

Here's How to Slash Motivation or Things Managers Should Never Say

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Now more than ever, managers and supervisors need to motivate their inside salespeople or their customer service representatives. Obviously, the more motivated people are the better sales and approval ratings will be. What managers and supervisors don't often remember is that they personally may be responsible for a demoralized staff with their "off the cuff" comments. Here are some things anyone in a management position should never say.

- 1. Be lucky you have a job.** Most inside sales people and customer service representatives are under a lot of pressure today. Customers are more demanding and their quotas are typically quite high. The last thing they need to hear is how lucky they are. What they would like to hear is "Thanks for your hard work. I know how difficult your job must be."
- 2. You need to work harder.** Your staff is already working hard, really hard. The issue is they may need to work smarter. Rather than criticizing, management should consider providing training to offer the team new approaches. Productivity and morale almost always spikes as a result of new learning or new insights.
- 3. Your voice should be friendlier.** Sales people and CSR's hear this all the time. It drives them nuts since they have no idea what to do about it. To their way of thinking, their voice is their voice. Managers and supervisors need to sit elbow to elbow with those who work over the phone on a regular basis and listen to recordings of calls and have people practice adding more warmth by pausing and breathing at appropriate times. One's voice is their calling card, and it will affect their success, but it is the responsibility of the manager to show them how through coaching.

- 4. You're spending too much time on each call.** Customers want to feel heard. They like it when the sales person or CSR spends time answering all of their questions or getting to know them on personal level. Your reps know this and wish you would acknowledge their efforts at building a relationship, not just handling a transaction. The few additional seconds spent with each caller is an investment in future customer loyalty.
- 5. Deal with It!** Today's customers are very assertive about requesting free delivery, fee waivers or discounts. Sales people and CSR's are often frustrated because they don't know how to handle these and other situations when they arise. They don't know how much latitude they have and constantly having to check with you lengthens the call and annoys the customer. The "What if's" need to be discussed at staff meetings.

Managers and supervisor play a pivotal role in motivating staff. The most successful are those that spend time on the floor coaching their staff on an on-going basis. They are very affirming and recognize the stresses of the job. They weigh their words very carefully.

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