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CHUCK TALK: Searching for the 'magical fix' could kill your business

Better to improve core operations, hone the strategy

BY CHUCK MACHE

"All we have to do is make this one change, and revenue will go through the roof." When I hear a statement similar to this, I get a little nervous for the person who is saying it.

I've never in 25 years of selling, managing, leading and building companies found a magical fix. That doesn't mean they aren't there, and it could mean that I'm just not good enough.

But I'm just saying I've never found one. I have heard that statement from many executives, managers, and salespeople most of whom are either doing something else with their lives or living a business life of mediocrity.

Look, I play the "what if" game constantly, and there is a real place for it in business. Like, what if you could come up with an absolutely incredible strategic change to your business model that would create the growth rate you've only imagined?

Or, what if you could find that strategic fix that would once and for all differentiate you from every competitor in your niche, creating opportunities that were certain to grow revenue?

I'll be the first one to arrive at a session where we look beyond the current strategy at ways to launch into super-duper stardom. However, I have news for all of you. There is no such thing as a magical fix. In fact, show me an individual whose responsibility is to lead, manage or sell who spends their time in search of the major change that is going to instantly catapult their business, and I'll show you inexperience and flawed thinking.

Here's an example:

Sales are down in a company, and there are many reasons. The sales management team is weak. While it has potential, it is not being led or managed correctly. The marketing strategy is clear. The brand positioning is clear. But the collateral material and Web site is taking forever to change over to completion.

The general manager is convinced that recruiting and hiring great salespeople will be the magical fix to get the company on track. He gets target fixation on recruiting a superstar from a competitor and turns a deaf ear to all the other issues. Meanwhile, the company is not hitting plan.

What just happened in this example?

1. There is no scalable model that is working right now; adding people won't fix the existing problem.
2. While the addition of the superstar sales rep will help, the odds are they won't stay very long because the overall system is broken.

3. The GM is focused on a magical fix of recruiting versus building a sound, scalable model.

This magical fix thinking can be applied directly to salespeople also. Let's use the same above example:

The sales rep shows up for work on Monday morning. While the marketing strategy is crystal clear, he feels like the magical fix is a Powerpoint presentation that will help him bring business in. Therefore, he'll abandon the core disciplines required to grow revenue and focus on the magical fix of the creation of the greatest Powerpoint presentation known to saleskind and not spending time with customers.

If you are in sales, make sure you have the following in place:

- A clear personal brand that supports the company brand positioning statement
- A complete marketing strategy that positions you for success
- A disciplined execution plan that is a proven methodology for bringing in sales
- Your hand on the pulse of the reasons you are above or below hitting your plan
- The strategic changes you will make to fuel your plan

Every successful company and every successful salesperson has a disciplined strategic platform from which they grow their business.

They don't spend their time searching for the magical fix because they are busy executing their existing business model and constantly improving it. It has been my experience that those who focus on the magical fix have at best a weak business model to begin with. And, those who don't focus on it find a way to make magic in their business.

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Chuck Mache, president of Chuck Mache Communications, is a speaker, executive coach, consultant and author of "The Four Kinds of Sales People: How and Why They Excel and How You Can Too." He is also a featured expert on the Entrepreneur Magazine Radio Show in a segment called "Chuck Talk" at www.EntrepreneurTalkRadio.com. Learn more and sign up for Chuck's complimentary monthly newsletter at www.ChuckMache.com.