

The 7 Distinct Levels to Sales Management or Coaching

Tom the salesperson was late to work when his manager Bob told him, “Your problem is you lack discipline.” What Tom’s manager did not realize is that Tom was a salesperson operating with a Level 2 understanding being coached by a managerial style at Level 1. When a *lower* level coaching style is introduced to an individual operating at a *higher* level it often leads to a salesperson’s apathy, resentment and demoralization.

To better understand this common situation, let’s look at what each level represents. While the entire book, *The Seven Evolutionary Levels to Profound Selling* is dedicated to this endeavor I will share the concepts behind the first 3 Levels of this understanding.

- **Level 1 Coaching or Selling:** This behavior is characterized primarily by **telling** an individual or customer what they *ought* to or *need* to do. Level 1’s will dominate the conversation with little understanding as to what is truly important to the salesperson or customer. The motto of an individual operating at Level 1 could be; *let me give you my advice (or expertise) on what you should do.*

- **Level 2 Coaching or Selling:** There is big shift here as **questions** begin to replace *telling*. The questions employ common statements such as, *wouldn’t you agree or you want to be happy right?* The questions may be designed to *lead* the salesperson or customer down the path the speaker wants not necessarily the path the listener desires. Questions help the manager or the salesperson to gain information. The challenge is to keep the questions from feeling like an interrogation. Additionally, this level includes understanding of the steps to the sales process as well as goal setting. Level 2 is the most common level taught in management and sales books/classes. The motto of an individual operating at Level 2 could be; *control the employee (or customer) with questions – you must always be in control.*

- **Level 3 Coaching or Selling:** Individuals operating at Level 3 employ a **system** for gaining information. They are often charismatic, charming and diplomatic. They are highly skilled at a systematic process of “getting their way”. They are very adept at (manipulative) strategies in managing others and working with customers. Their ability to use persuasion is extremely subtle and well developed. Level 3 salespeople are amazing at their ability to sell product. It isn’t that the manipulation is bad or good as much as the manipulation takes longer and burns unnecessary energy. These are *very* competent and rare individuals that manage (or sell) at this high level. The motto of an individual operating at Level 3 could be; *I must figure out the best strategy to persuade others to my point of view while maintaining the relationship.*

When a manager operating at Level 3 works with a salesperson operating at Level 1 or 2, it fosters an environment of admiration for the manager. The focus here is to be aware of what level both the manager and the salesperson are choosing to use in their interactions. The most important element to a sales staff is to have a manager they want to emulate. Are you a manager that fosters admiration and inspiration? Are you aware of what level your sales staff is choosing with customers? Are you aware of the level from which you choose to “coach” your staff?

