

Improving the Success Rate of New Hires - Two Logical Assumptions and How to Challenge Them© – Jim McLean

All of those involved in the hiring and management of new sales representatives have seen unexpected failures among those expected to succeed. There are many causes, and this brief article does not intend to address all of them. It does address two issues that we at Resource Management International, Inc. have seen frequently in our experience both as corporate managers and consultants.

The rate of success in onboarding new representation can be improved by challenging two logical assumptions and adapting the onboarding process accordingly.

Assumption #1: The new person has been successful in the past, therefore he or she will be successful in the future.

Reality: Past achievement is indeed an excellent indicator of future performance. At the same time it is likely that the new salesperson will repeat those patterns of analysis and behavior that have made them successful in the past. The problem is that some of those behaviors may not be as appropriate or effective in the new environment as they were in the old. Critical elements in the new situation may not have been encountered in the past.

Questions to Improve Success:

“Have we clearly defined a detailed sales process specifically for our company and products that the new salesperson can understand and follow?”

“Have our managers established the skill to identify changes in process that each of them may need to make in order to succeed in their new environment?”

“Do we ask our new sales professionals to proactively examine the environmental difference between their old and new selling situations?”

Assumption #2: We won't have to train the experienced salesperson – they are already trained.”

Reality: A lot of other companies, including the ones whose former employees you may be hiring are thinking the same way. Further, they may be training in different competencies than those required for success in your business. Lastly, the new sales representative may be acting based on the expectations of their old organization rather than the new.

Questions to Improve Success:

“Have we identified core competencies for success in our business?”

“Have we designed vehicles to test these competencies among our sales team?”

“Have we designed training and coaching models to provide skill and knowledge training once gaps have been identified?”

“Have we communicated our expectations clearly to the new sales representative along with the methods of achieving them and the standards by which performance will be measured?”

As companies seek to identify and integrate new people into their organizations, it is important to recognize that while logical assumptions can be useful, they must be challenged within the light of each company’s unique environment, situation and objectives.

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