

## “The Coaching Cube<sup>®</sup>” by Jim Pancero



We are excited to share with you one of our latest sales management products to help you increase your sales coaching and leadership effectiveness. Called “The Coaching Cube<sup>®</sup>” this 2 ¼” cube is constructed of dense foam material like that used in traditional “stress balls” and has printed on each of its six sides a critical coaching concept to share with the members of your sales team.

By displaying the top six most critical coaching ideas or suggestions, the “The Coaching Cube<sup>®</sup>” is meant to sit on your desk as a reminder to help you think of additional ideas that can improve your team’s selling opportunities and multiple-stepped plans. It can also be used to help stimulate your sales rep’s strategic customer planning. Next time a coaching session or account planning meeting with one of your sales team members stalls due to a lack of new ideas, toss the “The Coaching Cube<sup>®</sup>” over to your sales rep asking them to “pick a side” and tell you what they think they can do to help fulfill or achieve the idea being offered.

Each of the six sides of the “The Coaching Cube<sup>®</sup>” offers a critical coaching suggestion or idea.

### **Be Proactive - “Can I stop reacting and start initiating?”**

The first side of the six sided “The Coaching Cube<sup>®</sup>” focuses on being more proactive and asks the question “Can I stop reacting and start initiating?”

The majority of sales professionals are only reactive in their selling efforts. How many of your people wait for a customer to call or a request for a price quote to come across their desk before they start selling anything new? The first and most fundamental concept of increasing your competitive advantage and uniqueness begins with you initiating instead of just reacting or responding to your customers or prospects. Are your reps proactively prospecting for new opportunities? And are they proactively looking for ways to expand their customer contacts by getting “higher, wider and deeper” within their customer’s political organization?

What percentage of their selling days do your sales reps spend being proactive in their efforts instead of just being reactive by only responding to requests or identified problems?

The more of an initiator you can become, instead of responder, the more of a competitive edge you’re likely to gain. After all, success in selling has never been based on your being the most responsive fire fighter, but instead success occurs when you can become the most proactive arsonist in your market!

### **Think Multiple Moves Ahead - “Can I think and plan more moves ahead?”**

The next side of “The Coaching Cube<sup>®</sup>” addresses thinking multiple moves ahead by asking, “Can I think and plan more moves ahead?”

Most sales professionals are selling like the “*Hellarewe*” bird. Do you remember the “*Hellarewe*” bird? The three-foot bird that lives in four-foot grass and keeps asking, “*Where the hell are we?*”

One of the easier ways your sales team members can increase their competitive advantage is by thinking, planning, and initiating more moves ahead than either their customers or competitors.

Your responsibility as the leader of your sales organization is to help each team member think and plan more moves ahead than they’ve been in the past. Your job as their sales manager and leader is to lift them above the four foot grass to help them see where they need to go and then help them identify the best path to accomplishing their goals. How many moves ahead are your team members thinking, planning, and implementing?

**Be Tactical - “*Am I following my multi-stepped selling process?*”**

Another side of “The Coaching Cube<sup>®</sup>” focuses on being more tactical by asking, “*Am I following my multi-stepped selling process?*”

How many moves ahead are your sales team members thinking and planning with their selling process? A key responsibility of a sales manager is to lead their entire sales team in the definition and consistent implementation of a defined multiple-stepped selling process from the time you identify a new selling opportunity until you have a signed order. However, the vast majority of sales teams have no defined multiple-stepped selling process and each member of the sales team continues selling their own way with their own unique process, and with no coaching guidance, leadership, or feedback.

What can you do to help your team define, follow, and ultimately keep refining your selling process so your entire sales team can become more focused in their multiple-stepped planning, more efficient in their selling efforts, and more effective in their sales results?

**Be Strategic - “*Have I communicated my value and uniqueness?*”**

The third side of “The Coaching Cube<sup>®</sup>” centers on being more strategic by asking, “*Have I communicated my value and uniqueness?*”

The toughest single question for any sales professional from a customer or prospect is when they ask you “*Why, based on all the competitive alternatives available to me do I want to buy from you?*” However, the majority of sales teams have no clearly defined and refined response to this question.

Another critical responsibility of a sales leader is to help their entire sales team develop and utilize a single response to this question so your entire sales team and the members of your sales support team, are all able to communicate a consistent and effective definition of your value and uniqueness.

Do you think your team can improve and strengthen their ability to communicate a stronger value and uniqueness within their prospects and customers?

## **Be Politically Aware - “Can I get ‘higher, wider, and deeper’ with my customers?”**

The next side of “The Coaching Cube<sup>®</sup>” deals with being more politically aware by asking “Can I get ‘higher, wider and deeper’ with my customers?”

Most sales professionals only have one or two main contacts within their customer’s organization. Though your reps keep talking about how stable their larger customers are, you’ll likely discover that most of their accounts are only stable because of one or two key relationships.

One of the ways you can increase your competitive advantage and positioning within your customers is to get “higher, wider and deeper” within your contacts at that account.

How can your sales reps get higher, calling on upper management, higher than they’ve been calling before? How can they get wider, by calling on more departments or divisions besides the one currently buying from them?

Moreover, how can they get deeper within the account so they build stronger relationships with multiple people within the department or division they’re selling to, so if someone leaves or is promoted they can still keep the business and all the relationships in place and away from your competitors!

Getting “higher, wider and deeper” will also help you be more solutions and customer focused instead of just product focused by helping your sales team understand the importance and value of spending more time calling on users, influencers and executives in addition to the current buyers or “decision makers” most reps only focus their time on now.

Do you think getting “higher, wider and deeper” within your important customers could help increase your team’s competitive advantage and uniqueness?

## **Be Value Focused - “Am I selling ‘lowest total cost’ instead of lowest price?”**

Our last of the six sides of “The Coaching Cube<sup>®</sup>” addresses being more value focused by asking “Am I selling ‘lowest total cost’ instead of lowest price?”

A direct result of this last economic recession has been to make buyers much more price conscious in their buying efforts. But just because your customers are price focused doesn’t mean you have to be the lowest priced vendor to win their business.

The key to selling today is based on you communicating and validating how you and your company won’t likely be the lowest price, but can prove to be their lowest total cost.

Customers have never been price focused. Buyers today, even under these more financially pressured buying environments, focus on identifying and evaluating competitors against who will provide the most value and lowest total cost to them and their business.

However, if buyers search the market talking to a variety of competitors and see no real difference between competitive products and hears all the competitors saying and promising the same things as they explain how their company has “the best products, with the best service, and at the best price” well...if all these things are perceived as being equal by the buyer, then of course they’ll select the vendor with the lowest perceived price.

But you can have a higher price and still win the business! The job of a sales professional is to communicate such a differential in value, quality, risk, and responsiveness that their customer will buy from them even when they have a higher price. The reality of all selling is the more differential in value I can communicate and prove then the more differential you the buyer will be willing to pay in price.

If the customer only buys based on the lowest price bid then either your sales rep didn’t do their job of proving enough increased value and uniqueness to justify your higher prices, or your sales rep should have walked away from the account at the beginning as soon as they discovered the buyer wasn’t putting any value in your offerings of uniqueness and value or was announcing they’d only be selecting the lowest priced vendor proposing.

How can you help your sales team shift their focus from only trying to sell based on lowest price to now selling on lowest total cost? In addition, what can you do as their sales leader to help them strengthen and quantify their customer references and financial justifications that can help them prove they can ultimately be their buyer’s lowest total cost alternative?

Look how these six critical sales coaching concepts can increase your sales team’s focus, multiple-stepped account planning, and ability to communicate and prove your competitive uniqueness and value. The bottom line of selling is the more of these six coaching concepts you can think and apply with your customer or prospect, then the more of a competitive advantage you’ll gain within your markets.

### **Ordering your copy of “The Coaching Cube®”**

You can order your copy of “The Coaching Cube®” for only \$9.95 plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling by going to [www.pancero.com/coachingcube.html](http://www.pancero.com/coachingcube.html). Volume pricing/ordering is available by calling Paul Pyle on my team at 800-526-0074 extension 2.

As the manager and leader of your sales team we know you’re good, now the question is, are you good enough and creative enough to utilize “The Coaching Cube®” to help strengthen your sales coaching effectiveness and leadership with your sales team.

Jim Pancero