

Getting Sales Teams to Embrace Change

FEATURING
9 Helpful
Sales
Conversation
Starters



PAUL CHERRY • Author of *Questions That Sell*

Getting your sales team to embrace change

The vice president of sales at a company we work with recently sent members of his sales team an email about the upheavals in the marketplace, stating, **“Here’s what’s going to happen: We’ll have to shift around resources and job alignments. That means you’ll have new responsibilities, perhaps even extra work.”** Typically, when sales teams hear that changes are on the horizon, their first reaction is a groan, **“Oh, no, they’re gonna ask me to do more work with fewer resources.”** Sales professionals and sales managers are always ready to fight that, resulting in friction between the two factions. Each one perceives the other as stubborn, closed-minded, and negative. Sales team members are unhappy because, in their view, the problem is the company... the marketplace...the management... the products... basically, everything and everyone else except them — **“It’s not me, it’s you guys!”**



Challenges arise when sales professionals don't understand the bigger picture, especially when they're in panic mode. They find it hard to let go of that same old skill set they've clung to for years.

Creating dialogue and comprehending the bigger picture

When it comes to members of a sales team, there's nothing

more powerful than having one-on-one dialogue. Discussing the issues over lunch or a cup of coffee is a good way to ease into this kind of conversation. The real purpose is to get them to open up and share their thoughts, feelings, issues, and perspectives. You want to be a catalyst to effective communication. The **ONLY** way to do that is to ask **the right questions!**



Listening to your sales pro's issues & feelings

As we transition into this dialogue, it's important that we sales leaders help our teams comprehend the bigger picture. It must come across as positive and engaging, not threatening.

Once the information is flowing, we have to decide where to go next. It's not like you're looking for any specific information *per se*. You might get a lot of good feedback, or a small amount of limited feedback; it depends on where their perspective is coming from.



Start off by asking your sales pro how things are looking from their standpoint — this gives you a chance to discuss their issues and feelings. Keep in mind, these kind of questions will encourage people to vent. And that's just what we want! As a sales leader, you need to listen — even at the risk of opening the proverbial “can of worms.”

EXAMPLES OF DIALOGUE STARTERS

- 1.** Tell me about issues you are experiencing on some of your key accounts.
- 2.** Share with me what's going on in your world.
- 3.** From your perspective, how are you perceiving and experiencing change now?

Your sales team's feedback

Once your sales representative has had a chance to give you his or her view, offer some new information, and ask for his or her opinion on the matter. Your goal is to learn what your sales team member is thinking regarding the coming changes, and then, provide you with some valuable feedback:



- 4.** In addition to what you just told me, let me tell you a little about the changes we're currently experiencing as an organization.

MORE EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE SALES TEAM FEEDBACK

- 5.** Is it fair to say we, as a team, department, or organization, are experiencing a lot of change? In turn, how do you feel this is creating changes or challenges for us?
- 6.** In what ways do you feel our customers are changing in today's marketplace? How do you see our markets (themselves) presently changing? What's your take on the big-picture issues? How is it creating change for us?
- 7.** How do you think things are going with our competition today? What changes do you think they might be experiencing, and how might that affect us?

We don't want to make your sales staff feel uncomfortable or foolish — we just need them to understand that they need a broader view of the big-picture questions. We must help them think outside the box and fill in the gaps that will allow them to see a more expanded outlook.



Changes are a good idea!

Finally, close with questions that help the sales pro come to the realization that changes are a good idea, and make sure he or she is an active part in bringing those changes about:



- 8.** What are the implications if we don't change?
What could we do differently to adapt to change?
What are some of the things you're doing differently in order to adapt?
- 9.** What do you think some of the benefits might be if we were more adaptable to change?

Sometimes people are reluctant to change because they lack confidence or trust. They don't want to stick their necks out only to get them chopped off! You as a sales leader are acting as a coach, fueling this individual's confidence by being a catalyst to help him or her embrace change and to see risk as an opportunity for growth. With one-on-one dialogue and by asking the **right questions** (like the ones suggested in this ebook) you instill confidence and build trust — your sales team will become more indebted to you because you've sparked their thinking and curiosity. ■

About Paul Cherry

For over 25 years, sales success expert and author Paul Cherry has helped B2B sales professionals close more deals in all major industries. As a recognized thought leader in customer engagement strategies, he has been featured in more than 250 publications, including *Selling Power*, *Sales & Marketing Management*, *Investor's Business Daily*, *The Kiplinger Letter*, *Salesforce*, and *Inc.*



Paul is the founder of **Performance Based Results**, which delivers intense customized sales workshops, coaching, and leadership programs to companies throughout North America.

He has worked with more than 1,200 organizations, including 175 of the Fortune 500, plus more than a thousand entrepreneurial, small to mid-sized, cutting-edge businesses looking to dominate their niche markets. Paul's clients typically get 7 times their return-on-investment (ROI) or better.

His top-rated bestseller, *Questions That Sell* (AMACOM) has been listed on BookAuthority's "**100 Best Sales Books of All Time**" and has been published in four languages. He is also the author of *Questions That Get Results* (Wiley) and *The Ultimate Sales Pro* (HarperCollins Leadership).

Need a speaker to motivate your sales team for an online meeting or live session? Call us today at **302-478-4443** or send an email to: ask@pbresults.com

