BOOK REVIEW

BOOK TITLE


SROTA PANDYA
*Independent Researcher, Bangalore*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Max Cates received a bachelor of science from Missouri State University and a master of arts from the University Of Missouri School Of Journalism. He began his professional career with United Telecommunications (America's third-largest telecommunications company at the time) as Advertising Coordinator. After three years, he joined AT&T and served for 10 years in progressively responsible corporate leadership positions in advertising, corporate communications, and marketing management. Cates's next leadership position was with Associated Electric Cooperative, a $2 billion electric power utility. After two promotions there, he became the youngest Division Director in its history, reporting to the CEO. His responsibilities included leading marketing, advertising, and corporate communications, as well as directing consumer sales strategy. During his tenure at Associated, he also completed Executive Development at the Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania. After 11 years with Associated and a number of national awards, Cates returned to AT&T, serving in sales and sales management positions, progressing from Internet Sales Manager to Telemarketing Sales Manager, to Area Sales Manager. Following an award-winning career with AT&T, which included the prestigious CEO Club Award, Cates joined Access Media, where he managed the sales force. He also served as a sales management professor at Webster University.
SUMMARY OF THE BOOK

The book summarizes the crux of any sales performance as maximal capacity of the sales team with the support of effective leadership. The performance of the sales team with full-fledged commitment may bring wonders to the company in achieving the sales volume without any apprehensions. This book titled “Seven Steps to Success for Sales Managers” provides better understanding on leaders efforts in creating high-performance sales teams with the supports of team structure, sales representative cooperation, empowerment, and continuous improvement. As it is well aware that all these processes are well connected to the fundamentals and key components of Total Quality Management (TQM). The book clearly point toward the importance of total quality management approach in bringing better sales volume to the company and better orientation to the sales managers. As Max stated the biggest challenge in sales management is is getting the sales representatives competent and smart enough to sell at maximal capacity. The book clearly distinguish the differences between leading and misleading, inspiring versus intimidating, and invigorating rather than deflating, by focusing on several aspects commencing from recruitment to Empowerment, from there to Performance. It is well understood from the content of the book that the seven steps provide better direction and encouragement for those who want to be more than managers, those who aspire to be leaders.

Chapter 1 First Step: Manage Yourself
Chapter 2 Second Step: High-Performance Teams Begin with Hiring
Chapter 3 Third Step: Building a Winning Team
Chapter 4 Fourth Step: Becoming a Successful Servant Leader
Chapter 5 Fifth Step: Sales Empowerment, Beginning with Ownership
Chapter 6 Sixth Step: Success through Performance Measurement
Chapter 7 Seventh Step: Continuous Improvement, Maintaining Success

EVALUATION OF THE BOOK

Seven Steps to Success for Sales Managers extends better sales management tactics which any sales managers or even sales representatives can easily digest. Max incorporated the content of the
book in such a way that the readers can easily digest the latest sales trends and tactics. Thrusting the importance of team and team empowerment the book guides the readers towards better sales performance steps.

Max starts off in the first chapter on First Step: Manage Yourself, with a heading “Self-Management Question Number One: Are you a trusted leader? The leadership once get accountability only when the sales team trust and accept leaders tactics and strategies that would be leading towards better sales performance. Leaders personal control towards the team members is well envisaged in the book for success. With the examples/case studies and definitions, he focused on “adaptability, mental toughness, bad-Boss image, role of Ego and emotional coefficient”.

In the second chapter titled High Performance Teams Begin with Hiring indicates the importance sales managers focus on recruitment of the sales representatives or executives. It is important that the team should extend best of their abilities to the sales team in its conversion into sales volume. How the process of recruitment should be done by a sales managers is well detailed by Max in this chapter. A few of his sub-titles justify this book easily: viz., The Science of Selection; Hire for Traits, not Skills; The Sixth Dimension; Body Language; Seven Tiebreakers and Red Flags.

In the third chapter the author stress the importance of Build a Winning Team. It is stated by Max that several leaders fail to pool winning team in their effort to make the team empowered following absolute principles of total quality management. Based upon Max’s past experience, he uses TQM as a cornerstone of this total sales management approach. However, the concept of TQM, if not practiced with proper orientation may lead to failures. Getting control over the team in need of better emotional coefficient as well as personal control.

The chapter 4 tells us the way with how a sales manager becomes a Successful Servant Leader. Developing sales people, treating them with respect, encouraging their talents and input—these are trends that has proven build strong sales team and give the leader lasting impression as well as supporting the leader’s vision towards the
competitive edge. As it is critically evaluated it makes sense to invest in sales team members in order to produce the sales volume of a company.

In Chapter Five, the author will open your eyes/brain into the power of generating higher levels of performance by creating: Sales Empowerment: Beginning with Ownership. The author takes a step by step approach on how to-do each action: viz., Give Control to Get Control, Develop By-In, Empowering Your Team to Success and Developing a Self-Managed Sales Team. Empowering sales reps and teams in decision-making that increases sales productivity. Sales Empowered team, especially on sales is the leader in the industry when it comes to helping organizations drive top-line revenue.

Max then closes the book on chapters six on: Success through Performance Measurement and detailing on continuous Improvement, maintaining success. He summarizes many of his key points with five critical needs of salespeople like Structure, Challenge, Respect, Involvement and Support, that should be extended to the team for better acceptance and accountability on the sales managers leadership.

The chapter 7 deals with the success mantra ‘continuous improvement’. The importance of total quality management, six sigma, using the Deming Cycle for Improved Sales and excellence is well illustrated with innumerable examples.

CONCLUSION

In this book the author stresses the importance of participative management where the sales representatives and the sales managers sit together and continuously monitor and evaluate the sales scenario and there leading the sales operations with a focus on continuous improvement with absolute quality consciousness. The author shows how to go far beyond "old school," of control tactics on sales management, by explaining the possibilities of participatory management approach that works with the unleashing full power and energy of the sales people. This book will help a sales manager or leader to build an outstanding team, empower it, and lead it to sustained success.