



LinkedIn
SALES ACADEMY

LinkedIn Sales Academy

Master the Art of Sales Coaching



Introduction

Master the Art of Sales Coaching

As a sales leader, your job is to find top talent and people that are going to help you move the organization forward. It starts by being as effective as possible in your day-to-day job. But how do you perform at your best when you wear so many different hats: manager, coach, and mentor, to name a few?

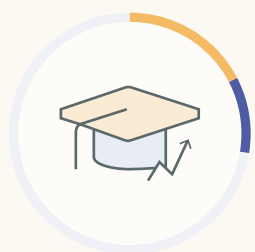
This Pocket Guide shares tips from the best sales managers invested in coaching at LinkedIn.

Read on for best practices you can apply to effectively balance your roles and make the most impact.

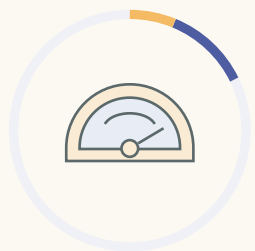


Coach to Drive Better Results

If you're trying to decide whether to make coaching part of your modus operandi, this should convince you.



We rolled out sales coaching to all LinkedIn sales managers globally, and saw our coached reps attain quota at an average of **22%-26%** higher rates than their non-coached peers.

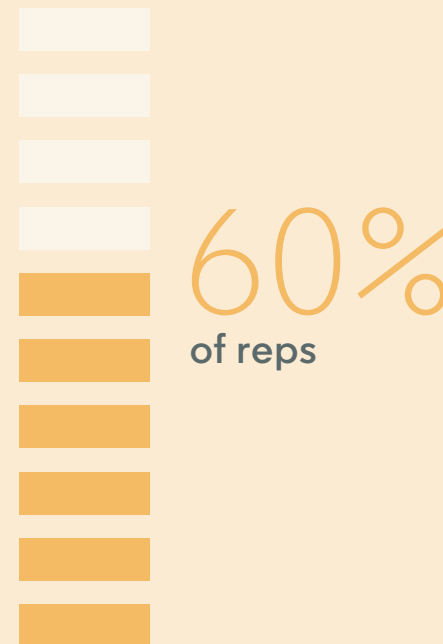


Research suggests that sales coaching initiatives typically result in anywhere from a **5%-20%** increase in quota attainment.

Simply put, coached reps outperform their non-coached peers. We've seen it ourselves.



Moreover, our top **10 managers in North America** coached more than other managers and drove higher impact from both their top and middle-performing reps. In fact, their top reps saw an approximately **32%** improvement in quota attainment over top reps in the region who weren't coached.



Surveyed reps agree that they could use more coaching today than they receive from their manager

Understand Your Manager Personas

As a manager, you have many demands on your time. And you may not feel you have enough time to invest in your team the way you'd like.

But to be a transformational manager and leader you need to always be there for your reps. So, you need a strategy to free up the necessary time. First understand what you spend your time on each day. Then figure out what isn't about teaching and coaching your reps.

Here are some of the roles that managers typically play:



Teacher

Demonstrating ideal behavior and showing reps how to get the job done.



Relationship builder

Facilitating connections and bringing in the “badge-to-badge” support (such as by introducing your manager to a prospect’s exec-level manager).



Sales coach

Keenly and silently observing in support of your sales reps.



Sales driver

Helping reps—especially new hires—take opportunities to the next level and even close the deal.



Sales support

Adding commentary during calls.

Get Clear on Teaching vs. Mentoring vs. Coaching

Before we dive into the most effective ways to coach, let's clarify the differences between coaching, teaching and mentoring:

1

Teaching (or training) focuses on imparting new knowledge and developing the knowledge and skills necessary to do a job.

2

Mentoring is about developing a rep's skills over time by building a close, trusted relationship between you and the rep. You'll likely find that mentoring is characterized by meaningful moments that often occur during effective sales coaching sessions.

3

Coaching is performance-driven, observation-based, and focuses on developing one skill or behavior at a time to help drive better overall performance. When you coach, you inspire reps to see and take the necessary next steps for their own improvement, rather than prescribe what they should do.



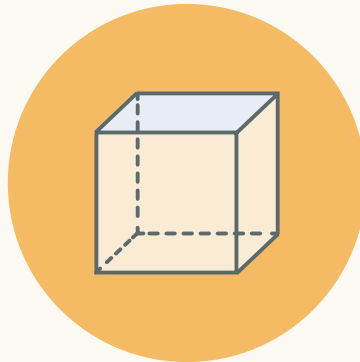
What is sales coaching?

LinkedIn defines sales coaching as a formal process that uses one-on-one meetings to inspire sales people to achieve new levels of sales performance based on observations of sales rep client interaction.



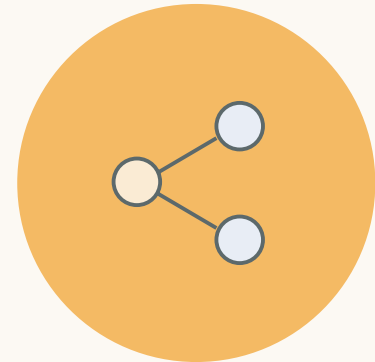
Teaching

Setting the foundation for an identified gap in knowledge or skill



Coaching

Helping others uncover their true potential and commit to behavior change



Mentoring

Developing skills over time by building a close, trusted relationship

Why Feedback is NOT Coaching

Be careful not to mistake feedback for coaching. Feedback may help reps understand what is preventing them from reaching their current goals. But it is reactive, focused on past behavior, and manifests itself in one-way communication.

Coaching is more **proactive**, focused on **future behavior**, and inspires your reps to make behavioral changes that allow them to unleash their own potential.



You'll know you're coaching when you ask questions and engage your reps in two-way dialogues.

Beyond that, the biggest difference between coaching and feedback is that you follow up your coaching to gauge progress and continue providing helpful guidance.



Embrace the Sales Coaching Best Practices Framework

So how do you make the shift from giving feedback to coaching?

Step one

Get buy-in by stating your intent and building trust. Start each coaching session explaining how and why you intend to help your reps achieve better results, and then maintain consistency and accountability. Once you've diagnosed a potential problem, it's essential to hold you and your rep accountable for putting a plan into action and seeing it through.

Remember:

Coaching is built on trust, and trust is built over time.

Make Coaching a Priority

It starts with time management, deciding on day-to-day focus, and then staying focused on coaching and teaching one skill at a time.

Step two

Build the plan: prepare, prioritize, and align.

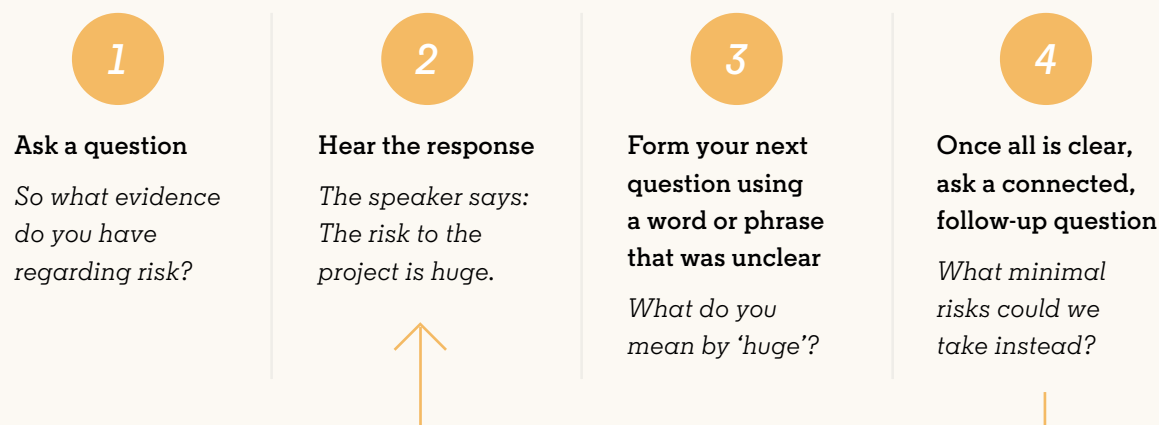
Your sales reps are your most important customers. Preparing for a coaching session with a sales rep should be just as important to you as preparing for a client meeting is to them. When planning for coaching, prioritize who you are going to coach to focus on the right people. Then align and gain agreement with your rep on what competency or behavior you are going to coach.



Become an Expert at Facilitative Listening

Making the switch from telling to asking is how you move from teaching to coaching. Focus on leading your reps down the right path while allowing them to take the actual steps and decide on the ultimate way forward.

You can do that by mastering the facilitative listening process. Ask a question, listen intently, identify one thing that's unclear to you, ask a clarifying question, listen intently, and so on. The idea is to dig deep on one area instead of asking a bunch of questions and moving on.



Keep your objective in mind: You want to get your reps thinking about new ways of achieving their goals, so ask questions to generate new ideas. Then spark action by gaining commitment from the rep on which behavior will change and when.

Be resourceful

Leverage outside resources to help you and your team get things done.

Be curious

Ask thoughtful open-ended questions to get to the heart of matters.

Be often

Always be available and consistent with your coaching.

Conclusion

Lead Your Team to Success

Our research shows that sales reps—even top performers—crave sales coaching. Who can blame them?

Done right, sales coaching empowers reps to reach their full potential and deliver continually better results. **Follow the tips in this guide and you'll be well on your way!**

For more world-class training designed to shape you into the best sales leader possible,
check out LinkedIn Sales Academy.

