

Building Synergy That Drives Results

A 3 Step Guide to Improving Your Sales Team

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In a world of 'cautious consumers', the need to develop and nurture a productive sales staff is not just a goal. It's a necessity. So how can you ensure your dealership's sales staff is on the right track? This three step guide to building effective team synergy is a good place to start.

About 5 years ago G&A Marketing noticed that the fundamentals behind successful staffed events were changing, but not for the better. Event team arrogance was on the rise while pre-sale training and efforts to establish dealership synergy were sharply declining. G&A knew that proper training as well as alliance amongst dealership staff and event team were crucial to making any event a success. In response, G&A partnered with a well known management company to develop cutting edge tools that eliminated the need for team arrogance, and increased the bond between event team and dealership staff. By establishing these changes, G&A's dealers began to generate more gross profit per event. Almost like magic.

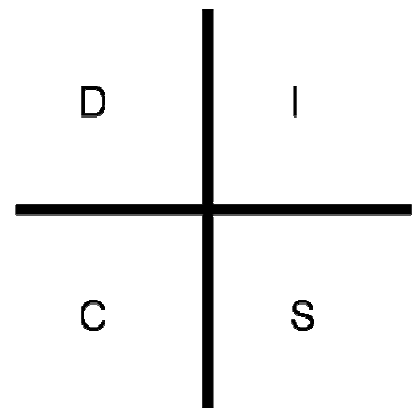
Because of the success G&A's dealers have experienced over the years, I am pleased to share with you these tips to creating a system which will turn even the most hopeless sales person into a super star.

Step 1: Assess Style of Staff

As a first step, G&A trains its Team Managers to assess people on their own team, as well as people within the dealership. Why is this important? It allows each team leader (or manager) to know what they're dealing with. Assessing staff characteristics makes it easier to make adjustments to management style in an effort to keep each employee feeling energized, more at ease and willing to work with us.

G&A breaks people's personalities down into four distinct styles. Some personalities may fit in only one style. Others may be a combination of two or more. The four styles to consider are: D, I, S and C. DISC is an acronym for:

- **Dominance** – relating to control, power and assertiveness
- **Influence** – relating to social situations and communication
- **Steadiness** – relating to patience, persistence, and thoughtfulness
- **Conscientiousness** – relating to structure and organization



Example of a DISC matrix

These four dimensions can be grouped in a grid with *D* and *I* sharing the top row and representing extroverted aspects of the personality. *C* and *S* then make up the bottom row representing introverted aspects. When looking at the columns of the grid, *D* and *C* share the left column and represent task-focused aspects. Similarly, *I* and *S* share the right column and represent social aspects.

How to Classify Employees According to DISC:

In the DISC matrix, the styles on the left side illustrate assertiveness, while the right side represents passivity. From a horizontal perspective, the styles at the top represent being open while the styles at the bottom represent being reserved. Here are some personality

traits G&A uses to classify its employees according to DISC, and place them in the appropriate quadrant of the matrix.

- **Dominance:** People who score high in the intensity of the "D" styles factor are very active in dealing with problems and challenges, while low "D" scores are people who want to do more research before committing to a decision. High "D" people are described as demanding, forceful, egocentric, strong willed, driving, determined, ambitious, aggressive, and pioneering. Low D scores can be described as those who are conservative, low keyed, cooperative, calculating, undemanding, cautious, mild, agreeable, modest and peaceful.

High "D" people charge toward confrontational situations. They separate business and personal relationships. Never lie to a high "D". They will hunt you down. High "D" personalities love to win; even if it leaves a messy trail. They represent 18% of the population.

- **Influence:** People with high "I" scores influence others through talking and activity and tend to be emotional. They are described as convincing, magnetic, political, enthusiastic, persuasive, warm, demonstrative, trusting, and optimistic. Those with low "I" scores influence more by data and facts, and not with feelings. They are described as reflective, factual, calculating, skeptical, logical, suspicious, matter of fact, pessimistic, and critical.

High "I" personalities are people who walk into a room and light it up. They have lots of energy, and are a lot of fun to be around. They are horrible with managing money, but believe they can always make it up easily. They don't like paperwork, and tend to over promise everything. They are the salesperson that has a knack to win over upset clients. This group represents 28% of the population.

- **Steadiness:** People with high "S" styles scores want a steady pace, security, and do not like sudden change. High "S" individuals are calm, relaxed, patient, possessive, predictable, deliberate, stable, consistent, and tend to be unemotional and poker faced. Low "S" intensity scores are those who like change and variety. People with low "S" scores are described as restless, demonstrative, impatient, eager, or even impulsive.

High "S" people love process and continuity. When it comes to negotiating, high "S" personalities are not about winning. They want to make everyone happy. They are everyone's friend. They don't have big egos and are great team players. High "S" personalities do not feel the need to be the center of attention. They will avoid confrontational situations. Money is not their key motivator. This group represents 40% of the population.

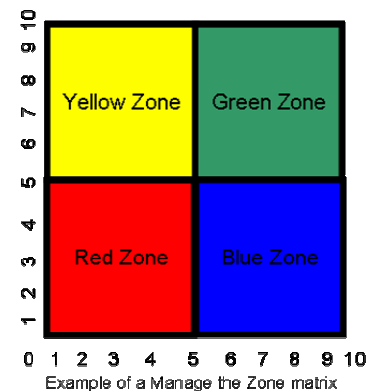
- **Conscientious:** People with high "C" styles adhere to rules, regulations, and structure. They like to do quality work and do it right the first time. High "C" people are careful, cautious, exacting, neat, systematic, diplomatic, accurate, and tactful. Those with low "C" scores challenge the rules and want independence and are described as self-willed, stubborn, opinionated, unsystematic, arbitrary, and careless with details.

High “C” personalities love rules and spreadsheets. They love to catch or prove others wrong. High “C” people make good accountants and auditors. They want all of the details, and need to be perfect before moving on. As a result, they are not good with deadlines. They have issues with people because people aren’t perfect. This group represents 14% of the population.

Step 2: Manage the Zone

Once you establish what type of people you are working with, it’s time to move on to figuring out where they stand as far as attitude and ability. At G&A, we use an assessment tool called “managing the zone” to help our team leaders and managers work with the hand they’ve been dealt. This tool helps determine where each individual in the store is based on talent and attitude, and provides insight on how to proceed in working with them. Here’s how to start “managing the zone”:

- 1) Pull out a blank piece of paper. Draw a box, and divide it into four sections.
 - Number the vertical and horizontal axis from 0-10
 - In the top left quadrant of the box write, “Yellow Zone”
 - In the top right quadrant of the box write, “Green Zone”
 - In the bottom left quadrant of the box write, “Red Zone”
 - In the bottom right quadrant of the box write, “Blue Zone”



- 2) Rank each individual on a scale of 1 to 10, according to the following traits: (Do not rank anyone as a 5. Ranking any trait as a 5 indicates inductiveness, and will not help you determine where the employee actually stands.)

Product Knowledge

Skill

Attitude

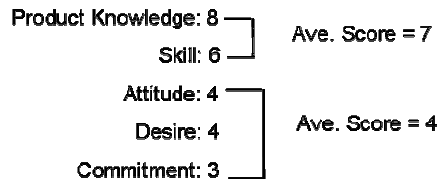
Desire

Commitment

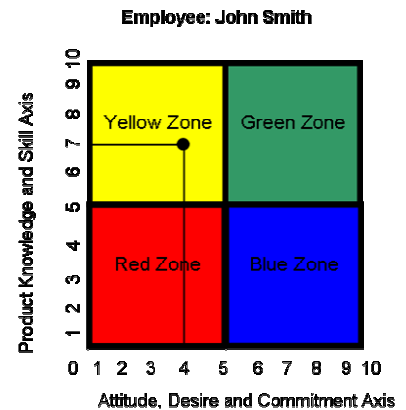
- Add the employee's *Product Knowledge* score and *Skill* score, then find the average.
- Add the employee's *Attitude* score, *Desire* score and *Commitment* score, then find the average.

Example

Employee: John Smith



- 3) Plot each employee's average scores on the matrix. *Product Knowledge* and *Skill* averages are plotted from the vertical axis. *Attitude*, *Desire* and *Commitment* averages are plotted from the horizontal axis. The point where the employee's *Product Knowledge* and *Skill* average, and the employee's *Attitude*, *Desire* and *Commitment* score intersect indicates that employee's zone (see adjacent example)



If Employees Land in the Red Zone:

Employees in the Red Zone can be a huge liability to the company. Red Zone employees have low self-esteem and little initiative. If a bulk of your sales staff lands in the Red Zone, you should probably review your hiring process because you're likely hiring the wrong type of person. These are people who bring you no value.

At G&A, we've established a few short rules to remind us how to handle these people. Use these as thought starters when managing Red Zone employees.

Rule 1) *You can't make a pig sing.* (Meaning: not everyone can be a sales person.)

Rule 2) *When you want it more than they want it. It's time to cut them loose.* (Meaning: stop working with employees whom have no motivation to be better.)

Managing Yellow Zone Employees:

Employees in the Yellow Zone know how to do the job and the talent to do it. But their attitude is bringing them down, and could be bringing down others in the organization. People in the Yellow Zone need to be nurtured to move them on to the Green Zone.

Most managers make the mistake of yelling, belittling or embarrassing this person, thinking that will motivate them out of their bad attitude. The result is usually the opposite. The employee tends to sink further into the Yellow Zone, and starts recruiting others in the company to join them. The best way to handle Yellow Zone employees is to talk about where you want that employee to be versus where that employee may be currently. For example, talk to your Yellow Zone employee about the success you believe he is capable of, or perhaps about how he could be a leader within the organization. The Yellow Zone is one of the most difficult Zones for managers to deal with. You'll tend to do a lot more negotiating with people in the yellow. .

Rules to Remember for Yellow Zone Employees:

- Rule 1)** *Treat people as valuable and not indispensable.* (Meaning: Build in your people instead of constantly replacing them.)
- Rule 2)** *Separate the issues, pick your battles wisely.* (Meaning: Don't let employees bring drama into the real problem.)
- Rule 3)** *It is better that one person perish than the whole team go down in flames.* (Meaning: If employees won't adjust, and are recruiting others to have a bad attitude; they need to go.)
- Rule 4)** *Pass your negatives up and your positives down.* (Meaning: Tell your staff encouraging stories. Share your struggles with your boss.)
- Rule 5)** *Speak to them off the record to give them a chance to self direct.* (Meaning: Speak to them one-on-one, and away from others. Let them give their side of the story.)

Managing Blue Zone Employees:

Blue Zone employees are typically new people to the organization. Managers have a short window of opportunity to teach them the right way to do things. If managers don't feel a sense of urgency here, these employees will fall to either the Yellow Zone or Red Zone quickly. You want to keep them away from anyone in the Yellow. Treat the Blue Zone like a boot camp. Wear out Blue Zone employees with information and training that allows no extra time to think. This will wear them out and keep them focused on what you teaching. When someone is in the Blue Zone they are usually open minded and absorb info like a sponge.

Rules to Remember for Blue Zone Employees:

- Rule 1)** *Everyone is a movie star on paper.* (Meaning: No matter how good their resume, still train each sales person on your sales process and product.)
- Rule 2)** *Make them drink out of a fire hose.* (Meaning: Feed them training until they're too tired to think they can't do it.)

Rule 3) *You can compress time frames, but you can't skip steps.* (Meaning: Don't skip the training).

Managing Green Zone Employees:

The Green Zone is where you want everyone to be. These people are self-motivated and working to achieve their own goals. They become the leaders in the group. They are great at recruiting additional Green people, and are an excellent example of the 80/20 rule where 20% of your people make 80% of your money.

You need to constantly stroke Green Zone employees or they start to feel under appreciated. But be careful. If you stroke them too much they will use it against you. Keep them in the inner circle so they feel special.

Rules to Remember for Green Zone Employees:

Rule 1) *Work with those that deserve it, not just those who need it.* (Meaning: Make sure you teach those who've proven to be successful just as much as those whom have not.)

Rule 2) *Work with winners; winning is an attitude.* (Meaning: Green Zone employees will spread the right attitude to the Blue and Yellow Zone.)

Rule 3) *Get vested in the Green zone.* (Meaning: The Green Zone is where your company will make more money.)

Step 3: Overcoming Challenging Conversations

Still from time to time you will have to have challenging conversations with employees, managers and owners. In most cases, disagreements are the result of unclear communication. In the car business this usually results in a shouting match and test of each other's egos. The following 7 steps will help to uncover the root issue, reduce tempers and clarify communication - All without the drama.

1. Name the meeting. Tell them what the tone of the meeting will be.
 - Difficult (Lack of performance, poor behavior, etc.)
 - Update Meeting (Find out how the employee is feeling)
 - Fact Finding (No good news. No bad news. Just need to get facts.)
 - Responsibility (Clarify whom should be doing what)
2. "Here's what I know..." (Just state the facts)
3. "Is that accurate?" "Is that new info?" (Have the employee answer "yes" or "no")
4. If answer is "no" ask, "What am I missing?" (Give them an attempt to say their side of the story)
5. "How do you think we should fix this?" OR "Here's what I would like to see happen..."
6. "Is that do-able" OR "Does that make sense?"
7. Deal with the response.

There are many issues that arise daily in car dealerships which usually end in tempers being flared up. Although these 7 strategies may not put an end to all disagreements, they have been proven to be incredibly effective in keeping everyone working cooperatively towards the same goal.

Obviously, there's a lot to consider when building a system to increase sales team synergy. Yet when done correctly, there is no telling how much you, your team and your dealership can achieve.

Who Is G&A Marketing?

The answer is simple. G&A Marketing, Inc. is an automotive staffed event (AKA Automotive super sale), advertising, training and consulting company that is far from ordinary. It is G&A's goal to be the industry's best at leading dealerships to achieve maximum performance through marketing, training, consulting and motivation. And it's something no G&A employee takes lightly. By offering an ever growing array of customizable marketing products and services, G&A Marketing gives dealerships the power to increase market share, improve staff performance and grown their bottom line. For more information, please visit <http://www.gamarketing.com>, email Matt Baker, VP of G&A Marketing at mbaker@gamarketing.com, or call Matt at 800.688.1370 for specifics on Staffed Events.