

# 7

## Sales Meetings and Huddles

*“The strength of the wolf is the pack. The strength of the pack is the wolf.”*

—Rudyard Kipling, Writer and Poet

(AHS) We recently held a focus group with one of our client’s team of sales coaches. There were about 15 coaches in the room along with the President of their company, Steve, and me. We were facilitating a dialogue with the team to learn more about the strengths and challenges that the teams were currently facing with respect to running meaningful and motivating meetings. One of the company’s top managers, Craig LoGrande, raised his hand and admitted, “Every month I run one sales meeting, and attend another sales meeting for our sales managers and I’ve gotta tell

you...I've never walked out of my meeting or someone else's meeting feeling motivated."

To make this comment in front of the group took some chutzpah, but his comment is an accurate description of most meetings. In fact many times we have observed that sales meetings are more like sales beatings, so people leave them dejected rather than inspired. Other times, salespeople feel like meetings are a waste of the time that they could be using to sell more to earn a living. As Mike Mejia, a sales executive at Adelphia says, "If a meeting is just to have a meeting—it's de-motivating."

In this chapter, the goal is to put a plan in place that will enable you and your sales team to conduct sales meetings that are positive, motivating, and useful. Imagine that—a sales meeting that everyone (coach and salespeople) look forward to attending.

### **The Coaching Model**

You may be getting a bit tired of this coaching model by now, but the truth is, each segment of the model represents another opportunity for the coach to communicate with salespeople in a way that inspires stronger performance which leads to the ultimate goal of success for everyone on the team.

Most of what has been covered so far has addressed skills and techniques specific to the coach-salesperson one-on-one dynamic. The coach and salesperson agree on a business plan together, they conduct one-on-one GSMs regularly, the pair conducts individualized training to address specific skills, the coach follows up to reinforce each salesperson's individual priorities, and the



FIGURE 7.1 Coaching Model

coach and salesperson do the job together one-on-one during coaching in the crunch. A sales meeting is obviously a huge opportunity for the entire team because the dynamic changes to one in which everyone is together. The coach and salespeople can deliver one consistent message to everyone on the team at the same time. What a great way sculpt great salespeople!

Professor and author Peter Drucker, in his Harvard Business Review article from June 2004, What Makes an Effective Executive, outlines the eight practices that are common to effective executives. One of the practices is that they run effective meetings. This is so critical because as Drucker states in the article, “even junior executives and professionals are with other people—that is, in a meeting of some sort—more than half of every business day.” This is why it is necessary to make that time productive. As Drucker states, “Making a meeting productive takes a good deal of self-discipline. It requires that executives determine what kind of meeting is appropriate and stick to that format. It’s also necessary to terminate the meeting as soon as its specific purpose has been accomplished.” The good news for us is that for the purposes of this book, we are only concerned with one type of meeting—the sales meeting, so we can share a format that has been successful for top sales coaches and their teams and then stick to it.

The challenge is that many of us have preconceived barriers that have been built up over time from years of attending ineffective meetings. Before looking at some of the reasons why salespeople can have a negative attitude toward meetings, let’s try to start with a clean slate—a positive attitude.

A great friend and colleague of ours, Mark Norman, recently told us of a rural community in Iowa that is so small it seems to have only one of everything important—one grocery store, one

movie theater, one high school, and one barber shop. Usually that's part of the appeal of smaller towns; everyone gets to know everyone else. The problem in this community happens to be with the barber shop. It is the only shop in town, and the owner is the only barber within a 100 mile radius. So when the men in town need to get their hair cut they need to visit this particular barber. This would not be such an issue if it were not for the fact that this barber is one of the most negative individuals you could ever come across. He's just the ultimate pessimist. He is so much of a downer that he actually developed the nickname in the community, "The Negative Barber."

One afternoon, a man named Chad walked into the Negative Barber's shop for a haircut. The exact opposite of the barber, Chad was always smiling, he had a skip in his step, and it was obvious that he was excited to be alive. Those of you that know some negative people know that positive people can rub negative people the wrong way. As Chad sat down in the Negative Barber's chair, their conversation went like this:

Negative Barber: The weather has been terrible, the economy stinks, there's war in many parts of the world...what on earth are you so excited about?

Chad: You know I'm glad you asked! My wife and I have been saving for the last ten years for a trip to Italy. And we are finally going! We're leaving tomorrow. That's why I'm getting my haircut.

Negative Barber: Italy? My wife and I went to Italy a few years back. The people were rude, the cities were dirty, and the weather was horrible the whole time we were there. Maybe you should go somewhere else?

Chad: The trip is already booked.

Negative Barber: That's too bad. How you getting over to Europe?

Chad: We're flying on Premier Airlines. We're excited...we got a pretty good deal.

Negative Barber: Premier huh? My wife and I flew Primer. The flight attendants were nasty, the bathroom doors on the plane were locked the entire way over to Europe, and they lost our luggage. I wouldn't get too excited. Hey, where you staying over there?

Chad: The Rome Paradise Inn. We've heard good things.

Negative Barber: Good things? This is really ironic. My wife and I must have used the same travel agent. We stayed there too. The pillows were hard, the wake-up calls came late, and the food at the hotel restaurant was disgusting. Is it too late to change?

Chad: I think so. It's a package deal.

Negative Barber: Why you going to Italy anyway? I'd just cancel the whole trip if I were you.

Chad: My wife and I are devout Catholics. We've been waiting our whole lives for a personalized visit with the Pope.

Negative Barber: Ha! Did you just say personalized visit with the Pope. Let me tell you what's going to happen. You are going to walk into St. Peter's Square at the Vatican. You and about 10,000 other people will be expecting your 'personal visit.' The pope will be about a half-mile away and if you're lucky, you'll see the back of his head. Good luck.

Chad leaves the barber shop, not quite as enthusiastic as he was when he entered. He and his wife go to Italy and return 10 days later. About two months go by, and Chad just can't wait any

longer. He must go back in and see the Negative Barber to get a trim. So he walks in, and as the Negative Barber starts to trim Chad's hair he recognizes him:

Negative Barber: Hey! I remember you. You're the guy who went to Italy. Terrible, right?

Chad: Italy was delightful. The people were friendly, the cities were clean, and the weather was perfect every day.

Negative Barber: What about those flights? The worst, right?

Chad: You know what? The flight attendants were pleasant, the bathrooms were pristine with no lines, and our luggage was actually waiting for us when we stepped off the plane.

Negative Barber: Alright—that Paradise Inn. They couldn't have made that place any better.

Chad: My wife and I loved it. The pillows were cottony soft, all are wake-up calls were on time, and the food at the restaurant was delicious. We ate most of our meals there.

Negative Barber: Fine. You went for the Pope. How was your personal visit?

Chad: You're not going to believe this. That was the best part. My wife and I got to St. Peter's Square, and the place was like a morgue. It must have been some sort of holiday in Rome, but no one else was around. So my wife and I walked up to the front of the square where the Pope usually stands at the altar. The alter door was cracked so I pushed it open and guess who was inside? The Pope, himself. When the Pope heard us enter, he slowly motioned both my wife and I to come toward him. Then he had us each kneel before him. He looked at us, placed his hand on my head, and you know what he said? 'Where'd you get that lousy haircut?'

Clearly you can go about life looking for the positive, like Chad, or the not so positive, like the Negative Barber. After working with hundreds of thousands of salespeople, we have realized that individuals who show up for sales meetings or training meetings, typically fall into one of four categories. The 4-point system or “E-scale” categorizes each type of team member. E stands for enthusiasm and the four levels characterize how enthusiastic someone is at the meeting:

- **4 on the E-scale is a Learner**—this person shows up early with extra sharpened pencils to take down every important note. Learners want to gain as much as possible from the meeting because they know they will be able to apply the information in the field. Learners typically participate very actively during the meeting.
- **3 on the E-scale is a Vacationer**—this person is out of his or her regular work environment for a little while so he or she treats it like a “vacation.” Sometimes vacationers put their feet up and leave their sunglasses on during the meeting. These people tend to be semi-engaged in some parts of the meeting and enjoy seeing their friends and taking a short break from the job.
- **2 on the E-scale is a Hostage**—this person is at the meeting for one and only one reason—because she is required to be. Hostages do not typically disrupt the meeting, they just keep to themselves and only participate when they are absolutely are forced to.
- **1 on the E-scale is a Terrorist**—this is a hostage with a bad attitude. Terrorists are negative and cynical and see it as their jobs to bring other meeting attendees down with them.



Where were you on the E-scale in the last meeting you attended?

We know everyone can not be a 4 everyday at every meeting. The key here is, whether you are a salesperson or a coach, you must be aware that all four types may be at your meeting. Once it is evident where each attendee is on the scale, try to spend time with and channel your energy toward the people that want to be there. Learners are ideal attendees—they want to get better and help others improve. You should work to harness their energy and transfer it to others. Vacationers and hostages are acceptable. See it as your challenge to try to use meeting activities and participation to get them up on the E-scale through the course of the meeting. Terrorists must be confronted and redirected. It is one thing to sabotage one's own career and motivation, but it is not acceptable to do so to others. Consistent terrorism can kill a positive sales culture.

While salespeople can go into meetings at varying levels on the E-scale, here are some common reasons that salespeople occasionally head into sales meetings with that Negative Barber type of outlook that exists at the lower end of the scale:

- Salespeople sometimes think the meeting will be all about the product(s) without much time devoted to how to sell the product.
- Salespeople perceive meetings as a waste of time if they don't think they will be learning anything new.
- Salespeople become frustrated when they have to take the time to attend meetings because that is time away from selling.
- Salespeople do not like meetings when the leader is not an effective facilitator—if the tone is not motivating and engaging.

- Salespeople become bored in meetings if there is no interaction and participation from the group. If the coach just uses the meeting to make announcements, salespeople become frustrated.
- Salespeople do not like when meetings start or end late.
- Salespeople have low expectations when they attend meetings that do not have a written agenda. They know the discussion will not be focused and will end up on unproductive tangents.
- Salespeople are disappointed when sales meetings become operational meetings.
- Salespeople do not appreciate when the meeting leader uses a meeting to criticize poor performance and it becomes a beating versus a meeting.
- Some salespeople have a negative attitude toward meetings because they think they already know it all.
- Salespeople learn to hate meetings when they often become gripe sessions full of cynical complaints.
- Some salespeople who are not performing well are reluctant to go to sales meetings where they know there will be results reporting.

Have any of these perceptions existed among your sales team?

What follows are all the reasons to have sales meetings despite the negative expectations that may exist among the team. Once your team is on track following the meeting model in this chapter, your sales meetings will be very well received, and people will be much less reluctant to attend. So why have the meetings?

- Meetings are a great venue to engage the team in team building or morale boosting exercises. Sales is a tough field,

and it's easy to get down on oneself as a salesperson who is out there fighting the battles on one's own. The camaraderie that happens at sales meetings can be extremely inspiring.

- Meetings are one of the best venues to deliver recognition. Everyone loves being told they did a good job, especially when it is in front of peers. Public recognition at meetings motivates salespeople and impacts retention positively.
- Sales meetings are a great place to share success stories. When salespeople report their wins back to the team, others are motivated and able to incorporate each other's best practices. Sharing success stories helps keep the meeting tone positive and spirited.
- Sales meetings provide opportunities to focus or re-direct the entire team toward specific goals. Maybe there is a push to move a certain product or capitalize on a special promotion. Sales meetings are a great way to get everyone on board.
- Great coaches and teams use sales meetings to ensure accountability. The coach and salespeople individually report their performances to the group and set goals in front of the group. This public peer reporting is an easy and effective way to hold team members accountable.
- Teams have had a lot of success using sales meetings as a forum to build relationships with other functions within the company. For example, many top sales teams invite service people or administrative people to the meetings. They typically love being included and everyone's job becomes easier because more people are on the same page.
- Good sales meetings often involve peer training and coaching from the more senior salespeople to the newer ones. This is a great way to develop future leaders within the team for

the company and keeps seasoned veterans excited about the meetings.

- You can make the meetings fun. Some teams conduct training in the form of a game or give out special incentives at meetings to keep the team inspired.

How do you get all this done without having your meeting last all week? Follow this example agenda. Obviously you'll need to adapt the agenda to your sales environment, but this should give you a pretty solid start.

## Sales Meeting

Here is an agenda for a well run, motivating, interactive, and useful meeting that takes less than one hour. Next we'll break down the steps and discuss how top coaches and salespeople execute each portion of the meeting.

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| ■ Opening Inspiration                      | (2 minutes)            |
| ■ Success Stories                          | (1 minute/team member) |
| ■ Training                                 | (25 minutes)           |
| ■ Scoreboard—Goal Reporting<br>and Setting | (10 minutes)           |
| ■ Summary and Action Items                 | (5 minutes)            |
| ■ Next Meeting Logistics and<br>Assignment | (2 minutes)            |
| ■ Closing Inspiration                      | (1 minute)             |

***Opening Inspiration***

Anyone can brighten a room. Some people brighten it when they enter; others brighten the room when they leave. To start a sales meeting a coach must do whatever it takes to get in the mood of someone who brightens the room upon entrance. Use positive self-talk, drink a Mountain Dew Big Gulp, listen to your favorite song, or do 10 jumping jacks— whatever works for you. You may be about to encounter some negativity if you have some sad singers or slow walkers coming into the meeting for any of the reasons we mentioned. If some of the salespeople are the type who must leave the room to brighten it, the best way to turn them around at the start of a sales meeting is with a powerful opening inspiration.

Most people are not intentionally negative; it is simply that they would rather be somewhere else trying to grow their business. If their minds are preoccupied, a strong opening inspiration is a positive way to get everyone on the same page. Sales is a difficult job, so many people appreciate these types of positive inspirations. You can find these quotes, stories, poems, or articles in all types of places: throughout this book, on our website at [www.nextlevelsalesconsulting.com](http://www.nextlevelsalesconsulting.com), or in various books and publications. Here's one example:

**What Am I?**

I will push you onward or drag you down to failure. I am completely at your command. Half the things you do you might just as well turn over to me and I will be able to do them quickly and correctly.

I am easily managed – you must merely be firm with me. Show me exactly how you want something done; and after a few lessons, I will do it automatically. I am the servant of all great men; and alas, of all failures as

well. Those who are great, I have made great. Those who are failures, I have made failures.

I am not a machine, though I work with all the precision of a machine plus the intelligence of a man. You may run me for a profit or run me for ruin – it makes no difference to me.

Take me, train me, be firm with me and I will place the world at your feet. Be easy with me and I will destroy you. You know by now, my friend, that I am your habits.

If your meeting started at 8:00, it's now 8:02, and the tone has been all positive so far. The coach or a team member has read or recited the opening inspiration and everyone is feeling positive and running on a rainbow.

### *Success Stories*

In the days of ancient Rome, when gladiators used to fight one another, there was one particularly strong gladiator named Androcles. Androcles easily made handiwork out of every human opponent that came his way. So after he had defeated all worthy men, the people of Rome arranged a final battle between Androcles and a lion. The battle began in front of a packed Coliseum, and right away the lion leaped at Androcles. Androcles swiftly dodged the lion and ended up behind it. From that position, Androcles leaned over and whispered into the lion's ear and immediately the lion turned over on its back with all four paws in the air to give up and forfeit victory to Androcles. Caesar, who was sitting up in the Coliseum, was amazed by what he saw, so he arranged for one of his guards to bring Androcles to him. Caesar congratulated Androcles and then asked how he beat the lion so easily: "Androcles, what did

you say to the lion?” Androcles responded, “I told the lion...listen lion, you realize if you beat me, all fifty thousand of these people are going to want to know how you did it. You’re going to have to give a 15-minute impromptu speech on the strategies and tactics you used to defeat me.”

Like the lion, many people would prefer not to speak in public. In fact, according to *The Book of Lists*, the 10 worst human fears in the U.S. are the following:

1. Speaking before a group
2. Heights
3. Insects and bugs
4. Financial problems
5. Deep water
6. Sickness
7. Death
8. Flying
9. Loneliness
10. Dogs

As comedian Jerry Seinfeld points out, “that means if you’re at a funeral, you’d rather be in the casket than delivering the eulogy.”

Success stories, which are easy subjects to talk about, can be used both as a means to overcoming this fear of speaking and as a way to share best practices.

Sharing success stories is also an excellent way to continue the positive momentum after the opening inspiration. At this point in the meeting, the most successful teams have each person stand up one at a time to share a personal win since the last meeting. In a sales meeting it is important to get people on their feet as much as

possible. This helps them stay engaged. Other benefits of standing up to present success stories early in the meeting include

- The meeting becomes interactive right away, so the amount of positive energy in the room stays strong.
- Salespeople are recognized by their coach and their peers for their great efforts and outstanding results.
- Best practices are shared which helps improve everyone's results.
- Salespeople build credibility when they describe their experiences to the team.
- Salespeople build confidence in their ability to speak to groups when they present to the team.

In general, people like sharing good news. Here are a few things to keep in mind to make this portion of the meeting run smoothly:

- Have people prepare success stories in advance of the meeting so that they are prepared with their biggest wins and so that they can be succinct. The preparation is simple when you make this the start of each meeting.
- If the coach or a salesperson would like a certain salesperson to share a specific story, be sure to tell that person in advance.
- Limit each success story to one minute.
- The coach should share a success story first to set the positive tone and demonstrate how to tell a succinct story and stay within the time limit.



- The coach and salespeople can give quick feedback and recognition after individuals share.
- Applaud after each story as an extra form of recognition and to keep the energy up in the meeting.

Here are a few examples of what success stories may sound like:

Joel: *I have been so persistent prospecting Ian's Corndog Café. I have called them at least 30 times, and I can never get past Cecilia, the gatekeeper, to speak with Ian himself, who makes all the decisions. So finally I came in early Thursday, called at 5:30 AM, and got in touch with Ian. I made an appointment to meet with him this afternoon. This could be a big deal!*

Leigh: *I had an initial meeting with that big law firm, Dewey, Cheatum, and Howe. All three key decision makers attended: Jennine, Bob, and Ava. They are very qualified and seem really excited about a long-term commitment. My presentation meeting is on Friday and Mindy is coming with me to help close the deal!*

Scotty: *I just got the signed proposal yesterday from Raleigh's Restaurant. They should be a great client. They've already signed on for a year. And, with that sale, I've exceeded my quota for the quarter!*

If you introduce sharing success stories to your sales meetings and it is a new concept, it may be a bit uncomfortable for some, especially when people have to stand up. Do it anyway! My mentor

always asks me if I would rather be comfortable with my current level of success or uncomfortable and more successful. The major obstacles that a coach or a team face during this portion of the meeting include 1) People who do not want to stand; or 2) People who have nothing positive to share.

It is the coach's responsibility to address the first challenge. The coach must stand to tell his success story. Then the coach must choose another enthusiastic, positive team member to go second. This person will also not resist standing. So the team starts a pattern of standing and it soon becomes the standard way that people present their success stories. To address the second challenge of people with no good news, the coach must pre-empt this problem. If a coach is doing a great job of conducting GSMs, following up, and coaching in the crunch, he should be familiar with some successes from each salesperson before the meeting even starts. Then if someone has nothing to say, the coach can remind that person of something positive and have her share that story. If this becomes a regular occurrence with the same person, the coach can approach the salesperson prior to the meeting to tell her what to share. Very soon, that salesperson will get the point.

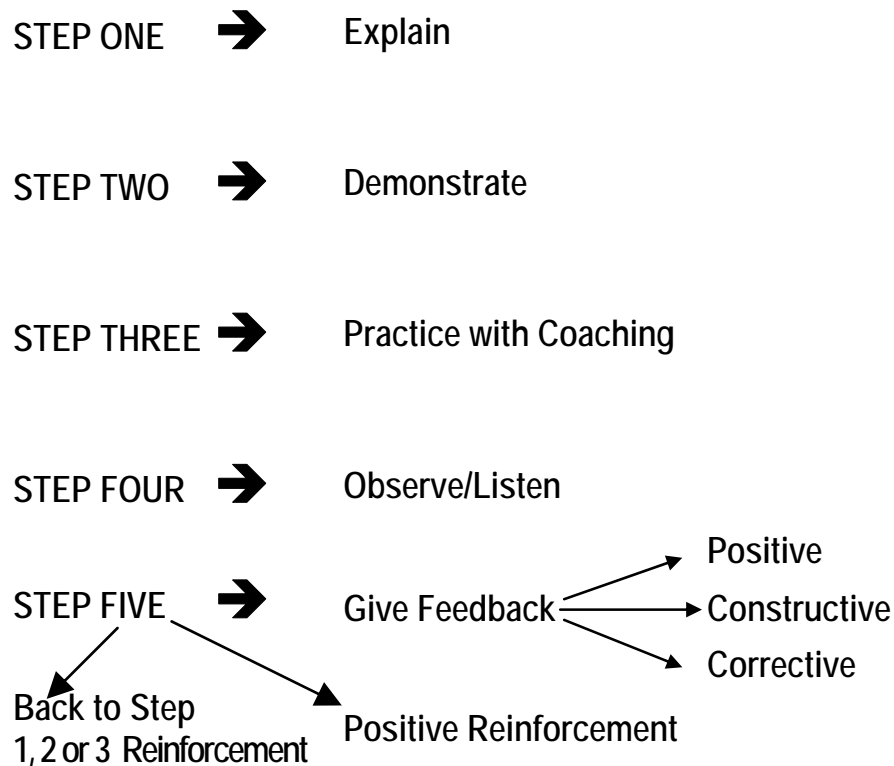
Now you are a few minutes into the meeting. You are all inspired, everyone has shared a recent success, and the entire team is grinning so wide they could eat bananas sideways.

### ***Training***

Before actually eating the bananas, we suggest you incorporate a team training session in your sales meetings, as the top sales teams

do. You can follow the same training process outlined in detail in chapter 5. Here it is again for you.

In a team setting the coach or team should select a training topic that addresses a skill gap that is common among the team members. For example, the team may practice delivering their value propositions, asking for referrals, or making cold calls. We've found it is important though not to try to cover 8 skills within one team training session. You have a limited amount of time, so pick one or maybe two related areas and practice them properly.



**FIGURE 7.2** The Training Process

When we say properly, here's what we mean. The training leader (most often the coach) will give a quick skill explanation and demonstration. As always, remember higher caliber demonstrations yield higher caliber results from team members. When salespeople are practicing skills, make sure they stand on their feet. This further engages all the participants and keeps the vibe upbeat. Everyone should be practicing at the same time in pairs or trios, switching partners after each iteration. The leader can use a bell and/or stopwatch to keep the team structured. This may sound a bit militant, but the best sales teams do it and, salespeople start to appreciate it when they realize they are improving. This practice with coaching step is where repetition comes into play. This practice with coaching step is where repetition comes into play. It is an area in which the great teams and coaches stand out from the good ones. Good teams practice how to resolve an objection or how to set an agenda or whichever skill is most relevant, for 2-3 iterations and move on. Great teams practice the same skills, but for 6-8 iterations or more, until everyone on the team feels like they can't wait to run out of the meeting and execute on a real live prospect or client. This may seem boring or overly repetitive, but it's what the great teams do, so great coaches must have that uniquely high tolerance for repetition. Great teams also will include a portion of the training, after several rounds of practice, in which each team member will stand on his feet and deliver the skill to the group. This is a great opportunity for recognition and helps encourage salespeople to take the practice sessions seriously.

Now we are halfway through the meeting and each person is feeling good, is participating, and has learned and practiced useful skills.

***Scoreboard—Goal Reporting and Setting***

*“There must be a mechanism that measures how we’re doing and it must always be there.”*

—John Swenson, Sales Executive,  
Avnet, a semiconductor  
distributor

One of our favorite clients at The Next Level is the Los Angeles Clippers NBA basketball team. We do not work with the players, but we do work with their sales team and sales coaches. To support our clients and because we love the team, we are season ticket holders and attend many of the games each season. In the center of the Staples Center arena, where the Clippers play hangs a large scoreboard so everyone in the arena can see it. Why is it visible to everyone? Because it has an impact on everyone there: players, coaches, and fans. When a player makes a basket, the scoreboard changes. The players become motivated by the score change. Then the fans cheer or boo. The fans’ cheers and boos impact the players’ performance and encourage them to play harder. The coach sees the score change on the scoreboard, and he makes coaching decisions accordingly. These decisions ideally help the players perform at an even higher level, so the scoreboard lights up again.

A public scoreboard is just as important in a sales culture as it is at a basketball game. To carry forth our analogy, the players on the court are like the salesperson that has his turn to score with sales activity and results. When a salesperson sees his numbers on the board versus those of his peers, he is typically motivated, just like the players in the game. The fans at the game are analogous to

all the other salespeople at the meeting. When one person puts his numbers on the board, the team members will either cheer with praise or respond less positively if the numbers are not great, in the same way that the fans boo. (Incidentally, we do not encourage booing at your sales meeting.) The coach on the court of course plays the same role as the sales coach in the meeting. As she looks at the results on the scoreboard, she strategizes and plans tactics for the entire team as well as for individual participants.

Let's look at the following example scoreboard and walk through a scenario of how this may work. Keep in mind that you can customize your team's scoreboard to be as specific or as general as you'd like.

At this point in the meeting it is time for each team member to update the weekly scoreboard. So one at a time, each salesperson takes a marker and writes his results from last week or month and sets goals for the subsequent period. If Gene St. Pierre is first up, he limps slowly up to the board and records his numbers. It's pretty clear that Gene had a rough week. Then he writes down his goals for the next week, which should be somewhat in sync with the goals set in his GSM. The point is not to humiliate anyone; it's merely to inspire great performance. So as Gene walks back to his seat in the meeting there will probably not be too many fans cheering and the coach may make note of a discussion that should happen after the meeting in follow up or at an upcoming GSM. This is a bit uncomfortable for Gene, but it is a necessary part of good sales coaching. If Gene is in it to win it, he should feel a fire in his belly to improve so that he does not have the same experience at the next sales meeting.

It's Mark Freeark's turn next. Mark struts up to the scoreboard with his shoulders high and his chest out. He

## Team Johnson Scoreboard

Name		Last Goal	Actual	+ / -	Next Goal
St Pierre	Appointments Set	5	2	-3	6
	Appointment Held	4	1	-3	4
	New Accounts	1	0	-1	2
Freeark	Appointments Set	5	6	+1	5
	Appointment Held	4	5	+1	4
	New Accounts	1	2	+1	2
Sullivan	Appointments Set				
	Appointment Held				
	New Accounts				
Baiaa	Appointments Set				
	Appointment Held				
	New Accounts				
Walker	Appointments Set				
	Appointment Held				
	New Accounts				
Dunlay	Appointments Set				
	Appointment Held				
	New Accounts				
Kolesar	Appointments Set				
	Appointment Held				
	New Accounts				
Lopez	Appointments Set				
	Appointment Held				
	New Accounts				
Fontenette	Appointments Set				
	Appointment Held				
	New Accounts				
Scarcello	Appointments Set				
	Appointment Held				
	New Accounts				
Tapia	Appointments Set				
	Appointment Held				
	New Accounts				

FIGURE 7.3 Team Johnson Scoreboard

not only hit, but exceeded his goal in each key performance indicator. Mark then sets big goals for next week too, hoping to close two more accounts. Mark should get a tremendously positive response from the “fans” and coach that recognize his great week and admire his confidence with the big goals he wrote down for next week.

These are two extreme examples, positive and negative, and your team members will be all over the board at times. Our clients have come up with names for this portion of the meeting referring to the team's response to either great or not so great performance. There's the walk of fame, or the walk of shame; cheers or jeers; or thumbs up or thumbs down.

When the scoreboard lights up, just like in a basketball game, salespeople receive immediate feedback from the coach and their peers. This recognition is huge. Let's look at how this impacts salespeople at each level.

The top 20% of your sales team likes being in the top spot and wants to stay there. They love the time each week when they get to put their big numbers on the board and shine in front of the team. These people may be the future leaders of your organization, they lead by example, and they deserve the positive recognition.

The big middle 60% gets motivated by results reporting on the scoreboard too. Most of this group becomes inspired by the performance of the top 20%, and they aspire to copy the top performers' aggressive goals and best practices, so they can be at that level soon too.

The bottom 20% should also get fired up! This positive peer pressure should help them quickly figure out whether they



are going to move up or out. They must adjust their habits to create stronger performance or start working on their resumes.

All of this is very healthy. Coaches ask us all the time how to motivate their weakest performers to change. This scoreboarding practice is one of the most effective ways we have seen top sales coaches pull the weeds on their teams. The best performers receive the recognition they deserve. Johnny Hardluck and Sally Badnews, who consistently under perform, will eventually weed themselves out, because no one likes having this experience every week or every month.

Great coaches and teams apply these techniques because scoreboarding publicly encourages the top performers to stay at the top, the middle performers to move up, and discourages poor performance all together.

### ***Summary and Action Items***

The meeting is almost over! This next step is not rocket science, but it is important. You have positive momentum, everyone has been through training, and people are motivated by the scoreboard, now it's time to bring this baby down for a smooth landing. Someone should be taking notes throughout the meeting. Many teams rotate this responsibility. At this point, the secretary can quickly summarize all of the key points from the meeting, paying special attention to review all of the important action items and who is responsible for following up on each one. The secretary should then send out the notes or minutes to the rest of the team after the meeting. Again, this is not too complicated, just a quick and clean way to tie up loose ends.

### ***Next Meeting Logistics and Assignment***

This step is simple, but important also. Before the closing inspiration, confirm the date and time of the next meeting or the next few meetings. Then make sure everyone is clear on the assignments that must be completed for the next meeting. For example, salespeople may need to bring with them a certain script for the training exercise next time, or in our meetings at The Next Level, we all read a book and give a quick oral report at the next meeting. Also, when you get to the stage in which different team members are leading different parts of the sales meeting (we are about to discuss that) here is where you confirm who is doing what.

### ***Closing Inspiration***

End the meeting with a bang, just like they way you started it! People should come out of a sales meeting feeling positive, but this doesn't always happen. The following is an example of an ineffective meeting that does not leave teammates feeling positive...(SRJ) I remember an old basketball coach I had. In one particular game, late in the fourth quarter my team was getting killed. For all intents and purposes, the game was over, and playing the last few minutes was a formality. Coach called us over to huddle and his speech went something like this: "You guys stink. You're not playing hard at all. OK. Put your hands in. Hustle on 3. 1-2-3-Hustle!" And we went back out onto the court feeling worse than we did before the huddle. Sales meetings should leave people feeling just the opposite, ready to conquer their goals in the week or month ahead. Here are a couple examples of closing inspirations you can share with your team.

*It is not the critic who counts, nor the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumphs of high achievement and who at the worst if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither defeat nor victory.*

.—Theodore Roosevelt

The clock is running. Make the most of today. To realize the value of one year, ask a student who failed a grade. To realize the value of one month, ask the mother who gave birth to a premature baby. To realize the value of one week, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper. To realize the value of one hour, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet. To realize the value of one minute, ask a person who missed the train. To realize the value of one second, ask a person who just avoided an accident. To realize the value of one millisecond, ask the person who won a silver medal in the Olympics

.—The Executive Speechwriter Newsletter

### **Getting Others Involved**

A very wealthy man bought a huge ranch in Arizona and invited some of his closer associates to see it. After touring the 1,500 acres of mountains, rivers, and grasslands, he took everybody to the house. The house was as spectacular as the scenery. In the back of the house was the largest swimming pool they had ever seen.

However, it was filled with alligators. The owner explained: "I value courage more than anything. It is what made me a billionaire. I value courage so much that if anyone has the courage to jump in that pool and swim to the other side, I will give them whatever they want, my land, my house, my money, anything."

Of course, everybody laughed at the challenge and turned to follow the owner into the house for lunch. Suddenly they heard a splash. Turning around they saw a guy splashing and thrashing in the water, swimming for his life as the alligators swarmed after him. After several death-defying seconds, the man made it unharmed to the other side. The rich billionaire was amazed but he stuck to his promise. He said, "You are a man of courage, you can have any thing you want, house, money, land, etc., whatever you want is yours." The swimmer, breathing heavily, looked up and said, "I just want to know who pushed me in the pool."

Some people do need a little push to get involved and the more that people are involved in a sales meeting, the better. The quality of the meeting is directly related to the quality of the participation in the meeting. So once the coach and the team become very comfortable with the format of these sales meetings, after many weeks or months, the coach can begin to have salespeople take part in facilitating portions of the meeting. This is a great way to encourage your organization's future leaders to step up and start leading by coaching their peers. When salespeople effectively lead portions of the meeting, the energy can really be great because generally, people will want to see their peers succeed, especially if they know they will be on their feet in front of the group soon too.

The way this works is that the coach simply chooses certain salespeople to lead certain parts of the meeting. Some coaches del-

delegate roles at each meeting for the subsequent meeting. You may use a template like the one shown in Figure 7.4.

The choice of who does what cannot just be a random assignment from the coach. If this happens, the meeting can turn to chaos, and people will not be interested in leading again. The coach should delegate carefully and strategically, one portion at a time, beginning with the top performers. Then it is the coach's job to

Next Meeting's Assignments		
Agenda Item	Facilitator	Time
Opening Inspiration	_____	2 Min.
Success Stories	_____	1 Min./Person
Training	_____	25 Min.
• Topic _____		
Scoreboard	_____ <b>Coach</b>	10 Min.
Summary and action items	_____	5 Min.
Next Meeting Logistics and Assignments	_____ <b>Coach</b>	2 Min.
Closing Inspiration	_____	1 Min.

**FIGURE 7.4** Next Meeting's Assignments

make sure each person is ready to lead her portion effectively. For example, if a coach is going to have the top salesperson lead training on resolving objections for the next meeting's training, the coach should schedule time, in advance of the sales meeting, one-on-one with the top performer to review the handouts and go through a dry run of the training presentation.

### ***Sales Huddles***

Sales huddles are simply a quicker, and often more regular, versions of a sales meeting. Some of our clients in financial services gather all the salespeople and coaches together every morning for 10-15 minutes to set the tone and explain the specific sales focus for the day. Many of our clients who work in a call center sales environment have a great deal of success with short, daily huddles to share wins, review new information, and motivate the team. In a widely spread outside sales team, daily huddles can happen over a conference call.

The 2001 NFL Champion Baltimore Ravens football team is a great example of a team that utilized brief huddles to focus and motivate team members. On offense, quarterback Trent Dilfer led the huddles, and on defense, it was linebacker Ray Lewis. The huddle leader brings all the players together to prepare them for battle before the next play. They establish a focus and everyone is on the same page. There's also a lot of encouragement and recognition that happens in a football team's huddle, and it is no different in a sales huddle. Some football teams even hold hands in their huddles as a sign of team. You can do that with your sales team, but you may want to run it by your HR department first.

On sales teams, many coaches prepare the night before for the next day's huddle, or some do so early each morning. The best coaches, who run huddles, make the quick preparation part of their regular routine. This preparation is key, because with only 10-15 minutes, the coach must be able to focus and motivate the team in a very short period of time. It's his or her only chance to deliver a clear message to the entire team.

Here's an example sales huddle agenda:

- Opening Inspiration
- Yesterday's Results vs. Goals
- Share 1-2 Success Stories
- Share 1-2 Challenges and Potential Solutions
- Set the Focus or Goals for the Day Ahead (e.g. new product, promotion, or sales incentive)
- Closing Inspiration

### ***Other Best Practices on Meetings/Huddles from Top Sales Teams***

- Some sales organizations cover operational issues in separate meetings to keep the sales meeting focused on sales.
- Some sales organizations have meetings on Friday afternoons and reward strong performance with the rest of the day off. Poor performance means more sales activity on Friday afternoon.
- Giving pre-work and small assignments before sales meetings improves the quality of the skill development/training time.
- Daily huddles are a great forum for setting daily goals. This helps the entire team focus on the right behaviors.

- Daily huddles must last 15 minutes or less.
- The scoreboard should be in a place in the office that is visible all the time, by everyone in all functions, sales and others—some teams use it as the wallpaper on their computer and update it each day.
- A great time to do follow up is right after your meeting or huddle.

Your meeting or your huddle is over. If you are a coach, it is now time to get to work following up, conducting GSMs, coaching in the crunch, or leading individual training sessions. Go out and catch people doing the right things. If you are a salesperson, you have just heard an inspiring closing inspiration and you are ready to go out and dominate the world, or at least your sales territory.

Next we will round out our coaching puzzle with an important section on recognition. Sales activities and coaching activities are great, and everyone is happier when these activities occur within a positive sales culture fueled by coach and peer recognition.