

The 8 questions your sales team asks everyone (but you).



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As customers continue to have more information at their fingertips, the role of the traditional salesperson keeps changing.

Big data and sales enablement tools are making the job more technical. And more sophisticated customers and buying processes are making it harder to win business strictly on relationships.

One thing hasn't changed. The nagging, often million-dollar question: "What makes a salesperson successful?"

In this article, we'll discuss the research we've done and a new way of looking at sales success. Our conclusion is that a common quality of successful salespeople is curiosity. They aren't afraid to ask questions. They are eager to learn about anything new (like new products and solutions). And they embrace new technology.

They ask prospects and customers questions to learn more about their business. They ask their teammates for ideas on how to break into new accounts and break through to bigger accounts. And they are constantly asking themselves how they can get more and better results.

But all too often, they don't ask their managers the important questions.

The Level Up eight-question sales model was developed to help sales leaders enable and inspire their teams to make the most of their natural curiosity. Do YOU have the answers to make your sales team, and every person on it, as successful as possible – in the shortest amount of time?

Companies all over the world are spending more and more time and money to enable, challenge, drive, motivate, train and compensate their sales teams and channel partners to grow revenue. Some of these tactics work great. Others fall flat on their face. The difference, we believe, comes in asking – and answering – the right questions.

Level Up

Over the last two years, we have done multiple, targeted studies to uncover what success looks like within thriving sales organizations. Why would we do our own research? There are plenty of training, onboarding and compensation studies. But our belief is that success in sales is about inspiration – not compensation.

We also believe the most powerful motivator is intrinsic, or comes from inside. It's why people

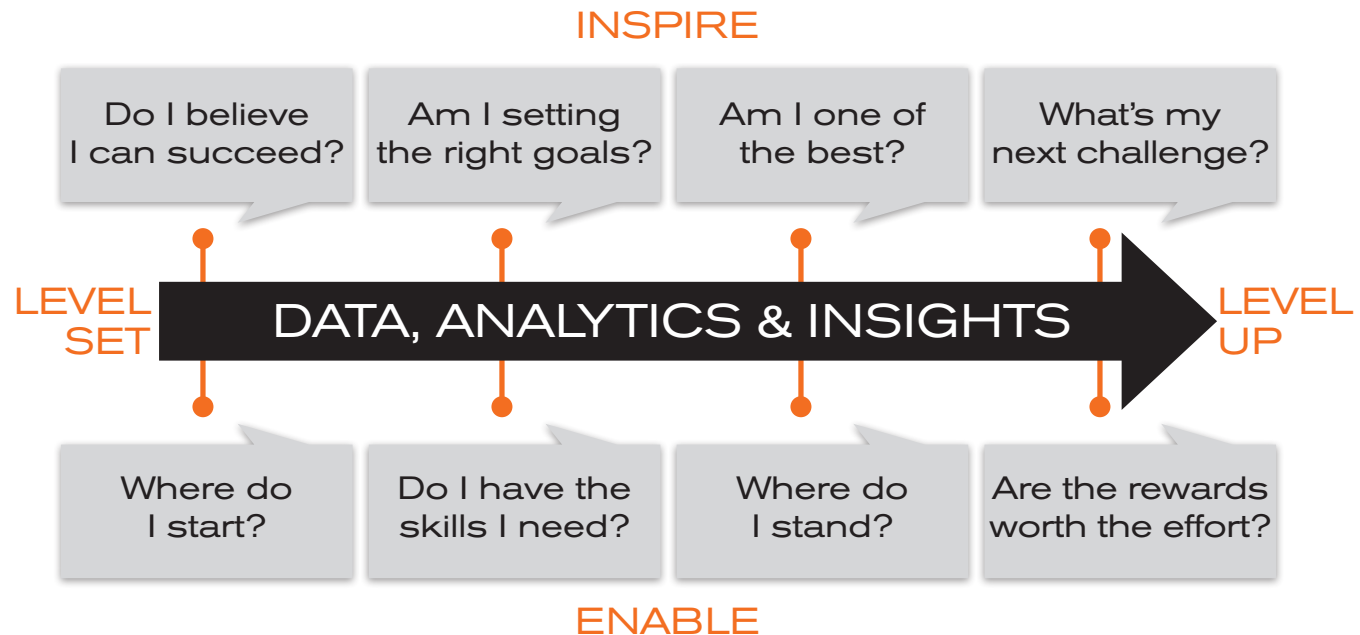
run marathons, travel to exotic destinations on vacation and set all kinds of irrational, emotional goals. Our objective is to create a culture where your team can tap into their own internal motivators, select their own goals and achieve higher levels of success.

Of course, not everyone is always intrinsically motivated. Even the most inspiring half-time speech won't get everyone on the team to play

his or her best. That's why extrinsic motivators come in handy – and when used correctly, can nudge fence-sitters and middle performers to get out of their comfort zone and on their way to meaningful results.

The intent behind BIW's sales model is to show how a combination of tactics can produce results to take your team to the next level.

Deliver next-level sales.





Where do I start?

The 8 questions you need to answer

There are two parts to the Level Up eight-question sales model: enable and inspire. Left brain and right brain. Analytical and emotional. Practical and aspirational. The four questions that make up the enablement section of the model are more practical in nature:

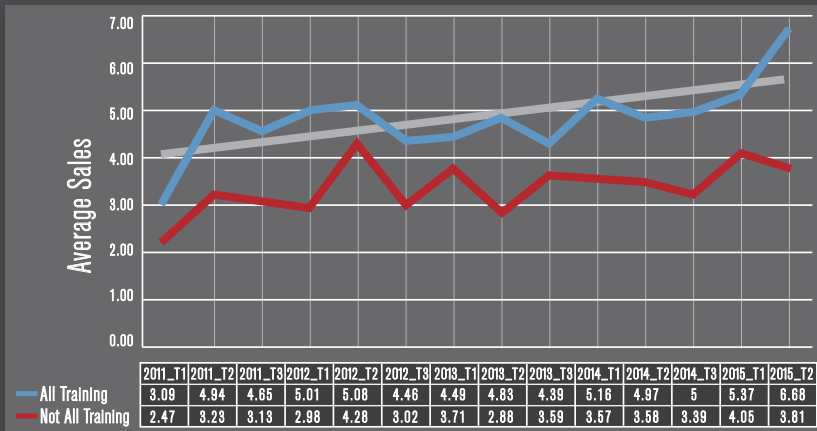
1 Where do I start?

Good salespeople ask this question even before they have a job. "Where do I start my career?" Do you have a solid value proposition to help you recruit the best?

And once you've hired that future star, you most certainly need to point them in the right direction. A medical device company we worked with completely revamped their onboarding program to include fresh content, interactive simulations, at-home learning, clear definition of metrics and a certification component. It only took them 120 days to implement and they saw an immediate pay-off: **new hires quickly outperformed veterans by 26%.**


2 Do I have the skills I need?

Too many salespeople believe that when you give them the thumbs up, they have passed their biggest test. Your best reps believe they need to ask themselves this question every day. The chart below shows actual sales data from a three-year period where we matched learning completion with sales performance. Those reps that took advantage of ALL learning opportunities OUTPERFORMED those who took just some training. Over the long haul, this can have a huge impact on your bottom line.



And our study with channel sales reps showed a connection between learning and confidence in making the sale. When asked the most important reason to recommend a product or solution to customers, they said:

- #1 Customer needs
- #2 Product knowledge of salesperson
- #3 Product features
- #4 Promotions
- #5 Relationship with manufacturer
- #6 Brand



Do I have the skills I need?



Where do I stand?

3 Where do I stand?

This is where technology can be a huge help. Keeping your sales team and partner reps informed about where they stand can keep them playing their best and staying in the game longer. Just be sure to avoid these surprises:

Surprise, you're enrolled!

55% of salespeople have participated in a program without realizing they were enrolled until some time after the program had started.

Surprise, you're a winner!

53% of salespeople have won some kind of award in a program without realizing they were enrolled in it.

Surprise, you're out of luck!

63% of salespeople have found out about a program AFTER it was too late to enrol.

Each of these scenarios equates to missed opportunity – for the reps and for you.

4 Are the rewards worth the effort?

We all ask ourselves this question on a daily basis. When it comes to motivating your sales teams, the key is to be sure you're offering the right rewards. Why is it worth my time to enter information into my CRM? What good will it do to make another prospecting call? Why should I listen to my boss? Why doesn't my support team want to support me?

The answer to most of these questions can be found in the behavioural economics concept of **idiosyncratic fit**, one of the most useful concepts to enabling and inspiring your team. When someone on your team asks if the rewards are worth the effort, they are really asking themselves, "What unique advantage do I have?" In other words, if I do what you are asking, is there a win in it for me?

Reps will perform much more intensely if they feel they have the inside track. One way of accomplishing this is to create situations where they can choose their own goals. In a study we conducted around goal-setting, those reps who were asked to participate in goal-setting had a clear edge in intensity of commitment and intensity of performance.

A photograph of three women kayaking on a river. The woman on the left is in a red kayak, the woman in the middle is in a white kayak, and the woman on the right is in a colorful kayak. They are all wearing athletic wear and using paddles. The water is dark blue with ripples.

Are the rewards worth the effort?



Do I believe I can succeed?

Next, we'll turn our attention to the four questions that make up the inspire section of the Level Up sales model. If enablement is all about practical, data-driven ways to support your sales team, inspiration introduces emotional engagement to challenge your team to set their goals even higher.

5 Do I believe I can succeed?

This also relates back to the concept of idiosyncratic fit. This explains why, when presented with a new goal, individuals will ask themselves if they have a unique advantage in achieving this goal. Do they have the knowledge, ability or skills necessary to succeed? If the answer is no, there's a good chance they won't even pursue that goal.

Extrinsic rewards are often used to close this gap by creating short-term "wins" for performers at all levels. They may not be able to achieve long-term goals but in the short term, if they stay in the game, they'll help themselves improve – and they'll contribute more to your bottom-line growth.

A study of short-term rewards showed that regularly **awarding and recognizing over 50% of your sales team results in increased revenue and retention** – two key goals for any high-functioning sales organization.

6 Am I setting the right goals?

The key to this question is all about self-selected goals. The goals you hand out may be motivational (think: idiosyncratic fit), but as salespeople reach to be their best, they are really driven by the goals they choose for themselves.

The challenge is to create an environment where self-selected goals can reward the individual but still contribute to the overall organization's goals. This can get tricky, as you will find top performers are always challenging themselves but middle and lower performers may not see any benefit in pushing themselves. With up to 60% of your sales organization being classified as "middle" performers, capable of double-digit improvements, it's easy to see where the potential lies.

Over one million salespeople have committed to goals using BIW's patented GoalQuest® system. **Over 98% of salespeople willingly accept a goal that is up to 6x higher than their current performance**, primarily because the system gives them a choice of goals. They can play it safe, or take a risk. And because they've made the choice themselves, it's always the right goal.



Am I setting the right goals?



Am I one of the best?

7 Am I one of the best?

Many times sales leaders get their position because they were (and still are) one of the best salespeople in the organization. Top performers are often driven intrinsically to do everything it takes to stay ahead of the pack and deliver results for themselves – and also for the organization.

What does the research say about top performers?

- They are aware of all opportunities to succeed. They want to know about any and all training and incentives offered.
- They take ALL of the training offered.
- They participate in more incentives and earn more often.
- They are motivated by a variety of rewards.
- They are motivated by setting their own goals.
- They are challenged by difficult goals and are willing to do what it takes to achieve them.
- They like to know when they are in the lead and when they are falling behind.

Knowing what drives top performers to be the best is the first step in keeping them engaged.

8 What's my next challenge?

It's one thing to keep top performers engaged in the short-term, but your long-term goal is retention. The secret weapon in this battle is recognition. One study of salespeople vs. non-salespeople in a larger organization showed that salespeople recognized others six times more often than they were recognized themselves.

The power of recognition is that it affirms what you are doing is right. What gets recognized, gets repeated. And for top performers, your goal for them is to keep repeating their success.

Keep in mind, however, that your goals need to be in alignment with their goals. You may be happy to keep them headed in the same direction, but the best salespeople are constantly asking themselves, "What's my next challenge?" With the right rewards and recognition, their next challenge will be the same as yours...



What's my next challenge?

Top salespeople use a rare combination of talents, skills and abilities to connect customers with the right solution. They come in many shapes and sizes but our belief is that all good salespeople are curious. They aren't afraid to ask questions of themselves, their boss, their team and their customers. They love to set – and achieve – big goals. And they are always looking for a new challenge.

Investing in sales enablement creates a solid foundation for your efforts. It's practical and rational. But salespeople, like all humans, are fundamentally irrational. Their decisions and actions are more likely to be driven by emotion than anything else. That's why investing in things that inspire your sales team is equally important. And with a carefully planned strategy, it's now possible to measure the return-on-investment of some of these initiatives.

So there's only one question left to ask: Are **YOU** ready for the challenge?

To learn more about **BI WORLDWIDE's Level Up** sales model, visit:
biworldwide.ca or
email **canada@biworldwide.com**.



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