

White Paper

Is Your Best Salesperson the Janitor?



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Here's an outrageous idea: Promote your janitor to sales executive. While you're at it, get your cooks, kitchen staff, clerks, stock people, busboys and administrative people to start making cold sales calls. Hell, make everyone a salesperson, even the marketing staff.

This may not be as outrageous as it first sounds. If you employ 2,500 people and, on the average, you can get each to generate one and a quarter new customers, that's 3,150 new customers. If each new customer, on the average, spends just \$130 in a three-month period, then your sales will increase by \$409,000 for that time period. So, you can see that some effort in this area is certainly worth your while. The question is how to do it?

Before I detail how to set up an employee-as-salesperson program, consider this for a moment. How many people do you think your average employee talks to in a three-month period? I mean actually talks to in person. My own unscientific calculations estimate that number would be at least 100 people. Now add to that the number of people they talk to on the phone, people with whom they e-mail or instant message and the people that read their Myspace blog, Friendster profile, FaceBook group comments, or any other of the seemingly endless special interest on-line forums. With this large number of interactions with prospects, it is easily conceivable that they can influence an average minimum of 1.25% of these contacts to become new customers. In fact, your program may get two, three, or more new customers per employee.

Okay, let's assume your company can benefit from this type of program. How do you get employees to do this kind of extracurricular activity? Do you just ask them to do it? Of course not, because if it were that easy, you wouldn't be reading this white paper.

There are four parts to a successful program.

Give Them Something to Talk About

First, you have to give your employees something to talk about. That is the consumer-promotion aspect of the program. Provide the employees something unique they can give to their friends, family and anyone else they want. This can be a get-something-free offer, a buy-one-get-one-free deal, a chance to win something big if they visit a web site and sign up, and so on. The more outrageous, the more likely the employees will talk about it. This gives the employee a kind of social capital – which is the reason most of us engage in word-of-mouth advertising in the first place.

Give the Employee an Incentive

The second part of the program includes incentives for the employees. Without an incentive, you are unlikely to generate enough momentum to make the program worth while. Again, incentives can vary but it seems to work best when awards are part of a competitive program. For instance, you can award points to an employee when a person they contacted makes a purchase, signs up online, visits a store, and so on. These points accumulate and they can be redeemed for prizes, used for games of chance, utilized to bid on large items in an auction, or even donated to a charity.

Provide Relevant Incentives

Prizes need to be relevant to your employee base. Be sure to include prizes that people will aspire to obtain and smaller prizes that almost everyone can redeem. It is important to be creative with prizes. For instance, if your company uses sports celebrities, a signed jersey or ball would make a great prize. You might even be able to convince vendors to provide some prizes. Again, the main point here is relevance to your employee base.

Make it Fun

To keep the concept fresh, you should probably conduct the promotion for a limited time period, maybe one each quarter, or once or twice a year. This type of program is also ideal for new product introductions.

Create an interesting theme and market it aggressively within your company. If the prizes are substantial, this will be easier. Also, the more creative the consumer offer is, the more exciting it will be for the employees to talk about.

Be sure to make it competitive. One way to do this is to list the top point- earners. If this can be done in each store, it is even better.

Make it fun and interesting to use the points. This can be done by creating an online game where the employee can “bet” points in the hope of winning a large prize. Auctions can be held for large prizes and the one who bid the most wins. Perhaps you could also allow employees to donate their points to specified charities.

Let's recap the program:

- 1. Create goals for the program so results can be measured against these goals.***
- 2. Develop a consumer offer that allows your employees to enhance their social capital.***
- 3. Come up with incentives that inspire participation in the program. Make them relevant.***
- 4. Create a fun and interesting themed concept.***
- 5. Heavily market the program internally.***
- 6. Make it fun and competitive.***
- 7. Measure the ROI.***

Obviously, the execution of an employee-to-salesperson program is dependent on your business type and your employee demographics, but whatever age they are, the program can be designed to simulate sales.

There is another benefit derived from this type of employee program. It shows that you value them and need them to help keep the business successful. This creates more enthusiastic employees and we all know from our own experience that enthusiasm is contagious.

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Learn how Hallman can assist you in developing an effective employee sales program.

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