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Some people don't have what it takes to be a manager

Philadelphia Business Journal - by [Colleen Stanley](#)

So you want to be a sales manager? It's a wonderful job and a tough one, which requires the skills of a good parent, the vision of a CEO and insights of a psychologist.

This unusual combination of skills is the reason many companies struggle to find the right person to lead this important area of the company.

Take this quiz to see if you have what it takes to lead a high-performance sales team.

- Are you more motivated by the thrill of the hunt or the thrill of development?

Great sales managers are excited when they hear about the success of a team member closing a big deal, rather than their own success in closing business. Their reward comes from handing out pats on the back instead of seeking applause for their efforts. Like a proud parent, the proud sales manager brags from the sidelines, "That's my boy/girl!"

- Can you wear two hats at one time?

A sales manager must be sensitive to the challenges faced by the field reps and present those issues to corporate personnel.

At the same time, a sales manager must understand the big picture and profitability, which means saying "no" to some of the sales teams' demands. (No, we can't carry one more item in the warehouse.) It's called "managing up" and "managing down."

The key is not to wear one hat too long, because it results in bad hair and bad decisions.

- Can you sell -- or teach someone to sell?

Once you earn the title of sales manager, it doesn't matter how well you prospect and close. The only thing that matters is how well you transfer those skills to the sales team. You might be able to close enough deals the first year as a sales manager to hit quota. It's a guarantee you can't hit that quota year after year just on your own abilities.

The best sales managers develop salespeople who are better than them at closing the business.

- Can you see into the future or are you stuck in the past?

The difference between a sales manager and a sales leader is that a manager is stuck in the muck and mire of day-to-day operations. They can see only what's happening 10 feet in front of them. The sales leader lifts their head, identifies opportunities and executes strategy to capture those opportunities.

- Are you a fun lover or a fun hater?

You can be very serious about business and also be very serious about the business of fun.

Sales representatives, by nature, enjoy humor and fun. A great sales manager can defuse tense situations.

- Are you willing to be lonely a few days a year?

Being a leader brings new meaning to the phrase "lonely at the top." Executing change seldom brings praise from sales team members until they see the changes positively affect their compensation.

- How are you at trying on shoes?

Great sales managers are emotionally intelligent and take the time to know each person on their team, what personally motivates them and how they like to be communicated with.

The effective sales manager may wear loafers, Crocs and spike heels all in one day because they know salespeople are unique and can't be mass-managed.

- Will you leave the office?

Customers can tell you what's important. The only way to discover that information is to hear it first-hand. The only way a sales manager can coach a salesperson is to observe them in action.

About the Author

Colleen Stanley is president of SalesLeadership Inc., a business development consulting firm specializing in sales and sales management training. The company provides programs in prospecting, referral strategies, consultative sales training, sales management training, and hiring/selection. She is also the author of "Growing Great Sales Teams: Lessons from the Cornfield." Reach Colleen at 303.708.1128 or visit www.salesleadershipdevelopment.com.

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