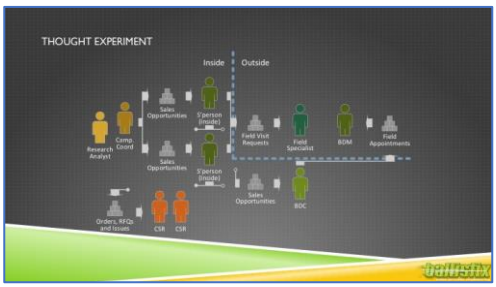
MEASUREMENT, CONTROL & AUTOMATION ASSOCIATION

FACINGFORWARD

The Sales Machine – Justin Roff-Marsh

Mr. Roff-Marsh attacked some "sacred cows" in his presentation during the Industry Forum. He looked at behaviors of outside salespeople. First, salespeople only take a couple of business development meetings a week and they are up to their elbows in customer service activities rather than in actually selling. They over-service some accounts and ignore others. There is more friction between sales and other departments. And, finally, they don't prospect for new customers enough. This is because the situation is that salespeople own their accounts and operate as autonomous agents. If salespeople are paid on commission then they will feel that they are autonomous and will talk about "their accounts" or "their territory." There is a pervasive assumption that sales is an outside activity and that sales is an individual pursuit. Roff-Marsh feels these assumptions are wrong.

Especially today, with limited time and interest by customers to see salespeople face to face, sales is primarily an inside function and selling takes place mostly by phone—even if that phone call is taking place while an outside salesperson is in his car. This is, according to Roff-Marsh, a fact (whether companies want to acknowledge it or not). Additionally, he posited that sales is a team endeavor—whether one likes it or not—because that is also already true!



He took the MCAA audience through a "thought experiment" based on a tragic (albeit not fatal) skiing accident for all the sales-related employees of a $20Million company. Having to replace the entire sales team (one person at a time), he showed how to take a different approach by starting with building a robust customer service representative team which can handle orders, quotes and issues. Fully trained and qualified to do this job. That will lead to much greater customer satisfaction because in the ordinary mix, customer service representatives don't own customer service—salespeople get in between customer service and the customer ("their account"). Customers will be happier when the customer service is a pure offering. Our new CSR team handles all the existing customers.

Without new orders, however, our company has to start adding salespeople. Roff-Marsh suggests they need to be INSIDE sales. They have no other responsibility but to sell. They can have 20 meaningful sales conversations per day based on leads coming up from the customer service representatives who handle the incoming calls and forward all new leads to sales.

The company will then add a campaign coordinator to generate leads for inside sales and a researcher who will get lists (perhaps this job is outsourced). The Campaign Coordinator creates the sales opportunities with emails containing compelling value propositions so that when the salesperson makes calls, 20 of the customers will be willing to talk.

At this point, the company is able to hire a Field Specialist—someone OUTSIDE—who addresses all requests for field visits including requirement discovery and demonstrations. Finally the company adds a business development manager (and an assistant to help schedule) who spends his entire time in boardrooms making the big presentations.

At this point our company has a robust customer service organization which keeps all customers very happy, customers who are developed predominantly by inside sales where salespeople only concentrate on selling with leads fed in by a campaign coordinator who has marketed with emails containing compelling value propositions. The only outside individuals are ones who are there to address specific requests or needs that can only be met by face to face visits.

MCAA has made a PDF copy of the slides from this presentation available to all MCAA members. A video of the entire presentation is being finalized for attendees at no cost. Non-members may be able to purchase the video. Email mcaa@themcaa.org for more details.