



Matt Baker

LACK OF SYNERGY KILLS STAFFED EVENT

Remember last month's Super Bowl game? Sure – the Colts and the Saints had incredible seasons, and both teams came ready to win. Yet in the end, New Orleans proved their worth by bringing home a well-deserved victory.

So then, consider for a second what might have happened to the 2010 Super Bowl had New Orleans decided not to practice. Think the Saints would still be 2010 Super Bowl champions? Chances are, probably not.

Making a decision not to practice doesn't make much sense in the world of sports. But when trying to relay this philosophy to the business world, especially the world of staffed events, it can often become lost in translation. Any football team understands the importance of training and building synergy amongst its members. Not all staffed event companies, on the other hand, do. For many staffed event providers, training regimens and team-building exercises are viewed more as a waste of time than they are a key to successful performance. Many staffed event companies (and dealers alike) think an event sale is nothing more than putting different car guys in a showroom full of prospects just to see how many units they can sell. As a result, these companies and their dealers never realize how much of a direct impact training and synergy have on the overall performance of their sale. Your staffed event provider should utilize training as means of getting everyone involved and working toward a shared goal — much like the New Orleans Saints did in preparation for the Super Bowl. The purpose of the event is to sell more cars at a greater profit. This requires both technique and team work.

Is there really any organization in any industry that thrives when there is no synergy? A lack of cohesive bond between event team and dealership sales staff will kill any perfectly good sale. No matter how much you spent on advertising. No matter how many ups you see. If these two parties aren't working together, they're going nowhere

fast. Without a real connection, without real synergy, there is no shared ambition. Instead of working to establish similar goals, efforts by both parties are focused almost solely on overpowering one another. This rivalry eventually wears down every stakeholder in the event's success, often leaving frustration and disappointment in its wake.

So, one may ask, if synergy is key to keeping promotional events profitable, how does one ensure their dealership's culture promotes total cooperation? The answer to this question can encompass many parts. Imagine an offense on a football team where half the members are running a pass play and the other half are running a run play. Think that this offense is going to achieve any success together? No, probably not. A sales force combined of dealership staff and event team staff is no different. If the event company comes in with an ego that is against selling with your staff, they're probably not the best fit for your store. Just like dealers, not all staffed event companies do business the same way. One key factor to keep in mind is the staffed event company's pay plan. Be mindful of how you set up the pay plan for the team. Putting all the pressure on the team often results in less overall team work. This is because the members of the event team become so focused on reaching certain numbers just to get a pay check that they ignore the dealership staff. In return, the dealership staff feels left out and may make an effort to sabotage teams coming in.

Has your dealership established any common goals with your event company? If you don't know what everyone is working towards, what can you expect to achieve?

Consider the importance of proper training when developing your dealership's sales force. You know you need top-notch sales talent, and creating that top-notch sales team requires regular, disciplined training. Even the best car salespeople get caught in routine from time to time and start skipping steps. Training, when done correctly, creates synergy and produces results. Do your

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vendors (especially staffed event vendors) offer personalized training programs to help integrate their process with your sales staff? Do they make an effort to establish and build a cohesive bond with your dealership? If they do, your staff is likely begging you to keep them coming back. If they don't, you and your dealership staff are probably left frustrated by a miserable experience.

Obviously, there's more to building synergy amongst your staff and your event company than I can share here. Don't let that fact, however, keep you from realizing the bottom line. There is not another product in the auto industry that can generate more profit to the dealer in only a few days than a staffed event. Unfortunately, many companies have cut too many corners, ultimately diminishing event results and faith in event effectiveness. Understand that your dealership's success is a direct product of its environment. An environment rooted in opposition will bring you hostility, while an environment rooted in cooperation will bring you results.

If you're interested in learning more about cultivating a cohesive environment in your dealership, e-mail me to receive a free guide to creating synergy that drives results.

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