

Flinn Associates Monthly Newsletter

I Am Buried!

- May 2003 Newsletter -

"I am buried!" Have you ever had one of your sales reps make such a statement? At one time or another, possibly even now, there is someone on your staff who claims to be buried with work. So busy, that it is hard for them to imagine being more productive. Yet upon review this individual's sales are flat. You seek feedback from your customers; however this does not help you clarify your understanding of their effectiveness. Lastly you sense there is an apparent lack of substance to all the commotion which surrounds your salespersons daily routine. There is enough "good" preventing you from having a clear picture of this individual's performance, but there is something there that seems to need attention. Sound familiar?

This sales person is a drift. A drift and stuck in a quagmire of their creation, resulting in lots of motion, but less than acceptable results. The inability to consistently complete projects on time, to understand priorities and lacking a plan of action, makes it extremely difficult for a manager to understand just where the individual needs help. There is enough "getting done" to provide a screen thus preventing the manager from being able to pinpoint the short-comings within this individual's performance.

Before the level of your frustration piques, in concert with your rep, consider creating a very specific job description. Define clearly the expectations of what must be achieved, the results you expect out of their performance. Connect the activities and the individual's behaviors with the results you have already agreed upon achieving. Lastly mutually agree to a set of quantitative standards (such as measurable sales increases or gross profit improvement, etc) and qualitative standards of performance (such as organizational skills, time management, decision making, etc).

This process will have helped you identify specific areas in which improvement will benefit all parties. Use these identified areas to create specific performance improvement plans. Focus in two areas which will have the greatest impact on performance. Provide continuous and timely feedback, reinforcing both the positive while correcting the negative. Old habits are hard to break. Identifying clear expectations, establishing measurable results of achievement, agreeing to standards of performance, and creating a plan for improvement provides the sales manager with a process and a tool for improving staff performance.

Is your sales management system helping you achieve the results you anticipate? If not, Flinn Associates can help you clarify the connection between your expectations and the results achieved by your sales staff.

For additional insight into improving productivity, issue identification, and help closing the gap between expectations and results, [contact Flinn Associates](#) today.