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There are many things that vary by market within our industry. Some markets focus on well water while others do not, some markets' primary concern is iron and some cater to residential areas. There is, however, one phenomenon that we see in almost every market: dealership owners who can sell successfully but cannot find salespeople who can sell as well as themselves. There are several steps you can take to develop successful salespeople.

By Carl Davidson

Owners Versus Salespeople

We have all seen it before: An owner gets a phone call, goes to a home, talks with the homeowner for 15 minutes, makes a sale, installs the equipment and picks up a check. Now if you could just hire another person to do that, you would double your sales. But very few, if any, salespeople reach this level of success with the methods used by the owner because owners have a few advantages—we will look at two of them.

Owners have an enthusiasm and depth of knowledge that comes across when they talk to customers. This confidence and knowledge comes from years of experience and pride of ownership. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find these qualities in a salesperson without having them work for you for many years.

But how will you pay them while they develop this knowledge and confidence? And what happens if they never develop it?

Owners are generally too busy to prospect. They tend to sell to prospects who call in for an appointment as opposed to people they found through prospecting. The prospects owners talk to tend to be referrals and customers who know they have a problem and want it fixed. This results in a high closing rate on a low volume of presentations.

A typical owner might do three sales calls a week and sell two to three systems, but most do not do demos. They get to the home, determine the need, show the customer a brochure and price and get the sale. As an owner, you will probably never find a salesperson who can duplicate your success using your style of selling.

What Salespeople Need

Unlike owners, salespeople generally have a much lower closing rate but a much higher number of presentations per week. They need four things to help them be successful:

1. Demos. Although the owner can sell without doing a demonstration, it has been proven that salespeople need to do a full demo in every home they enter. They also need to be fully trained on a good demonstration script. This is because their customers are not as sold when they arrive compared to the owner's customers, and because they do not

generally possess the owner's enthusiasm and knowledge. If you have a salesperson that closes less than 33% of the people they demo, they need help in this area.

2. Leads. Salespeople need leads. The most productive salespeople get some of their leads from the company. I recommend that the company give the salespeople about half their leads and that the salesperson be expected to generate the other half.

You can generate leads by hiring seniors to pick up water samples, students to work flea markets and shows and by using voice broadcast marketing. These are all inexpensive methods that are proven to work.

3. Financing. Financing is critical to the success of salespeople. Almost all water equipment is sold on the basis of dollars per month and savings per month. Be sure to give your staff the training, charts and assistance they need to make financing part of every sales presentation.

4. Supervision, Praise and Help. While the owner can work on his or her own, salespeople need to be supervised every day. Make it a habit to contact your salespeople daily to find out how many demos they have done and how many systems they sold yesterday. Praise them for something good they have done and offer your advice in the areas in which they need to improve. If they got into less than two homes, offer to help them get appointments. If they performed two or more demos but they are not closing at 33%, help them with their demo and closing skills.

As an owner, you will never find a salesperson like yourself and you should not even try. Follow the suggestions in this article and you will find that you can get good sales and productivity from your sales staff. *wqp*

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Stop Looking for a Salesperson [Like Yourself]

How dealership owners can create a successful sales staff