

BUILD A STRONG DIRECT SALES TEAM THIS YEAR – *Overcome 4 Common Leadership Challenges*

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As a direct sales company owner, team leader, or direct sales manager, there are many leadership challenges you will need to overcome to build a successful direct sales business. While these include topics such as recruiting, training, marketing, recognizing your team, prospecting, and a variety of others; this article will provide strategies to assist you with successful direct sales team building.



1. LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: UNDERSTAND TEAM MEMBER BEHAVIOR STYLES

The results you gain through adequately supporting your team (advising, coaching, training, and goal setting) highly depends upon each individual's behavioral style.

- * Does your team member prefer sales strategies to be broken down systematically?
- * Alternatively, would your team member prefer to create steps herself to accomplish a team goal?
- * Does she thrive by jumping in and figuring it out as she goes?

- * Is she bogged down by details?
- * Does your team as a whole lean into the strengths of each member?
- * Does your team member work best in a group, with a buddy, or independently?
- * Is your team member fast paced and decisive or slow paced and contemplative?

These are the questions to ask to ensure that your support strategy compliments your support recipients.

If you are using a one size fits all leadership approach, chances are you are not meeting your team members' individual needs, learning styles, and goals. To personalize, notice how they work, learn, and respond.

Some leadership teams may even want to gain deeper self-awareness by taking behavior assessments such as DiSC Personal Listening Profile, Time Mastery Profile, and 363 Assessments. These tools, typically administered by trained coaches and practitioners, require an investment, yet may be worth it.



2. LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: PREVENT YOUR TEAM FROM RUNNING HOT AND COLD

Some team members expend all their energy in bursts followed by periods of lackluster inactivity. This is a common and vicious cycle

as the energy crash can negatively affect sales bookings, scheduled home parties, recruiting results, and ultimately lead to personal discouragement. As a team leader, you can better support your team by creating a higher level of consistency in your team's daily, weekly, and monthly direct sales routines. Coach your team to be self-pacers and to recognize and create consistency.

To improve your team's consistency:

- * Share best practices of consistent team members
- * Give examples of schedules that lend themselves to consistency
- * Help each individual team member analyze what is getting in the way of achieving consistent results



3. LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: KEEP THE BALL MOVING FORWARD

After holiday home parties and New Year's resolutions begin to fade, your recruits may do the same. Team motivation is one of the most important leadership challenges that each direct sales leader will address. As strong leaders, we must be proactive to keep our teams engaged and to encourage them not only to meet but to also exceed their sales goals. Remember to

frequently remind your team to check in with their "WHY." Why are they doing this? Why are they in this business? Why are they connected to their team? Lastly, keep the business fresh and fun. Humor reduces stress.

To re-engage your team at the start of the year:

- * Host a team breakfast for your locals. Serve pancakes, and talk about how each person will stack their parties and flip to the New Year's goals.
- * For virtual team members, plan a mobilizing and energizing campaign around a team goal. Ask each team member to commit to their portion of the goal. Conduct a Facebook live event to respond in real time to your team member's challenges.
- * Kick off a phone tag "Volley Ball" booking competition. Each team needs to book a party and pass the virtual volley ball to the next person. Plan a fun way to honor the winning team.

Alternatively, is it also possible that you are saying the same message at your meetings repeatedly and having a numbing effect?

The team might begin to mentally play what I call "meeting bingo," based upon message delivery and content becoming too elementary or boring to established team members. The response is, "I've heard this before," and then team members begin to tune out the learning. This is similar to the drinking games played during political speeches where audience members take a shot or sip when a buzzword is repeated. Like these games, what we get with the repetition of empty buzzwords untethered to a measurable action step is a short-term shot of feeling good and nothing but a hangover the next day! The result is meeting attendance drops and so does activity.

While repetition of the basics is critical to mastery, it is important to be specific and innovative in your meeting delivery. There is a big difference between statements that vaguely urge team members to "increase home party bookings, increase sales to meet your monthly goals, or increase sales to advance in the compensation plan," and statements with measurable actions and meaning such as, "meet a quarterly goal of 10 new home party bookings and become a Team Leader by April 30th." As

you recite motivating meeting objectives, be sure to include a monthly or weekly plan to break down that goal into manageable bites.

Running effective meetings, retreats, and conference calls takes time and planning.

To launch more effective meetings and retreats:

- * Send out an organized agenda in advance.
- * Delegate assignments, roles, and speaking parts in advance.
- * Have a surprise element if your meetings, retreats, and webinars are becoming routine.
- * Invite guest speakers to help you with the heavy lifting. It is said, "It is hard to be a prophet in your own land." Sometimes an outside speaker can make an impact and be heard in a way that you cannot easily accomplish on your own.

By proactively preparing for and overcoming these direct sales leadership challenges, you will be on your way to building a successful sales team and growing your home party business! ♦



4. LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: BINGO! RUNNING EFFECTIVE TEAM MEETINGS AND RETREATS

Do your team members often leave your team meetings, retreats or team conference calls motivated only to become quickly deflated later? Does your direct sales team go home sounding charged up, but post-meeting, produce little to no change? What went wrong?

Ultimately, this is a case of goals being too distant and not concrete or that the proposed actions lack definition. The problem with failing to provide a set of concrete action steps is that it leads to disengaged team members.



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