

What football managers know and we don't

This Free E-Book is brought to you by [Natural-Aging.com](http://Natural-Aging.com).

**100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

**What football managers know and we don't**

**By Mike O'Riordan**

**What football managers know and we don't by Mike O'Riordan**

For many of us, amateur commentary and critique of 'professional' football is a national pastime. It's a shame we don't pay such close attention to our business. Take a moment to ponder this.....

- How would you feel about investing £millions in a new player for your team without having seen him play beforehand?
- Once the player joined your team, how regularly would you want to see him play in order to assess his ability, strengths and weaknesses ?
- How personalised would his ongoing coaching be to ensure his fitness and skills continue to improve?

I can take a fairly accurate educated guess on your answers. So I'm wondering why we don't apply the same principal to our sales professionals?

- Why is it that companies continue to invest millions in a sales team in order to grow their business without ever really seeing the sales people in action?
- Why are salespeople rarely assessed and coached in the field to improve their performance and thus maximise the organisation's return on investment?
- Why is it that there is little emphasis on improving the skill and knowledge levels of salespeople other than, perhaps, a little 'product' training?

I saw an advertisement last week, which read 'Sales Director wanted £28 million'. Although this appeared to be the salary, it was of course, the estimated cost to the company were they to make the wrong selection.

- Why are many senior management teams so cavalier about measuring the real return on investment achieved by their sales team other than tracking revenue?
- Why don't they understand where, and what added-value help is necessary to increase sales performance?

## What football managers know and we don't

What do you know about the standards of performance of your salespeople and will this be enough to achieve your corporate goals? Surely it is sheer madness to ignore the part of your business that is potentially capable of generating such massive growth and profit both now and in the future?

And so back to football

Before purchasing a player you would study his track record. You would assess both his fitness and his, skills (such as passing, shooting, heading the ball and his ability to accurately position and read the game). Scouts and management would observe the person playing prior to making such a huge investment. Judgements in relation to their ability to blend into the team would be considered seriously, a thorough medical would take place and a contract negotiated.

Now let's see what often happens in many UK organisations when it comes to selecting, managing and growing a successful sales team.....

New salespeople are often recruited from a steady stream of (often irrelevant) c.v's from selected organisations which have a vested interest in placing their candidate. The interview process is often informal and based on 'gut feel' because the sales managers performing interviews are unprepared, under time pressure and inadequately experienced in selecting top sales performers. A manager often interviews a candidate without the ability (or recognition that it's necessary) to match the Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills and Habits of the candidate with the requirements of the job. In addition, the candidate is rarely evaluated in a real life situation - we don't get to see the 'player' on the 'pitch'. Joint interviews of candidates are decreasing due to time pressures. Proof of previous sales performance, P60 supporting evidence of past earnings and, perhaps most surprising, references, are seldom requested.

Very often, the end result is the selection of the wrong candidate which then takes many months to become apparent. By which time of course, you're stuck with the problem of reversing your expensive decision with employment law and numerous other ramifications to consider.

The lynch-Pin Point

In this age of the internet isn't it more cost effective to invest less cash on finding the candidate while investing more in the correct selection process?

Recruiting the wrong salespeople is extremely expensive, time consuming and unproductive so why do we not insist on a professional selection process in the same way that football managers do?

Your new salesperson joins the team.....

Once on board, our football manager would insist on continued meticulous screening in training and during match play whilst an on-going personal programme of coaching and improvement was agreed.

But our Managing Director.....

Gives the new sales person a territory and a sales target based on the organisation's requirements (i.e. top down quota). The person may be given an induction programme and perhaps even some product training if he's lucky. However, he seldom receives ongoing job assessment and coaching and 6

## What football managers know and we don't

months later has, in all likelihood, still not benefited from a visit with his manager. The company management adds to this folly by implicitly supporting the lack of standards of performance, systems and methodologies required to measure the necessary quality and quantity of sales effort.

The boards of directors usually ignore these issues when markets are buoyant and business is going well. The reality is that in fact, they are missing £millions in lost opportunities. They then react in 'panic mode' when sales are decreasing which often results in new management appointments to allow the same problems to occur once more -- only dressed in a different wrapper.

This is not the way to plan for success and it is certainly not the way you would run a football team!

We call this 'management by hope'.

So why is the sales function not producing the return on the investment required?

We couldn't attempt to address all the reasons but listed below are some snapshots of what we have seen over recent years.

- The detail of the sales function is seldom understood at board level. The belief that if you simply 'do more' you'll get the result is frighteningly common. No attention is paid to the 'doing more' of 'what', or to 'whom'.

- The direct sales plan is not integrated into the marketing and business plan and the disconnect is apparent.

- The sales management team is usually rewarded for achieving short-term revenue and profit goals with little measurement of the qualitative and quantitative parts of the job.

- Structured up-skilling and 'leader & coaching' programmes seldom exist.

- Apathy and low work rate within the sales organisation. (The drumbeat is too slow.) "If Bill hits his targets and only works 4 days per week, why do I care if he plays golf every Friday?" No thought is given to how much more Bill could achieve, how this would effect his motivation and indeed, how his targets were set!

- Lack of a 'sales culture' and excitement

- Lack of recognition of true professional selling

- The introduction of the internet and e-mail has given salespeople another excuse not to make contact with customers and cultivate their network

We are in danger of seeing standards of sales performance reduce year by year unless we take action now.

So what are our choices?

It's very simple really.....Organisations can continue in the same vein and leave sales results to chance, just hoping things improve..... or they can take action.

How to change?

## What football managers know and we don't

It is not possible to cover the whole spectrum of sales issues regularly facing Managing Directors but here are a few checklist items that you could take action on now.

- Ensure your sales propositions are articulated and clearly understood by the salespeople and your customers. Your customers must really understand the business deliverables of your products and services and the implications of choosing an alternative.
- Ensure you have a leader of sales who really understands the sales function and allocates time to managing it properly. Forbid them to be in the office for more than a small portion of the working week.
- Prepare open questions that establish the needs and wants of your customer and then relate their needs and wants back to your products and services.
- Prepare a 'person specification' template to ensure the standards for existing and new people are met.
- Be sure you know how you want the salespeople to spend their time.
- Introduce a professional selection and retention programme for all new and existing salespeople.
- Use outside expert resources where appropriate to plug the skill, knowledge and experience gaps within your own organisation.
- Plan, manage and measure the quality and quantity of sales effort taking place and compare this with the pre-agreed required activity to achieve the result.
- Immediately introduce 'bottom up / top down' planning to check the credibility of your revenue plan
- Link forecasting systems to the quantity, direction and quality of activity required rather than just to

historical sales results

- Know and understand how your sales team stacks up against the competition

So where do you start?

- Start with a thorough review of your sales organisation. The people, procedures, processes and current performance and highlight the areas for immediate, medium and long-term improvement. This can be done very quickly and at quite low cost
- Build a programme to manage change and improvement by introducing standards and key performance indicators and ensure salespeople and management 'walk the talk'
- Where necessary, for fast, expert advice, appoint an external organisation that has a proven track record of implementing change and improving sales performance.

Do not think you can fix these issues by sending your people on a training course. You'd be better off taking your team for a 'fun day' and you'll change no more. Remember the football manager who works with his team, shares his experience and improves their skills at the coaching ground? While training might be helpful in the short term, there is no substitute for getting 'on the pitch' to play and being observed in real live situations.

It takes a brave executive, especially a Sales Director to admit they need outside help — but all sportspeople have a coach who is continually improving performance so why should it be different for your sales professionals?

Conclusion

## What football managers know and we don't

A 10% improvement in sales performance will make a vast improvement to the profitability of a company and in most companies this is very achievable. However, it does require an investment of time, and some money. It requires people to stop some of the unproductive things they are doing now, and, instead, spend their time focused on what is truly effective and productive.

"The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results".  
Benjamin Franklin

At some point, whether you're ready or not – things must change.

A Certified Accountant with 26 years experience of selling and marketing achievement in the IT industry. Having been on the board of many companies in the U.K. including Sperry, Unisys and Acorn Computers, the last three years sees Mike running O'RIORDAN LAWES, a business consultancy working with executives to address the issues of improving business performance. Mike is a Non Executive of Quantum a leading company of sales practitioners specialising in improving sales performance.

### **Choosing A Football According To Your Needs**

**By Keith Kingston**

If you child likes to play football then choosing a football for them, is relatively easy but should not be treated with contempt. After all, you want to make sure you buy a football that will play well, will last several years and can produce a good, fun game on a regular basis.

Depending on your child's age, different types of footballs should be bought and used. Just as there are different types of balls you can buy to use for a game of baseball like a regulation major league baseball, a soft covered baseball or a wiffle ball, footballs too come in different styles, shapes and sizes depending upon the skill level of the football competition, the age and size of the player. Essentially choosing a football should be done on the basis of how the football is to be used and who will be using it.

If you are buying a football for a small child or a young child who is new to the new game of football then you should opt for a soft covered, foam football as opposed to the hard style, regulation football. The most popular brand of this kind of ball is the Nerf football. The Nerf ball is soft and is ideal for young children because if it accidentally hits someone it just bounces rather than causing any injury. A Nerf ball is usually very cheap and you can usually pick one up from your local sports store for under ten dollars.

For young people and teenagers who just want to have a bit of fun, you can always opt for a mini football. Mini footballs are smaller versions of the regular sized footballs but are made of the same materials as the regulation footballs. Mini footballs are easy to grip and throw which makes them ideal for kids and also ideal for family picnics.

However when it comes to choosing a football that is regulation and standard then there are a number

What football managers know and we don't

of different sizes and styles available for you to choose from. You can choose from a college football, an official National Football League football or a replica Superbowl finals football. The main difference between footballs is the shape with some being more rounded for catching and others being more pointed for throwing. The choice is really up to you, but your best bet is to see what is available and make your choice from those options.

You can avail of free football gear online, by participating in our promotional offers. Check out how you can acquire free football equipment

right now.



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by [Natural-Aging.com](http://Natural-Aging.com).

**[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**