



Robert Ciccone

Attracting marketing and sales champions

Hint: it's not with more money

We've been hearing about the local labour shortage for a long time. In fact, employers are going to unusual and costly lengths to locate suitable talent, such as sponsoring overseas workers and even celebrity-endorsed television and radio advertising. The shortage is a real problem, likely to last for a long time, and businesses are panicking.

But in terms of filling a sales and marketing role, my take is a bit different. The problem is not in finding people, it's in finding the *right* people – the champions.

To attract top sales and marketing talent, instead of just focusing on offering perks and incentives, focus on your business's internal sales and marketing structure, systems and efficiencies, and the top talent will find *you*. In other words, turn your company into a magnet that will attract the

champions in *any* job market. The key is to make your business so attractive that the best people will automatically become drawn to you.

There's a misperception that to attract the superstars, you have to throw more money at them. But, in fact, compensation rarely ranks first on the list of what top performers seek. What matters more than money to top marketers and salespeople is the company's culture, credibility, management and the kind of sales and marketing systems, support and tools that are in place.

I once worked with a client who at first didn't understand why he wasn't able to hire better sales and marketing people despite offering a great compensation package. But after looking into things further, it started to become clear. The top candidates saw through the current internal systems, processes and management for what

they really were: antiquated, cumbersome and underperforming and they chose to pass on any career opportunities being offered.

After working with this client to address issues other than compensation, and once various elements became established and proven, we noticed a wonderful thing. It became easier to attract and keep top talent; we found that champions would actually seek out and approach my client looking for opportunities to join.

At the end of the day, a superstar wants to be able to say they work for the absolute best company. They see themselves as top performers and want to know they are working for a company that is congruent with that image.

So, when a great salesperson is considering a job change, he or she is looking at more than the bottom line. Sure, the money's important, but a high salary and commission won't outweigh any deficiencies in infrastructure, procedures and/or available marketing tools. These deficiencies are what keep top sales and marketing people from doing what they do best – creating and keeping customers.

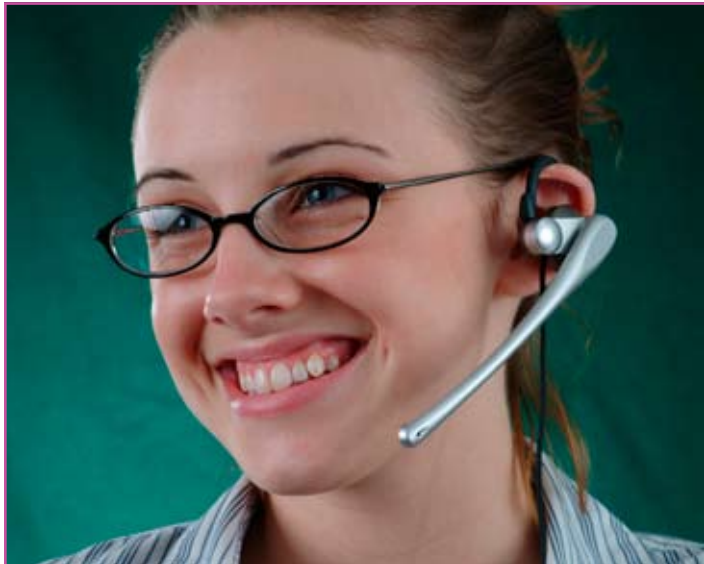
Do you provide training and self-development? A culture of continuous improvement attracts top performers. Is there a clear management structure

with defined roles and responsibilities? Champions look for good management with vision and structure. Are your literature and website current, relevant and cutting edge? The last thing a superstar wants is to feel inadequate with the tools of their trade.

How do the top sales and marketing people assess the job opportunities out there? Believe me, the elite people *know* where the good employers are. They know their marketplace inside and out, and if you're one of their competitors, they probably know more about you than you do – after all, being in "the know" and on top of things is what makes them great in the first place. They talk to your customers and suppliers. They're getting copies of your literature, they're visiting your website and they're on your mailing list.

And when you're the best of the best, you won't have to panic about a labour shortage, or about losing your best people to a competitor. *You* will be the one whom every sales and marketing superstar will seek out.

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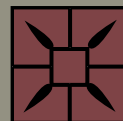


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