

How To Develop Accountability

Understand that the greatest challenge to bringing about change is the entrenched culture in your Sales Department. These are the patterns of behaviours that have been accepted, tolerated, punished, repeated or reinforced that have made you and your sales team what you are Today. To overcome the negative impact of these forces stick to the following action plan. Follow the steps diligently, remain consistent and most of all be patient. The result will be a transformation of culture and improved performance. Remember the way in which your sales team behaves is a direct result of the environment they are in. Consequently an environment of expectation creates an environment of accountability.

1. **Train often to internalise the training received.**
Repetition and reinforcement are the keys. The skills learned are internalised through coaching, action and implementation.
2. **Clarify specific expectations for improvement.**
Leave no doubt what you expect. Follow-through with feedback. You will need to communicate more clearly and more often so people know you mean business. Good people will try hard to hit a new standard if they know what it is and know they will be held accountable for results. People do what they're held accountable for.
3. **Create urgency.**
The reasons for change must be explained: where you were, where you are going and why it is important. You can't just tell people to change. They must understand the "why".
4. **Communicate the message incessantly.**
Stick with the program because just about the time you are sick of saying it is when your people begin to 'get it'. One of the best ways you can communicate change is by living it. Make decisions congruent with your new direction and walk your talk day-in and day-out.
5. **Maintain a pressure to perform.**
Whenever the bar is raised or change is implemented many people will give it lip service...*hoping it fades away*. You must stick to your guns and maintain pressure to perform long enough so that everyone knows the 'good old days' are gone forever and that you mean business. Too much anxiety is detrimental to performance but so is too little. Find that optimal level and sustain it. It takes constant attention and it is art, not a science.
6. **Attach positive consequences for succeeding and punishing consequences for failing.**
Clarify them up front and follow-through quickly in either case. You cannot change behaviour without changing consequences for that behaviour. You will need to pay more attention to performance, hold reviews with fast feedback more often and follow-through quickly on both the positive and negative consequences.

I think we would all agree following this six step accountability action plan consistently will bring high returns in productivity for your Dealership. However, remember this: The passage of time cools passions and good intentions. Lack of focus and execution drains passion, diminishes credibility and entrenches resistance to positive change.