

Training can't overcome "self-worth" obstacles

08 February 2011 6:41am



RECRUITERS WANTED

RECRUITER Daily Click here to see who's hiring
jobs.recruiterdaily.com.au

Even the best practical training won't help someone with low self-worth perform well in a sales role, says sales expert Kurt Newman.

Self-worth is "a basic foundation of selling", he says.

Defining it as "that part of the human personality that determines personal value and importance", Newman, the managing director of [Sales Consultants](#), says self-worth is "a basic human need, essential for normal, healthy development".

"Basically, if a person's self-worth is healthy, meaning reasonably high, they bounce back from adversity much quicker; they're more effective in their workplace; and there's a whole raft of advantages in having high self-worth."

If it's low, there is potentially a range of problems. Research shows that "people with low self-worth become ill more often and bounce back much slower. They take criticism very defensively, and tend to achieve less in their work and personal lives. They tend to suffer from stress and related illnesses a lot more."

Self-worth is critical to sales, Newman says, because "as self-worth increases, a sense of trust builds and the belief that a difficulty can be

overcome magnifies".

Conversely, "when self-worth decreases, confidence drops and so does the certainty of success, in direct proportion. Employees with low self-worth expect to be rejected. So, developing and maintaining a high level of self-worth is imperative to the success of a salesperson and rates well above the need for training and development as a priority".

Too often, Newman says, managers confuse poor results - caused by low self-worth - with a need for training and development.

"Managers think it's a training problem; the sales person doesn't know how to qualify, or close the sale, so 'let's send them off to training'.

"But companies can spend all the money in the world [on training]; it still won't make any difference to a person with low self-worth because they believe they don't have the ability to do it."

Identify and act on self-worth issues

A person with low self-worth gives him- or herself away with both verbal and non-verbal cues, Newman says.

Poor posture and eye contact are two key signals, and managers should also listen out for expressions such as "I always have difficulty with this client", or "I'm always poor at closing the sale".

(A person with high self-worth, on the other hand, is easy to spot due to their good body language, firm handshake, and good voice projection and vocal tone.)

The most valuable thing a manager can do to combat moments of low self-worth in a recruiter is encourage them not to take rejections and setbacks personally, Newman says.

"[They need to] take it as a professional rebuttal, a professional rejection. That's a very good start, and if they're still affected greatly, look into why, and figure out what it is.

"Don't take rejection personally; it's not a personal attack."

When signs of low self-worth persist, managers should coach and mentor staff to "assist them through some thinking that impacts on their performance".

Newman points out that there are two parts to self-worth: 'self concepts' ("what you think about yourself and your current situation"); and 'self esteem' ("how you *feel* about yourself or a situation").

"The two go hand-in-hand - it's impossible to be thinking great and wonderful things, and feeling *vice versa*.

"A person with high self-worth, topped up with good tailored, structured training, can perform great things in sales.

"But a person with low self-worth can go through the same training and development and just won't get the results because they don't believe they're able to do it."

Recruiters should take note themselves of the highs and lows of their self-worth, he adds. "It's important to be conscious of when your self-worth is down, and get yourself back up. Find out why you feel or think that way."

"It sounds so simplistic, but it's quite challenging and not quite a straight line to sort out issues with sales people. But if managers genuinely care about their salespeople... they really need to find out what the self-worth issue is and guide them."