

HOW TO INVERT THE 80:20 RULE

AND BOOST SALES TEAM SUCCESS



INTRODUCTION

Are you faced with developing a sales team that you feel could do even better but you're not sure how?

Are you looking for a way to improve your team's behaviours but don't know where to start?

Do you find yourself coming up against increasing obstacles when it comes to closing deals and continued customer engagement?

This practical guide aims to help you understand the biggest challenges to your business and discover how you can translate changes in seller behaviour into long-term improvements in customer engagement and business success.

You will gain valuable understanding into the new age of expectation and the importance of customer curiosity, and discover how to translate it into sales excellence. Using the Pareto 80:20 principle, you will learn how to transform your sales team into top performers as well as steps to manage them towards success.





THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES OF A MODERN SALES LEADER

As a Sales Leader today you're living and working in the age of expectation.

One inhabited by well-informed buyers, with a long list of expectations they apply to each and every transaction. Social media, online, mobile and digital resources have made business buyers significantly better informed, connected and ultimately more in control.

This, coupled with greater choice, means your sales and business development teams now have a minuscule amount of time to react. So how can the winners set themselves apart?

In the expectation economy, buyers are loyal to experiences, not brands. The sales teams that succeed are those that capitalise on every

business moment in a way that is customer-centric, contextually aware, empathetic and personalised.

For many businesses this means a complete behaviour transformation. As a sales leader, you know your team and the revenues they collectively and individually bring in each quarter.

But, do you understand exactly how productive they are, how they spend their days, which tasks they prioritise, their pain, and most importantly where improvements can be made?



The 80:20 rule hasn't changed. 80% of your results still come from 20% of your sales people. The challenge is to encourage underperformers to behave like their top-performing peers, by providing them with the tools, resources and training they need to facilitate real behavioural change, and work in the world we operate in today. After all, behaviour and performance are intrinsically linked. So how does a sales leader go about addressing these challenges?

The truth is we can always do better, as can our teams. Incorporating training and coaching into their working day to improve skillsets is a must-have rather than a nice idea, and we know that simply buying another piece of software without investing in the training, behaviour coaching and habit-building that goes with it is just a waste of time.

INVEST IN A SERVICE - NOT JUST THE TOOL ITSELF

We see this regularly with CRM for example. A lot of businesses still put their faith in the assumption that implementing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools is all it takes for their team to succeed, but just giving sellers a tool or repository for customer data doesn't automatically enable the behaviours that ultimately drive success.

It's no wonder then that when results are not achieved they start to question the return on this investment. Our answer to these challenges lies in customer curiosity. Read the next chapter to learn more.



THE NEW ERA OF CUSTOMER CURIOSITY

Social Selling has of course been the buzzword everybody has been talking about over the last few years.

But let's be honest, like many buzzwords it has not been easy to define - despite the fact that pretty much every B2B sales team out there has invested in 'social' to market and engage with new and existing customers.

Much of the confusion comes from the fact that Social Selling isn't necessarily a behaviour change or way of working in itself. Instead it's a systematic approach - using social and digital channels to learn, interact, educate, and build relationships.

Essentially, 'social' doesn't sell. People sell, and techniques such as sharing relevant content, interacting directly with potential and existing customers via social media channels, personal branding, and social listening are invaluable parts of their toolkit.

So what of the latest buzz term 'customer curiosity'? Is this just another trend? Is it any different to other buzzwords such as social selling or social listening?

If Social Selling is best described as a systematic approach, then 'customer curiosity' is best described as the mind-set that feeds into all sales behaviours.

Customer curiosity is about channelling one of our most innate human traits to seek better understanding of the customer ecosystem, customer perspectives, develop market fluency, and so on.

Social selling, content marketing, customer centricity etc. (those buzzwords again!!) are all enhanced by being curious.

Customer curiosity is perhaps the most important trait any seller, marketer or customer relationship professional can have.

Curious people seek to understand the world through the customer's lens – what their world looks like, what is important to them, what drives them, and what turns them off. Curious people tend to also be the ones that are keen to push boundaries, find new reasons to get excited, suggest new ideas, and uncover new ways to solve problems.

Curiosity, when nurtured and channelled in the right way, delivers what B2B companies and customers ultimately aspire to from their sales teams.

Whether it's social selling, traditional selling, social marketing, customer relationship management or any other approach – curiosity leads to customer-centric engagement, strong relationships, solutions that achieve goals and

solve problems, and the ability to jump on new ideas and opportunities for improved outcomes and competitive advantage.

AS STEVE JOBS SO RIGHTLY SAID “OUT OF CURIOSITY COMES EVERYTHING”

The leaders that have already transformed their team's approach in line with this customer curious methodology are seeing amazing results.

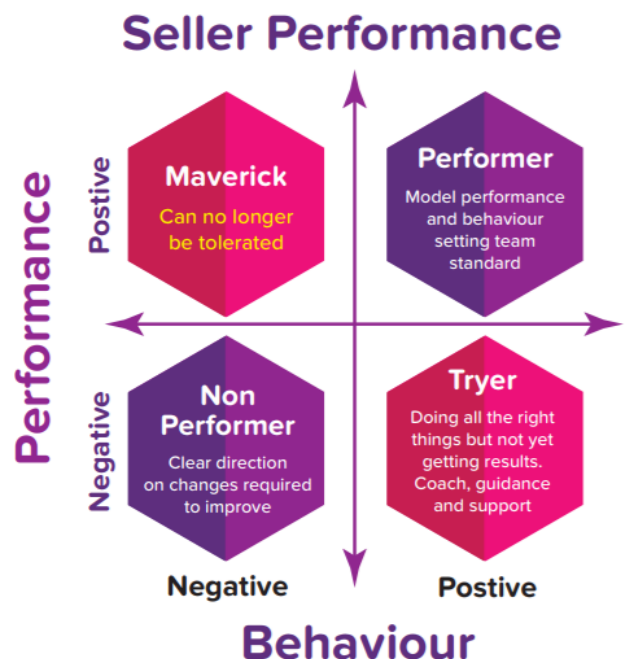
In the next chapter, we look at how to develop your average performers into super sellers through the art of customer curiosity.

HOW TO TRANSFORM THE MIDDLE MAJORITY INTO YOUR TOP PERFORMERS

It is a truth universally accepted that the 80:20 rule (or Pareto's principle) has impact throughout your business whether it's 80% of your customers contributing 20% of your sales, or 80% of your time accomplishing 20% of your tasks.

However when you see it reflected in your sales team and recognise the impact it's having on your quarter then it's time to start looking at ways of turning the 80:20 rule on its head.

Here we show you how to transform the majority of the team who are recording average results into a super selling maestro's – the stars who are performing head and shoulders above the rest.





THE TEAM

First, look at your team and categorise each of them into one of the four types:

.. THE TRYER

They do all the right things but are not yet getting results. They need to be coached and given guidance and support. These are often your new hires who have shown potential but are still finding their feet as they get to know their market and their customers.

.. THE NON-PERFORMER

They are typified by poor behaviour and as a consequence poor results, they need clear direction on the changes required to improve in order to be successful.

.. THE MAVERICK

They follow none of the rules but have managed by various means to get results. Their techniques can't be scaled and in the long-term will not be able to sustain positive outcomes without a drastic change in behaviour.

.. THE PERFORMER

They are your top sellers, combining model behaviour and the results to match. They set the standard for the rest of your team. So how do you turn your team into 20 percenters?

In an ideal world, all of your team would fall into the last category, but in actuality only a small percentage do.

The solution however lies in customer curiosity and by adopting these techniques you can improve behaviour and results throughout – so the Tryer starts seeing the fruits of their labour, the Non-Performer begins performing, the Maverick uses best practices to ensure results, and your Top Performer is given more time to do what they do best - building relationships and closing deals.

THE TECHNIQUES

.. BE CURIOUS IN HOW YOU RECRUIT AND RETAIN YOUR PEOPLE

Look beyond qualifications and credentials and aim to recruit individuals with inquisitive minds. Then provide an environment that empowers them.

Give your curious people the space, time and tools they need to satisfy their insatiable curiosity. Let them learn and practice their curiosity skills and form new habits. In return you will be rewarded with an loyal team that goes out to seek answers, shares ideas, solves problems, and drives your business forward.

.. BE CURIOUS ABOUT CUSTOMER AND PROSPECTS

Cultivate your team to have an authentic interest your customer's ecosystem. Encourage them to seek opportunities to understand their customers brand, culture, products and services, uncover insight into their problems, objectives, short and long-term goals, and the market reality in which they operate.

By allowing them to focus the direction of their curiosity on the customer they'll gain greater understanding of their world and how your company can fit into it, be better placed to predict needs, and be first with targeted solutions to resonate.

.. BE CURIOUS ABOUT PEOPLE AND OTHER POINTS OF VIEW

Customer curiosity is as much about building insight into the customer themselves as it is about insight into their business and market.

Provide your team with the tools and training to spot the clues that will help them understand the customer's persona, how they like to work and engage, what is important to them and what will make the biggest difference in their world.

Once they understand the customers agenda and connect with their story; they can adapt the way they engage with them to have the biggest, meaningful impact.

.. BE CURIOUS ABOUT 'WHAT IF'

Set aside your own corporate agenda, take the focus off your immediate surroundings and goals, stop imposing tried and tested sales rationales. Instead get curious about 'what if'.

Seek out patterns and trends that no one else has noticed, problems the customer does not even realise they have, triggers that indicate the new opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Don't get caught up in the here and now, instead cultivate curiosity in 'what if' and your team will uncover new ways to innovate, gain first mover advantage, and differentiate service.

.. BE CURIOUS ABOUT NEW HORIZONS

Find new reasons to get excited - how your offering can be improved, new behaviours and ways of working that can enhance productivity, and the tools that can take your business to the next level.

Take CRM systems for example - a useful snapshot of what is happening in your customer's world, but not necessarily the most dynamic solution when the customer world changes day-by-day, hour-by-hour. But augment CRM with real-time insight, and you have a game changer that your team can use to open doors to new opportunities.

.. BE CURIOUS BY ASKING QUESTIONS

Curiosity by nature demands the asking of questions. 'Tell, me more about that?' - A simple question maybe, but open-ended and therefore challenging the customer to share.

Find ways to to help your sellers go deeper – encourage them to join discussions and forums on LinkedIn and Quora, and look for sentiments and opinions that they can question.

.. BE CURIOUS FOR THE LONG TERM

Curiosity, as we have demonstrated, can be learned, and if practiced can deliver true behaviour and culture change. But curiosity can also wane over time. Invest in tools and training that will enhance curious behaviours, and provide regular feedback on results. Motivate by example through demonstration of how curious activities have made a real difference to customers.

By building these seven curious habits in your team, they will become a natural part of their sales process and the results will speak for themselves in new opportunities, new deals and happy engaged customers.



IMPACT

The effect of this behaviour change has a knock-on effect on your team's productivity, their engagement with customers, and with each other, as well as their sales success.

In a study by Steve W Martin for the Harvard Business Review – 82% of top sellers scored extremely high curiosity levels.

And as Jill Konrath sales strategist, speaker and the author so rightly said, the term extremely curious is fascinating. *“Top sellers want to learn more — about their customers, market, products, value propositions, triggering events, the buying process and the individuals they deal with. With a deep hunger for knowledge and information, they ask more and better questions”*. Most importantly, curiosity can be measured.

Using Artesian as an obvious example, Artesian monitors selling behaviours to present sales leaders with visibility of the scores of the top and bottom performers in their team and an

average of these scores shows how a team is performing as a whole.

Likewise Usage reports provide a breakdown of how Artesian is being used at individual's level of engagement.

As a manager you can get transparency over how your team is behaving and performing and by figuring out the DNA of your team you have the opportunity to invert the 80:20 rule and facilitate the behaviour changes necessary to transform your middle majority into your top performers.

The huge power of harnessing Pareto and social selling is evident when you make the 80:20 work for your sales team and transform your middle majority into your top performers.

4 SEVEN SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES TO MANAGING A SALES TEAM

Managing a sales team can feel like taming lions – they're hungry and competitive. But their success is your success, so you need to know how to get the best out of them. Here's seven sure-fire approaches to managing a sales team...

.. PROCESSES THAT HELP, NOT HINDER

There's a lot to track: sales process, forecasting, training, technology, hiring. You may have it well-defined in your head, but it all needs documenting. But you don't want these process documents to be a thick rulebook.

Great sales people enjoy a bit of freedom, so process documents should be useful guidance to train staff, track performance and increase sales, not an intimidating and confining rulebook.

A great example is activities-based management. This approach involves telling sales people how to do their job – how many calls to make, when to make them, who to call, and what to say.

This is far too limiting for really great sales people. They need the flexibility to indulge their curiosity and approach prospects in their own way, with their own style and to run their accounts like it's their own business. It's what makes great sales people great!

.. BUILD A PIPELINE OF TALENTED PEOPLE

Waiting until you need to hire someone new is leaving it too late. To get the best sales people you need to know who they are, which areas they are specialists in, and what they are up to – long before there is an actual need for new staff.

According to Glassdoor, salespeople are aggressively scouting the market for greener pastures with 68% planning to look for a new job in the next year, and 45% planning to look in the next three months, there is nearly always a real need.

The best way to accomplish this is to create a detailed database of prospective employees, just as you might do for potential clients.

You can even use the same curiosity strategies to track what these star sellers are up to and to create a pipeline of talented staff to join your team.

.. DON'T SKIMP ON THE TRAINING

Surprisingly, only 66% of companies actually train their new employees. That means a third of businesses are just hoping new staff will figure out how everything works.

ONLY 66% OF COMPANIES ACTUALLY TRAIN THEIR NEW EMPLOYEES

Likewise around 60% of businesses at any one time are planning to introduce new technology into the workplace that would require staff training but if no training is provided employees will be wasting valuable time getting to grips with the valuable tools a business has invested in, damaging return on that investment.

Dedicated training on the other hand, cuts down on wasted time trying to figure things out, minimises easily avoidable mistakes and instils your new team members with the confidence to be curious, engage and win new business.

.. ENCOURAGE A GREAT DIGITAL PRESENCE

We don't need to tell you how important your company's online presence is – businesses spend considerable amounts each year to ensure that their company is visible on search engines and social media. Sellers, whether aspiring, new, or established, cannot afford to ignore the importance of social media and the effects of their presence on social media. Social Media is as important as all of the other aspects of business today and as a sales leader it's up to you to encourage a great digital presence.

Not only does increased social media activity provide some great visibility for your business it can improve performance by channelling customer curiosity. According to Aberdeen Asset Management, 46% of sellers using social hit quota compared to 38% of sales reps who don't, and even help transform your sales team into a group of industry thought leaders. Who knows, perhaps they'll even end up doing a TED talk!

46% OF SELLERS USING SOCIAL HIT QUOTA COMPARED TO 38% OF SALES REPS WHO DON'T

.. ALLOW TIME TO DEVELOP CUSTOMER CURIOUS BEHAVIOURS

Along with increased visibility, a digital presence provides an excellent opportunity to indulge the customer curious behaviours that boost engagement and therefore success. Of course it takes time to build up a 360° ecosystem of prospects, that's fine, it'll all pay off in the long run. Customer curiosity and behaviour transformation is a long-game strategy, fleshing out a complete picture of your prospects, their businesses, and their interests, will ultimately deliver to higher-quality leads, value added and timely engagements, increased sales, and better customer experiences, and therefore improved satisfaction and retention.

“Selling through social channels is the closest thing to being a fly on the wall in your customers, prospects and competitor's world.”

Jim Keenan - The Rise of Social Salespeople

.. GIVE MEANING TO THEIR WORK

Even if they're working for the all-powerful Google, salespeople will still be more motivated by the overarching vision than either you or your business. People and companies can be inspiring, but what really drives great performance is the why behind the business.

Indeed 71% of millennials believe that meaningful work is an essential factor in defining career success. It's the 'why' that provides a reason for getting out of bed in the morning and gives your salespeople the focus they need to achieve fantastic results. Today's sellers crave more than "just a job." They want meaningful work that gives them purpose and inspires them to give it their all. Inspiration is the spark that lights the fire – it's what gets your team going.

.. ACCURATELY INCENTIVISE

Providing the right incentives to the right people is essential. Invest in their development and reward them based on contribution and drive, not on age or time served. The Zuckerberg philosophy of "You can do anything here if you can prove it", is certainly a great standard to work by.

According to a study by Oracle, while high performers contribute up to 67% greater sales revenue the average difference in compensation is only 5-10%. If you can integrate your performance tracking tool with your compensation system you can ensure that people are accurately rewarded for their achievement.

Even more than financial reward it's important to recognise the intrinsic motivation of your team, which Daniel H. Pink, author of 'Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us' identifies as autonomy, mastery and purpose.

Autonomy – the desire to direct our own lives. Mastery – the desire to be better at what you're doing. Purpose – why we do what we do (as we highlighted in point six on what gives us meaning).

Through understanding your team's real motivations, you can incentivise them in a way that works. If they feel they have the respect of you and your company as a whole then they will be much happier and more driven.

Success!

ABOUT ARTESIAN

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF B2B SALES

Artesian is a powerful AI driven service that equips client facing teams with the resources they need to succeed in a modern commercial environment.

Apps that drive action. MI that measures impact. A service that inspires and coaches. Artesian provides the data, real-time insight and context needed to find customers, create meaningful engagements, sell more and create long-lasting business relationships.

HOW IT WORKS

With the use of AI technology layered on top of company information, data and news, Artesian helps you uncover opportunities, build relationships and accelerate deals.

Artesian continually scans millions of online sources for data on markets, organisations, individuals and topics, and uses sophisticated algorithms to filter and transform that information into commercially valuable insights.

With Artesian, you can track your customers, prospects, competitors and partners; spot and capitalise on business opportunities; and manage risks in your pipeline.

Artesian helps drive customer alignment, credibility, competitiveness and client satisfaction.

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