



# Sales Manager Capability Framework

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## Strategic Decision

The sales manager capability framework provides an assessment tool for sales and sales force enablement leaders and helps them derive a plan for elevating sales manager performance to the next level. The framework covers the three main focus areas for sales managers: customers, business and people, and connects them to the three maturity levels: proficient, professional and adaptive professional.

### Strategic Issue:

*What does the sales manager capability framework look like, and how can it be applied to improve sales managers' effectiveness to drive sales performance?*

*Strategic Issue: A complex question that requires research, data, perspective, knowledge and context to answer*

## Four-Wheel-Drive to Master All Conditions

A vehicle with four-wheel-drive can master almost any kind of terrain and weather conditions. People who own four-wheel-drive vehicles like the feeling of being ready for anything. Sales leaders who leverage the sales manager capability framework, an adaptive system of tools that help them drive sales manager excellence, experience this same feeling.

## Sales Manager Capability Framework Is Well Connected

Sales manager excellence is the key driver of successful sales execution and sales performance. How effective sales manager, especially frontline sales managers, are in performing their role often dictates how effective their teams will be.

These three models arm every sales leader with powerful tools that make it easy to diagnose sales manager maturity levels and create step-by-step action and development plans designed to drive sales manager performance to world-class levels.

The sales manager capability framework leverages the concepts of the sales manager triangle and the sales manager maturity model that we introduced in previous CSO Insights Research Notes, *Sales Manager Triangle* and *Sales Manager Maturity Assessment Model*.

This capability framework incorporates the three main focus areas designated by the sales manager triangle: customer, business and people, and connects them to specific capabilities. Each of these capabilities are then mapped to the three levels of the sales



manager maturity model, proficient, professional and adaptive professional. This helps sales leaders easily identify what is necessary for required, recommended and world-class levels of performance.

## Sales Manager Capability Foundation

Mapped to customer, business and people, each of the capabilities identified across all three levels of performance build on a solid foundation of leadership, conscious collaboration and performance accountability. To be appropriate for the role, sales managers must start with a natural ability to lead. These leadership abilities must also be developed over time through specific sales manager leadership programs and experience in the role. Conscious collaboration describes how sales managers work within their own sales team, across the organization and with customers and partners. The strategic relevance of conscious collaboration is increasing, especially because the relevance of hierarchies is decreasing and the importance of expertise and network-oriented work is increasing.

Performance accountability covers several dimensions. First, world-class sales managers hold themselves accountable for delivering expected sales objectives. For more on this, see the CSO Insights Research Note, *Sales Manager: Sharpening Focus*. Second, they hold themselves accountable for developing their sales team's full potential by practicing excellent coaching and creating tailored development plans for individual team members. Third, they hold themselves accountable for their own performance and their responsibility to add significant value to customers, business and people.

## Share of market activity Sales Manager Capabilities Explained

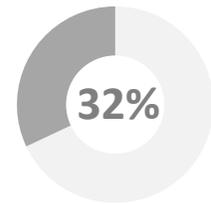
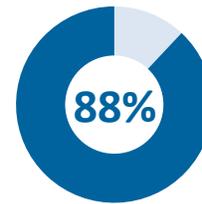
While the sales manager triangle defined the three areas of sales manager focus, leveraging the sales manager capability framework requires a closer look at the capabilities in each of these areas.

**Customer:** The relevant capabilities in the customer focus area are customer management, selling, business development and relationship development. Customer management covers the strategies, methods and processes used to

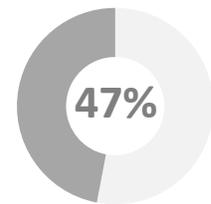
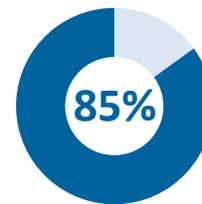
## Strategic Data

- World-Class Sales Performers
- All Respondents

*"In an average month, our sales managers definitely spend adequate time coaching each individual on the sales team."*



*"Our sales managers are always held accountable for ensuring the accuracy of our sales forecast."*



World-Class Sales Performers take care of their sales managers' strategic development because they know that sales managers are the most important role when it comes to sales execution and transformation. The excellence of their capabilities is directly connected to sales productivity and sales performance. Developing their capabilities in an integrated way is key to success and reinforces related sales enablement investments in salespeople.

SOURCE: 2016 CSO Insights Sales Best Practices Study



connect and engage with prospects and clients. These models are usually defined by sales operations. The sales manager's key challenge in this focus area is to drive the successful execution of customer management models through his or her team within specific territories, industries or defined accounts. Successful customer management is always closely connected to the people (resource allocation) and to the business area (territory, account, opportunity and funnel management). To move from

### The sales manager Capability Framework

		Required	Recommended	World-Class
<b>Customer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer management and engagement</li> <li>Selling</li> <li>Business development</li> <li>Relationship development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use from sales view, bridge to sales manager view</li> <li>Selling with sales pros</li> <li>Use from sales view</li> <li>Tactical use of network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use to improve coaching</li> <li>Selling in escalations</li> <li>Initiate business development for team</li> <li>Use network for team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluency, adaptive models</li> <li>Adaptive business development for team</li> <li>Leverage network for team</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Account/Territory Mgmt.</li> <li>Opportunity Management</li> <li>Funnel Management</li> <li>Call/Cadence Planning</li> <li>Performance Management /Metrics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use from sales view</li> <li>Use from sales view</li> <li>Forecast accuracy 70%</li> <li>Use from sales view</li> <li>Change sales/sales manager view</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use as coach</li> <li>Use as coach</li> <li>Forecast accuracy 80%</li> <li>Use to coach</li> <li>Sales manager view, leading indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluency / strategic coaching</li> <li>Fluency / strategic coaching</li> <li>Forecast accuracy +90%</li> </ul>
<b>People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpersonal capabilities</li> <li>Communication &amp; Listening</li> <li>Coaching</li> <li>Hiring</li> <li>Resource allocation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual experience</li> <li>Listening to answer</li> <li>Coaching basics</li> <li>Hiring Basics</li> <li>Gut feeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framework based</li> <li>Listening to understand</li> <li>Tactical coaching</li> <li>Use of assessments</li> <li>Framework based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adaptive intuition</li> <li>Listening to learn/adapt</li> <li>Strategic/tactical coaching</li> <li>Assessments fluency</li> <li>Framework fluency</li> </ul>

required to recommended and finally to world-class levels of performance, the sales manager must become increasingly proficient at balancing the three focus areas.

to derive best practices that develop the team's overall relationship-building abilities.

Since most sales managers are promoted from a sales professional role to the sales manager role, most bring come with a set of well-honed selling skills. These abilities have to be developed from a tactical level (sales managers are still selling) to the strategic level (being part of a team in strategic or large deals). Sales managers must also acquire the ability to transfer experience and learning to others through coaching. Likewise, business development and relationship capabilities have to be developed from the tactical to the strategic and integrated into coaching practices. The sales manager's relationship and network building capabilities are used

**Business:** The capabilities relevant in this area are account and territory management, opportunity management, funnel management, call/cadence planning and performance management. To be successful, the sales manager must be fluent in all of these methodologies and processes and able not only to apply them effectively, but also to coach sales professionals in their application. This fluency is what allows sales managers to navigate inevitable escalations successfully. Sales managers are constantly overwhelmed with ad hoc requests from a variety of different sources across the organization, e.g., campaigns,



launches, escalations, cost-cutting activities and performance initiatives. Being fluent in business management and understanding the interdependencies between requests allows the sales manager to quickly assess and prioritize them appropriately. Sales managers who are new to the role may have a natural talent in this area, but not yet have the fluency that characterizes world-class performance. For sales manager development programs, this is a key lever that drives excellent and adaptive sales manager performance.

A specific focus within business management is funnel management and forecast accuracy. High-performance in these areas is a result of continuously focusing on managing the sales activities that are connected to the expected sales objectives and on coaching the behaviors that lead to results. For more on this, refer to the CSO Insights Research Note, *Sales Managers: Sharpening Focus*.

**People:** This area includes interpersonal, communication and listening skills, as well as coaching and people development, hiring and resource allocation capabilities. Interpersonal capabilities are often overlooked because they are seen as a given talent or intuition and not something to be developed. Innate ability is important, but the interpersonal capabilities needed to improve collaboration and communication can be learned through a variety of different methods. A sales manager development program with a strong focus on role-plays and simulation can help develop these capabilities.

Communication and listening are related capabilities that have to be transferred to the sales manager perspective. Listening not only to answer, but also to understand and to learn is a required skill that moves the sales manager from the proficient level to the adaptive professional level. Coaching and people development is the most important capability as it has the power to create the most significant business impact. Developing this capability as

quickly as possible to the proficient and then to a professional level should be a key indicator of performance for every sales leader. For more on sales manager enablement programs see the CSO Insights Research Note, *Sales Managers: Enablement Needed*.

Hiring and resource allocation are connected capabilities that are new for sales managers who are transitioning into a manager-level role for the first time. Experienced managers can build on existing hiring experience, but there is always more to learn. Excellence in these capabilities requires collaboration with human resources to develop assessments and frameworks that help sales managers assess their team’s skill level and potential gaps and map them to the requirements of their territory, industry or account. Only then can they make effective hiring decisions and develop their capabilities to the next level.



Share of market activity

Changes in the activity of the active and passive market is uncertain. Established positive trends in various market segments.

Projected sales of





## How to Use the Framework

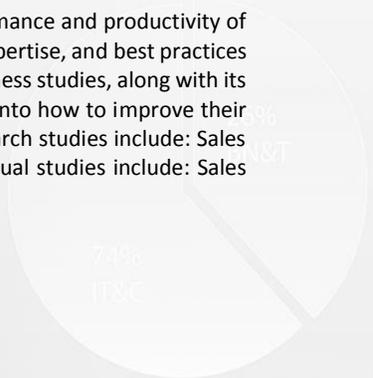
The sales manager capability framework can be used in different ways. First, the required capabilities in each area can be used as a checklist for self-assessment. This allows capability gaps to be easily identified. Second, the framework helps to map the results of the self-assessment to the different maturity levels. Maturity gaps in different capability areas can be identified and actions can be defined to close them. Third, it is a useful framework for sales enablement, sales operations, training, learning and development functions to use to map existing programs for sales managers to the framework's dimensions, sales manager areas and maturity levels. It may help to identify blind spots and imbalances in current programs. Furthermore, the sales manager capability framework is a tool that connects the dots between these different functions to come to a more integrated sales manager enablement and development approach.

Related CSO Insights Research Notes:

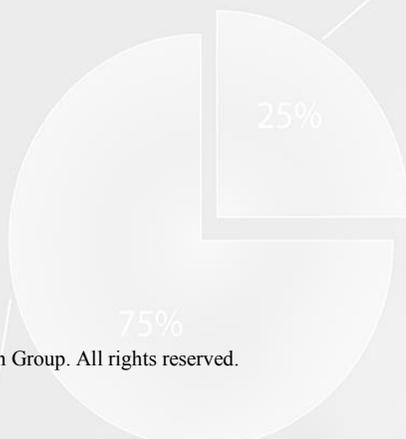
- Sales Manager Triangle*
- Sales Managers: Sharpening Focus*
- Sales Managers: Maturity Assessment Framework*
- Sales Managers: Capability Framework*
- Four Reasons to Invest in Sales Managers*

### About CSO Insights

CSO Insights is the independent research arm within Miller Heiman Group™, dedicated to improving the performance and productivity of complex B2B sales. The CSO Insights team of respected analysts provides sales leaders with the research, data, expertise, and best practices required to build sustainable strategies for sales performance improvement. CSO Insights' annual sales effectiveness studies, along with its benchmarking capabilities, are industry standards for sales leaders seeking operational and behavioral insights into how to improve their sales performance and to gain holistic assessments of their selling and sales management efficacy. Annual research studies include: Sales Best Practices Study, Sales Performance Optimization Study, and Sales Enablement Optimization Study. Bi-annual studies include: Sales Compensation and Performance Management Study and Channel Sales Optimization Study.



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