



Unravelling Low Sales Performance: Differentiating “Can’t Do” from “Won’t Do”

Sales performance is a crucial aspect of any business, and when it falters, it becomes essential to identify the root causes accurately. Distinguishing between "can't do" and "won't do" is a challenging but vital task for sales managers. This article aims to shed light on the differences between these two categories and the significance of clear identification. Additionally, we will explore different approaches to tackling each cause effectively.

Differentiating between "can't do" and "won't do" is often complex because the symptoms of both may appear similar. However, the underlying reasons behind low sales performance can be distinct.

“Can’t Do”

"Can't do" refers to situations where sales representatives lack the necessary skills, knowledge, or resources to perform effectively. It may result from inadequate training, insufficient product knowledge, or a lack of essential tools to carry out their responsibilities.

“Won’t Do”

In contrast, "won't do" relates to cases where sales representatives possess the required skills and knowledge but exhibit a lack of motivation or commitment to achieving their targets. This could stem from factors such as a poor work ethic, disengagement, or a misalignment between personal goals and company objectives.

The Challenge of Distinguishing

Differentiating between "can't do" and "won't do" is challenging due to overlapping symptoms and subjective interpretations. Sales managers must avoid making assumptions or premature judgments. Misidentifying the cause can lead to ineffective solutions and perpetuate poor performance.

Importance of Clear Identification

Accurate identification of the root causes is crucial for developing effective strategies and providing appropriate support to sales representatives. It enables sales managers to tailor interventions, allocate resources efficiently, and address the underlying issues directly, ultimately leading to improved sales performance.





Approaches for Tackling Each Cause

Addressing "Can't Do"

Step 1: Assess Skills and Knowledge Gaps: Conduct a comprehensive skills assessment to identify specific areas where sales representatives require additional training or development.

Step 2: Provide Targeted Training: Offer customised training programs that address the identified gaps, focusing on enhancing product knowledge, sales techniques, negotiation skills, or other relevant areas.

Step 3: Supportive Coaching and Mentoring: Assign experienced mentors or coaches to provide ongoing guidance, support, and feedback to sales representatives as they acquire new skills.

Step 4: Resource Allocation: Ensure sales representatives have access to the necessary tools, technology, and resources to perform their roles effectively.

Addressing "Won't Do"

Debriefing is a powerful tool to reinforce learning and encourage practical application.

Pre-training debriefing sets expectations, creates relevance, and establishes the link between the training and participants' roles. Post-training debriefing sessions enable participants to reflect on their learnings, share experiences, and identify practical applications.

Combining individual and group debriefing approaches ensures both personalised and collective growth. Moreover, in the era of virtual training, leveraging technology for virtual debriefing offers flexibility and accessibility.



Conclusion

Distinguishing between "can't do" and "won't do" in low sales performance scenarios is critical for sales managers. Clear identification of the root causes enables targeted interventions and ensures resources are allocated effectively.

By addressing each cause through tailored approaches, organisations can empower their sales teams, drive performance improvement, and achieve sustainable sales success.



By

Victor Lam

Senior Director, Learning Academy
PERSOLKELLY Consulting

About Us

PERSOLKELLY Consulting is a leading global human resource consulting and professional services company which proudly spans across the Asia-Pacific region. We are a subsidiary formed by the joint venture of PERSOL Group and Kelly Services Inc., now one of the largest recruitment companies in APAC. Formerly branded as BTI Consultants in Asia and Intelligence SMC in Hong Kong, PERSOLKELLY Consulting is built upon a rich legacy of expert talent development, HR management advisory, organisational effectiveness, and insights-driven HR solutions. With our single focus on fulfilling our client's needs, we use innovative practices to empower both individuals and enterprises to achieve their full potential. At PERSOLKELLY Consulting, we believe in shaping a future workforce that is able to "Work and Smile".

Learn More:

PERSOLKELLY Consulting Group

www.PERSOLKELLYCONSULTING.com