectations and “walk the talk” in terms of quality coaching.

Step 2:

Train. Each first and second-line leader attended a half-day workshop through which they gained clarity in terms of focus (the skills and behaviors that aligned to business priorities) and the elements of effective coaching (quality).

Step 3:

Reinforce and measure. Learning was sustained through a mobile gamification and reinforcement platform with improvements being measured at six-month increments.

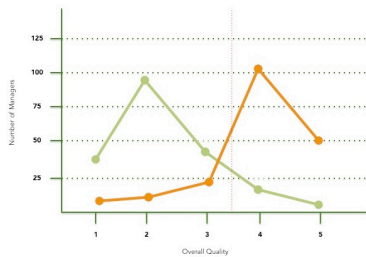


Fig. 2 Quality/Focus at 18 months

Actual Results

Employing this methodology, the sales team depicted in Fig. 1 produced a measurable and sustainable improvement in coaching quality in just 18 months (Fig. 2). In contrast to the baseline, the majority of coaching was classified as Level 4 with more than 25% of conversations classified as Level 5. In this time, the client saw a significant increase managers' ability to provide quality coaching to strategic priorities, such as:

- Components of brand message;
- Approved brand resources;
- Patient identification;
- Product trial, and
- Core skills (closing)

Coaching Quality and Business Impact

In addition to the improvements in coaching quality and key performance indicators outlined above, this client – and many others – have experienced a measurable and sustained impact on key

In as little as six months – and with results sustained for more than four years – clients have reported improvements in:

- Sales performance (i.e., organic sales growth)
- Productivity
- Use of approved resources
- Employee engagement, and
- Retention



Summary

By systematically measuring coaching quality and focus and developing an actionable approach to improvement, organizations can create measurable and sustainable improvements in coaching quality that lead to significant impact on business outcomes and drive organic sales growth.

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