

Characteristics of a Top Performing First Line Sales Manager



Improve Performance.
Drive Revenue.

About The Naro Group

The Naro Group specializes in helping technology companies capitalize on their investment in sales process and sales training. Contact Jim Naro, President, by email at: jnaro@TheNaroGroup.com.

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Qualifiers:

- The sales manager is in a corporate sales role.
- The corporate infrastructure provides the necessary tools/resources to succeed in the role.
- Job responsibilities, expectations and competencies are in place.
- This individual was not promoted from being a “top performing sales hunter” to the First Line Sales Manager position.

Behavioral Style Characteristics

Decision Making Style:

- They like to solve problems in a collaborative way. They naturally anticipate potential issues/challenges and therefore minimize the opportunity for things to escalate or become contentious. Their preference is to work with others to create win/win solutions whenever possible. Members of this managers’ team will feel included in the decision-making process and feel their opinions and feedback are considered and acted upon when possible.
- They seek to understand what the desired outcome from stakeholders through active listening, observing and thoughtful questioning before moving to action.
- Because they are connected to the “end game” and take a long-range view, they are able to rise above the day-to-day drama and make decisions from that perspective. As a manager, they instill a sense of calm and quiet confidence to the team when emotions are running high.
- They are diplomatic in their approach and respect the hierarchical structure within an organization. This enables them to move their initiatives forward in a credible, tactful way.

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Communication Style:

- The focus is on relationships for the first line manager. In face-to-face situations they are more comfortable in a small group setting where they can establish and monitor connection to their audience.
- They are very comfortable using email as a means of staying connected, not needing to pick up the telephone or meet face-to-face at all times, and will be approachable and warm in their written communication.
- As a manager, they will ask questions to test the viability of an idea (i.e. How is that going to work? What plans do you have in place to make that happen?) They tend to be the voice of realism, wanting to ensure that ideas and strategies are poised for success.
- They like to connect to a team or group by listening and observing, and may be less talkative as a result. “They think before they speak”.
- They will have a natural “coach-like approach” in their communication style since they actively listen and ask thoughtful questions to help facilitate the discussion.

Adaptability Style:

- Top Performing First Line Sales Managers like a bridge when it comes to change and want to create one for members of their team. They ask questions in order to understand the change so they can best adapt and anticipate what is needed to turn in a new direction.
- They are good at creating and/or following processes to get things done. They are able to handle many tasks at one time, yet work to complete projects and initiatives before moving to the next whenever possible.
- They are good at staying on task, and prefer to have a structure in order to help them do this. They are able to stay engaged in long-term projects and enjoy seeing or being recognized for meeting important milestones along the way.
- They are good at anticipating future events/needs, and plan accordingly to be ready for when that time comes (i.e. Preparing for a quarterly sales meeting)
- They tend to be very loyal to their organization and teams if they are treated well. They are dependable and give their teams a sense of “having their back”
- They are good at up selling based on their ability to form long-term, trusting relationships.

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Procedural Style:

- Top performing First Line Managers are good at following procedures.
- They will enjoy completing sales forecasting or sales reporting data. They will submit reports in a timely and accurate manner.
- They will want to gather data, look at trends and analyze results in order to access if there are better or different ways to improve efficiency or process.
- They will document their work, rather than holding it in their head, which makes knowledge transfer to others' more efficient.
- They will be comprehensive in their approach when time and/or circumstances allow. They do not like to “wing it” or be rushed into making a decision if they do not have the numbers or data needed to make an informed decision.

Ambitions of a Top Performing First Line Sales Managers:

- They are results oriented. They are good at maximizing their time in order to drive results and performance.
- They want to be paid for their performance and their teams' results.
- They care about their people and the customers. They have a service-oriented approach.
- They want their team to win and will feel a huge sense of fulfillment when this happens.
- They enjoy competition and love to win, even when they are competing against self, they set strong goals around achieving and succeeding.
- They are good at forming strategic relationships in order to further their own or their teams' agenda forward within the organization.
- They enjoy learning things that make them better in their area of focus so they can become a subject matter expert.

**Prepared for The Naro Group by Paula Goudsmit/Principal
High Impact Coaching and Consulting**



Contact Us

Tel: 603.881.7712

www.TheNaroGroup.com