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Today is Monday, July 10, 2006

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## COMMENTARY

# Which are you? Performer, Professional, Caretaker, Searcher?

*SANTA ROSA AUTHOR IDENTIFIES FOUR TYPES OF SALESPEOPLE AND THEIR SKILLS*

Monday, July 10, 2006

## COMMENTARY

BY CHUCK MACHE

I've spent the last 25 years selling, managing, leading and building sales organizations, and if you've managed salespeople for any length of time, I guarantee you've experienced scenarios similar to these:

1. One of your top producers just blew up on operations once again. She's the best at bringing in the numbers, but you spend a fair share of your time cleaning up her messes. Seems like she's either sky-high or down in the dumps. When she's down, she's out of her selling zone, and productivity comes to a standstill. But when she's up, look out world!
2. Another one of your top producers is very consistent, a total team player, even tempered, patient and consistently bringing in the numbers. He too is one of the best on the team, but he seems to be missing some opportunities that would catapult him to super stardom if he made some slight changes to his selling game. Instead, he sticks to his self-proven conservative approach.
3. Then you have some that are simply stuck in their lackluster comfort zones – giving you a solid month about every third month or giving you about 70 percent of what they have all the time. They have the potential, but they're consistently mediocre. You just can't get them to do the difficult things that it takes to produce at top levels with any regularity. Worse yet, they're passive aggressive. You say to yourself, "If I could only wake them up, they'd be right up there with the best."
4. Finally, you made some bad hiring decisions and have ended up with a few sales reps that just don't belong in sales. They perceived a sales career to be easy, and they were wrong. Producing top sales is hard work. These misfits are consumed with fear, and if truth be told, they honestly hate sales. They have no real intention of making the necessary changes to be successful. You'd like to help them find more fulfilling careers.

Have you ever closely examined why some people are wildly successful at selling, meeting and exceeding every goal placed in front of them, while others lack either the self motivation or certain key skill sets to get them to their next level of growth and performance?

After all, they all have the same product, the same tools and the same compensation structure. They've all been through the same training program. In my experience of leading and managing thousands of salespeople, the answer has to do with the fact that virtually all sales organizations are comprised of four different kinds of salespeople: two are top producers, one is stuck in a comfort zone and one doesn't belong in sales.

I was giving a speech on "Four People, Four Paths" recently to a leading company in the California real estate industry, and I was emphasizing the importance of knowing exactly who you are. I was quoting my book as I explained in detail the struggles and breakthrough opportunities for each of the four kinds of salespeople: two top producers (The Performer and The Professional), one that is stuck in a major comfort zone (The Caretaker) and one that belongs in another career (The Searcher). At one point, a woman yelled out, "Oh my God, I'm a Caretaker!"

The crowd laughed, and I congratulated her on her honesty and pointed out to her (and others who were not so forthright) the tremendous opportunity that existed if she made the conscious decision to change and begin doing the difficult things that it takes to produce top results on a consistent basis.

### *Influencing those who are 'stuck'*

My point is that while the individual makeup of sales forces may vary, there are always only four kinds. Management's goal is to get the best to keep getting better while building a team with as many top producers as possible. That means management must influence those that are "stuck" in their comfort zone to break through to the next level.

That means management must perform the unenviable task of helping those that don't belong to find other career paths. In my experience, management gets too preoccupied with these two challenges and neglects the opportunity to get their top producers to reach for their next level of achievement. They have more in them. That's why they're the best and can be even better.

If you want sales to improve, particularly in highly competitive sales environments, then leaders must create a growth-oriented atmosphere that thrives on constant improvement, regardless of market conditions. By the way, that means leaders and managers must also be striving to break through to their next level, too.

Sales is about creating and sustaining momentum, and then creating even more of it. Consistently.

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Chuck Mache, president of Chuck Mache Communications in Santa Rosa, has more than 25 years experience in selling, managing, building and leading sales organizations regionally as well as internationally. A speaker, coach and consultant, he is the author of the new book, "The Four Kinds of Sales People: Your Personal Path to Breakthrough Achievement," [www.thefourkindsofsalespeople.com](http://www.thefourkindsofsalespeople.com). Call him at 707-538-3270 or go to [www.chuckmache.com](http://www.chuckmache.com).