

The Sales Manager's Reading List

Have you heard of decision fatigue? The more decisions you make throughout the day, the harder it gets to make each one. Being in the information age with so many facts just a few mouse clicks away doesn't help.

Sales managers aiming to improve their team's performance have it particularly tough. Sales gurus tend to be good at selling and especially good at selling themselves. There are thousands of books and blogs on sales, and deciding exactly what route to take (let alone leading your team along it), can be a major investment of time and energy.

We can't give you the energy, but we can save you time. We've selected some of the best books and blogs available for sales managers from sales leaders who walk the walk as well as talk the talk. They do a great job of synthesizing a world of information into something that can make sense (and money) for your team.

BOOKS

1. Cracking the Sales Management Code

by Jason Jordan

A carefully designed and managed sales process. Jordan's key premise in this book is that sales managers can't manage results. Instead, they can build, manage, and measure the business processes that lead to the results they want. This book is a well-organized and straightforward blueprint on how to connect the dots between processes and results. Its emphasis on metrics is particularly relevant in today's data-soaked world, where implementing data-driven systems requires more focus than ever before.

2. The Ultimate Sales Machine

by Chet Holmes

A set of 12 fundamentals. Holmes distills years of experience into a set of 12 key areas where sales managers can make the most difference. He is a salesman at heart but does a good job describing how a tactical marketing program can set the stage for more, better, and easier deals to be closed by your sales team.



3. Taking Charge of Distribution Sales

by Gary Moore

A set of 9 fundamentals. Moore's set of fundamentals closely resembles Holmes'. The real value of this book, however, is seeing how the fundamentals can be applied specifically to wholesale distribution sales. Moore has years of in-the-trenches experience in wholesale sales management and includes tips and resources aimed directly at this audience. Each chapter ends with a "real world experience" case study.

4. Topgrading for Sales

by Brad Smart

A results-oriented hiring strategy. This book is a more specific version of Topgrading by the same author, and it focuses solely on building sales teams. Topgrading is a human resources evaluation framework designed to identify the "A" candidates for a given role. It relies less on traditional methods like reading CV's and more on a variety of practical assessment formats. Read this book to lay a solid, strategic foundation for building a high-caliber sales team.

5. You Can't Teach a Kid to Ride a Bike at a Seminar

by David Sandler and David Mattson

A consultative sales method. David Sandler's approach to sales is that it's a two-way street where the seller's decisions are just as important as the buyer's. Lead qualification is essentially a mutual decision to proceed down the path towards an eventual sale with the salesperson advising and guiding the buyer along the way. Many sales managers are familiar with Sandler's methods but it is worth reading the new updates by David Mattson for the 21st century landscape.



BLOGS

1. Anthony Iannarino at The Sales Blog

Anthony Iannarino is an international keynote speaker, author and sales leader, who's been featured extensively in publications like Forbes and ThinkSales. But that's not why you should read his blog on sales tips and insights, entitled simply: "The Sales Blog." You should read his blog because he writes from pure experience, and writes in a way that is easy to understand.

2. Jill Konrath

Jill Konrath is the queen of sales, a highly paid sales consultant, and the author of popular books like Agile Selling, SNAP selling, and Selling to Big Companies. Jill's blog is full of advice, inspiration and tips for sales professionals and business owners. Her blog also addresses sales managers and businesses that hire sales reps.

3. Tom Hopkins

Tom Hopkins is the author of How to Master the Art of Selling and the founder of Tom Hopkins International, a sales training organization based out of Arizona. Start with the book, because it's worth reading cover to cover. Following the book, the resources and the blog posts are enough to kick your sales activity into high gear. The blog serves salespeople and business owners in all verticals, industries, and countries.

4. Robert Terson at Selling Fearlessly

How about a fresh, blunt, and a frank take on sales and personality development? Head over to Selling Fearlessly by Robert Terson and swallow everything he writes on sales, sales management, and customer management. If you want to go in-depth, grab his book Selling Fearlessly.

5. Dan Pink

Dan Pink is a popular author of books like To Sell is Human, Free Agent Nation and Drive. He believes that we are all in the business of selling and moving people: We try to persuade, influence, manage, and pitch all the time. It's hard not to let his passion rub off on you. The book To Sell is Human convinces you that you are in sales whether you're a sales rep or a molecular scientist.