



By Carl Davidson

**About the Author**

Carl Davidson is president of Sales & Management Solutions, Inc., a consulting firm specializing in sales and management video training and live seminars exclusively for the water equipment industry. He has authored several books including *Financial Secrets of the Water Improvement Industry* and numerous articles. Send comments to davidson@salesco.net. For a free demonstration video, newsletter and list of products, contact Carl at 800-941-0068; www.carldavidson.com; davidson@carldavidson.com.

# WANTED

## 'Sleeve Roller With Dirty Hands'

### Recruiting the Right Salespeople for Your Business

Recently, some dealers have shared with me that they just can't get good salespeople, or they can't make sales happen. "People come and quit. What is happening out there?" Because I work with hundreds of dealers around the country and I see what works and what doesn't, I thought I would share my experiences and address this developing trend.

Society has evolved in an interesting way over the past two decades. Very few of us want to roll up our sleeves and get our hands dirty. I meet more and more water company owners who never go out and sell. Instead, they "administrate"—even if they have very little to measure or manage. They have forgotten that great managers lead by example.

For instance, when hiring salespeople, it has become the fashion to turn them loose after training and hope they do well. The fact is, you can't send a new salesperson out on their own after a few hours of training. Successful managers go out with them until they get one or two sales. They show the new salesperson how to prospect, how to network and lead them for a week or two.

This is important because the new recruit gets a sale or two in their first week, which re-enforces the feeling that they have made the correct career decision. It also proves to them that they can do it. The result? They go out on their own and continue to be successful.

Weak managers don't take new recruits out. Many managers and owners haven't done a full demo for so long they can't remember how to do it right. Many have their own "short cut"

method that works on established customers and call-ins, but would not work on cold leads such as the ones your recruit will face. If you don't have a great demo (see my September column on the importance of a great demo), you cannot manage a good sales team. If you can't get on the phone and get one appointment in 10 calls, or knock on doors and get in, you will never have a good team.

To make matters worse, I see owners and managers who don't want to lead hire sales managers who don't want to lead either. If you have a manager who sits in the office "planning" and "marketing," yet never takes a faltering recruit out to close or to prospect, you have just added a layer of "adminstrivia" that will never get a sales team where you want it to be. Many companies end up with an owner who doesn't want his hands dirty followed by a manager with the same feelings who hires salespeople who punch names into computers and look busy instead of getting out in the field.

Here are a few tell tale signs that show what camp you and your staff live in.

**Retail Hours**

If you, your manager or your staff are not working evenings and weekends, you are not hands-on workers. I just can't believe the number of people in our industry who work 9 to 5, Monday to Friday. The only people who should do that are bankers.

**Talk In Specifics**

Hands-on managers and owners talk in specifics. "We did 38 demos this week and closed 12." "Bob is weak at closing but he is going out with me tonight and tomorrow to fix that." Weak managers tend to speak in

generalities like, "The economy is soft... Things are OK." You can never put your finger on the source of their information or what it means. They always have to check if you ask them a specific question.

**Tough But Fair**

Great managers are respected but not necessarily liked. They are tough but fair. If you or your managers are "one of the boys," or do a lot of socializing with your staff, you are probably not hands-on.

**Firing Staff**

Effective managers fire bad salespeople. If you or your manager are weak, your bad salespeople hang on and then quit.

**Kit in Car**

Want to know if you are a hands-on manager? You are if you have a clean, fully charged kit in your car, and if the kit has been well used. If your kit isn't always ready to go, you are not hands-on.

**Out Doing Demos**

Do you ever look for your manager and find he is out doing demos, or is he always there in the office, at the computer? If he sells and does demos, he is hands-on.

**Sells a Few Every Month**

Is the owner and manager on the sales board every month? Do you have a sales board? If you aren't selling, you aren't hands-on managing.

**Supervises a Reasonable Size Team**

You can't afford a manager who doesn't have five or six productive sales people. If you have a manager with one or two salespeople, he isn't

hands-on recruiting.

**Weekly Sales Meetings With Teeth**

Does your company have a weekly sales meeting where you inspect the kits of your staff, go over their number of demos and sales, and make them do a part of the demo to see if they can do it word for word? If not, you are not hands-on.

These are just a few signs of the kind of owner or manager you are. Remember that it is leadership that makes things happen, not luck, the economy, or your location. You have to roll up your sleeves, take responsibility and make things happen. You need priorities and goals, and minimum standards.

Most of all, remember: There is no pay plan that will make them work unless you lead them; there is no advertising gimmick that will get all the leads unless you make them prospect; and no one is responsible for your performance but you.

By the way, if you think none of this applies to you, if you have a great sales team and sell to your true potential, you are correct. However, if you have a smaller staff than you want or if sales and profits aren't great, this does apply to you.

Remember that the longest journey begins with a single step, so put down this article, go out and take one step toward leadership. **WQP**

**LearnMore!**

For more information related to this article, go to [www.wqpmag.com/lm.cfm/wq100407](http://www.wqpmag.com/lm.cfm/wq100407)

For more information on this subject, write in 1016 on the reader service card.