

Transitioning into Sales Management: What to Expect

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If you're pursuing your first sales management job, you might be wondering what to expect. While sales reps develop many of the skills they'll need in a managerial position throughout their career, there's a big difference between being part of a sales team, and leading one.

Transitioning into sales management can be an excellent way to elevate your existing abilities, develop new skills, and increase your income. However, there are various hurdles to overcome if you want to ensure you're successful in your new role.

Here's what you can expect from your first sales manager role.

What Does a Sales Manager Do?

First, it's worth noting that a sales manager isn't just a [top-performing sales rep](#) with additional responsibilities. A sales manager role is a multifaceted job, which involves not just actively selling, but also coaching, guiding, hiring, and evaluating other team members.

In a sales manager position, you'll be responsible for ensuring the success of a company's sales department. You may need to develop training strategies to train sales representatives on a new sales process, set goals based on forecasting information, and even create comprehensive plans.

It's up to you to ensure your team reaches their sales targets, consistently improves their performance, and grows over time. You may even be responsible for writing job descriptions, interviewing new employees, and administering incentives programs.

The Challenges You'll Face in Your First Sales Manager Job

The good news for ambitious employees is demand for sales managers is increasing. Roles are expected to [increase by 5% through](#) to 2031. However, it's important to note that there may be a number of challenges you'll need to overcome as you move into this new position.

As a brand-new sales manager, you'll be under increased pressure to perform. You'll need to use all of your years of experience to not only ensure your success, but also assist every sales rep you work with in honing their abilities and improving their performance.

Sales managers also need to:

- **Develop new soft skills:** While there are many [hard skills](#) involved in sales management, you'll need to develop your soft skills too. You'll have to have excellent time management, communication, and collaboration skills to thrive in this role.
- **Use time effectively:** Speaking of time management, your leadership role will require you to be particularly cautious with your schedule. You'll need to make time for hiring, communicating with team members, creating training sessions and more.
- **Find a leadership style:** As a sales manager, you're no longer a colleague to your coworkers, you're a leader. This means finding a leadership style that resonates with your team members. You may choose collaborative leadership, inspirational leadership, or a brand-new method.

How to Transition into a Sales Manager Role

Many sales representatives will eventually consider looking into a management position. After you develop years of experience in your field, applying for a role as a sales manager can unlock new earning opportunities, as well as paths to personal growth.

The challenge is figuring out how to make the transition in a [competitive market](#). Here are some of the best strategies you can use to go from 'sales rep' to sales manager.

1. Enrol in Courses

As mentioned above, becoming a sales manager, and leading a team effectively requires the development of new skills. You'll need to learn about leadership styles, discover how to inspire and motivate other people, and build business acumen.

Enrolling in managerial courses and leadership classes can help you develop some of the management skills you need. You can even consider earning an applicable bachelor's degree, related to business, sales, marketing, or even data analytics. This could improve your chances of standing out from other applicants in your field.

1. Build your Network

Who you know can be just as important as what you know when [transitioning into sales](#) leadership. The relationships you build with your team, as well as other business leaders will be crucial in your career. Start by focusing on developing relationships with your existing team.

Learn how to communicate with your colleagues, discover what motivates them, and explore different methods of collaboration. Once you have a positive internal network, start looking for ways to build relationships online and offline with business leaders and sales experts in the niche you want to serve. This could open the door to new job opportunities.

1. Take Initiative

If you're hoping to transition into sales management through a promotion, one of the best things you can do is demonstrate your leadership abilities. Take the initiative, and show the other leaders in your business

that you're committed to delivering results. Invest in training courses for new software and processes your company might be using, volunteer for complex projects, and start mentoring others.

You can also show your ability to lead in other ways, by committing extra time to supporting your coworkers, working independently on tasks, and speaking up in sales meetings when you have ideas and suggestions. You can even volunteer to help onboard new employees.

1. Talk to your Boss

Sometimes, the best way to transition into a sales management role is to look for a new job with a different company. However, if you already have a lot of experience with your existing employer, it might be worth asking whether any progression opportunities are available.

Just as you would pitch products and services to companies, create a presentation highlighting your value as a manager. Demonstrate how you would handle your manager responsibilities, how you would help improve sales performance throughout the team, and what you've achieved so far.

Transitioning into Sales Management: Tips for Success

A sales manager role can be highly rewarding, but it's not for the faint of heart. Success in a managerial position requires a wide selection of skills, the right mindset, and a consistent commitment to growth. Here are our top tips for improving your chances of success.

1. Focus on Recruiting

Recruiting is one of the most important responsibilities of a sales manager. It's a key step in ensuring you have access to the right skills and talent in your team. Interviewing regularly, building a pipeline of talent, and networking with professionals will help your company grow.

In today's skills-short environment, a strong focus on recruiting will also ensure you can continuously source new candidates for your funnel. This will reduce the risk of you ending up with gaps in your team that could contribute to productivity and efficiency losses.

1. Foster Team Relationships

As a sales manager, it's your responsibility to ensure your teams aren't just effective, they're also highly engaged and aligned. Fostering professional relationships between your staff members will help to boost collaboration, create a more positive company culture, and drive growth.

Consider investing in team-building strategies, like [gamified training](#) sessions, scavenger hunts, and trust-building exercises. Think about how you can manage conflicts when they occur, and what you can do to create a transparent, respectful, and engaging environment for your staff.

1. Communicate Consistently

While thriving in your first sales management job requires a number of skills, few things are more important than your ability to communicate. Fostering open communication between you and your team helps to pave the way for two-way feedback, and valuable insights.

Don't just tell your employees what to do with clear directions and instructions, ask them questions and gather insights as often as possible. Find out what kind of sales processes they struggle with, what motivates them, and what can help to improve their sales performance.

1. Deliver Feedback and Coaching

Excellent sales managers are mentors and coaches for their team. They deliver constant inspiration, motivation, and guidance, to ensure every employee can reach their goals. Providing regular feedback (both positive and negative) to your teams can help you analyze performance trends in your team and implement the right training sessions to improve performance.

Acting as a coach or mentor to your staff members can ensure you're delivering one-on-one personalized support to each employee. This means you can get a deeper understanding of your employee's strengths, weaknesses, and requirements.

1. Share a Sense of Purpose

Many people assume sales people are only driven by one thing: money. However, the reality is that sales reps thrive best when they have a shared sense of purpose and vision. They want to feel as though they're not only delivering beneficial products and services to customers, but that they're also having a positive impact on the growth of the business.

With this in mind, share your vision with the team early, and often. Whenever you set sales goals or targets for your staff members, let them know how these goals align with the wider brand vision. Where possible, it's also helpful to align the vision of your business with the individual goals and motivations of your team members.

1. Master Time Management

As mentioned above, one of the biggest challenges employees face when transitioning into sales management, is understanding how to optimize their schedule. When you first step out of the sales funnel and into a management role, you might assume your days would be less stressful.

However, your role as a sales manager will require you to juggle a wide range of different tasks, from coaching team members, to creating reports, and recruiting new employees. Make sure you have a strategy in place to optimize your schedule every day. Use automation tools to improve your efficiency, leverage calendar apps to avoid overlap, and make the most of every moment.

1. Constantly Assess and Optimize

The best sales managers evaluate themselves based on the success and performance of their teams. The only way to ensure you're thriving as an effective manager, is to assess your employees regularly, and

examine their strengths and weaknesses.

Reviewing sales numbers, performance metrics, and KPIs will help you to determine whether your managerial strategies are really working. If you find you're not achieving the results you'd expect, don't simply 'pass the buck'. Remember that you're responsible for ensuring your team members can thrive in their roles.

Ready for a New Career Challenge?

Transitioning into sales management can seem like a daunting process, with a number of complex steps involved. You'll need to develop new skills, learn how to motivate and engage your team, and live up to much higher expectations.

However, if you can master the sales management role, then the rewards can be astronomical, from new skills, to a stronger personal brand, and increased income. Learn how to thrive in your new sales management role on the [Hardskill Exchange](#) today!??

HSE Team