

# Looking for **TROUBLE**

## Avoid Mistakes That Hurt Your Sales

In my work helping dealers make their sales staff successful, I have noticed that dealers make many of the same mistakes that could lead to failure. To help them better manage their staff, here are a few common problems to avoid. Take a look and see if any of these apply to you.

### Hiring Family

Hiring friends and family sounds like a great idea before it happens. Family members are easy to recruit and easy to hire, but the sad truth is that they are tough to discipline and even tougher to fire. Firing your wife, son or brother makes Christmas dinner a little uncomfortable for many years to come. We suggest you are extra cautious when mixing business with family. It is best to hire people you will have no emotional attachments to. Remember, it's business.

### Rescuing The Downtrodden

Do you rescue the desperate? Our experience proves you should only hire homeowners, people in stable relationships and people who have been successful. You can take on that lost waif who lives in his parents' basement and has seen his share of life's troubles but your chances of creating a productive and stable salesperson are very small indeed.

### Low Expectations

Low Expectations lead to failure. If you hire a salesperson, you should be very

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specific about what you expect. How much should a good salesperson sell? In our industry, we believe the smallest performance you should accept is 10 demos per week which result in three sales per week. If you accept less than that, you won't make money and they won't make money.

### No Defined Rules and Goals

The less defined your position is, the less likely it is to succeed. Many dealers hire salespeople and then simply turn them loose. You'll attract better sales people and have a much better chance at success if you lay out in detail what they should do every day. For example, you should request, "When you go on an appointment, you must call on four neighbors. You

must canvass the neighborhood during every install."

### No Credit or Police Checks

It's sad to say but unless you do a police check, you could be sending criminals to your customers homes and you could be financially liable for anything they do while they are there. Courts have found that failure to do a background check may make you responsible. Credit checks are important too. First, they are an indication of character. If your new applicant has walked out on obligations before, it is your first indication that they may be less than honorable with you. More importantly, very few salespeople can sell if they have lots of credit problems. We suggest you pass on people with serious problems.

### Adopting Your Staff

If they don't sell and you keep them around, you have adopted them. Keep your charitable activities separate from your business. Remember, if salespeople fail to sell, you are better off without them.

### Waiting Too Long

People sell or they don't and it doesn't get better over time. For example, we end our three-day training for new recruits on a Friday. Then, we tell them they must do five "practice demos" for friends and family over the weekend. If they sell one, they will be top salespeople. If they do the

five demos but don't sell, they will be average. If they don't do the demos, you might as well fire them on the spot, as they don't have what it takes to sell for a living. Your new staff should sell immediately. There is no learning curve.

### **Thinking Salespeople Don't Cost**


The biggest mistake you can make is feeling like new salespeople don't cost you anything. Nothing could be further from the truth. It costs between \$200 and \$400 in advertising, interest and overhead for

every demo you get. If a new salesperson has blown 10, they have cost you about \$4,000! Worse yet, you should have closed three of those 10 and make about \$6,000 in gross profit that you will never see if you keep weak salespeople. That means a total cost of \$10,000 every week they are with you.

### **Making the Job Unmeasurable**

To be successful, you must measure activities. How many leads did they get by prospecting? How many did they

close? You should measure everything about your staff and try to improve it. Better still, measuring gives you yard sticks you can use to tell salespeople what you expect. My father used to say, "If you ain't measuring, you ain't managing."

Finally, take an inventory of your company and see how many of these mistakes you are making. Eliminate them, and you will find it's a lot easier to create a great sales team. 



#### **About the Author**

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