

COACHING UP SMART SHARKS



AuctusIQ

Sales Leadership and Coaching
are Critical to Developing an
Intelligent Sales Force

AUTHORED BY AUCTUSIQ CO-FOUNDERS, TROY KANTER AND DR. COURTNEY MCCASHLAND



Those who grow and advance your careers have mastered three things: 1) finding and keeping great talent, 2) coaching that talent to success, 3) exploring a system that measures and replicates success. For dynamic leaders who realize that steady progress can lead to exponentially improved outcomes, one specific fact crystallizes: coaching, perhaps more than anything, is one of the most transformative drivers of growth.

Take it from one of the most effective and skillful leaders of the 21st century: Alabama football coach Nick Saban.

Saban's 7 national titles are the most in college football history, he was the first coach to win titles at two FBS schools and has been named multiple times to Fortune's annual list of the "World's 50 Greatest Leaders" alongside luminaries across a wide variety of fields: Jeff Bezos, Angela Merkel, the Pope, Tim Cook, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and others.

In college football, he's basically a Great White to every other school's minnow.

What makes Saban's leadership style special? Those who know him best praise him for a method of achieving goals that has come to be known as "The Process." They describe it in a number of ways, but the common theme is that it is based in a detailed roadmap for growth and achievement.

One of Saban's longtime assistants, Burton Burns, said the benefits of "The Process" clarified for him one Christmas while trying to assemble a bicycle. Burn's wife, after watching him struggle for far too long, finally insisted on reading him the instructions. He relented and — voila! — suddenly everything snapped into place. He realized that's exactly how his boss had built success: If you make a rock-solid plan and then follow the steps, it simply works.

If you have a good process, it's not about a whole organization focusing on one massive outcome -- bringing home the championship trophy, for instance -- but about the small steps that get you there. For student-athletes in Saban's group, that means making progress in the weight room and hitting their marks in the classroom. For coaches, that might look like a few hours refining a playbook or months spent recruiting the best talent. But the key is following a detailed process that has a foundation in accountability, structure and discipline. With that, nothing is left to chance.

"You can't get from A to Z by passing up B," Burns said.

Keep in mind that before Nick Saban started churning out undefeated seasons and forced his way into discussions as the greatest college football coach of all time, he spent nearly 20 years trying to get one of his teams to finish atop the AP poll. Saban told Fortune that once you have a system or a routine, "you spend a lot more time on thinking of things that would make it better."

That love of routine is probably why Saban reportedly always eats the same salad for lunch and why former Apple CEO Steve Jobs consistently strolled into the office in the same black turtleneck: they each set up a system to squeeze in just a little more precious time to think about what they found important and less time thinking about that which they found mundane.

Leading a 21st-century sales team follows the same basic principle: Create a laser-focused process that feeds into your goals, then follow it with tenacity.

Unfortunately, too many sales teams out there don't have a refined process. In fact, many sales managers — handed a winning process to follow — will naturally push back. For them, even if they see how the process



adds extraordinary value, they fear that embracing it means admitting to their boss that they didn't have a working process before. It's not an admission of guilt, and that fear may be what's stopping your sales team from opening the floodgates and unlocking their full potential.

As a leader, your focus has to be on your team's accountabilities and discipline, building on their strengths and identifying areas for growth, aligning your team's skills with where the industry is headed and more.

What it boils down to is this: You are what you do, and every sales leader needs to do three things and do them consistently to coach up a successful selling team:

1

WORK THE LEADING INDICATORS.

It's about seeking to identify those long-term opportunities and aligning your selling organization with the competencies needed to succeed in the future.

2

WORK THE DEALS.

No matter how busy your day or what's on your plate, you must be willing to stop to everything to help your sellers work and win a deal.

3

WORK THE DEVELOPMENT GAPS.

This is about understanding your team, their strengths, and eliminating their blind spots. Allowing you to help them get better, faster, and smarter—quarter over quarter.



The honest truth is that working the indicators is one of the hardest tasks facing a CEO or sales leader. Not only do those corporate leaders need to know where your industry is heading in five years, but as your company grows from closing \$50 thousand to \$50 million deals, you need to be much more intentional about the types of skilled sellers they bring to the table with potential buyers.

Each is easier said than done. That's why habits are so important, both for you and your team. As a leader, you need to master a number of habits that keep you moving toward your larger goals while bettering your team. You need habits that help you shift out of the daily sales mindset and force you to think several quarters into the future so you can see the potentially seismic shifts that you'll need to adjust for.

Another reason good habits are so phenomenally powerful: Most organizations have been over-matrixed to the nth degree. In other words, team structures are often set up in a way in which -- stuck in silos -- they more easily lose sight of the bigger picture and even lose track of overall accountability for achieving specific goals.

With a clear, habit-driven process, you'll be better prepared to keep the most important functions of your role directly in front of you and top of mind, which means you'll have your team focused on developing skills that will have the maximum impact to your bottom line.

COMMON MISTAKES SALES LEADERS MAKE

Sales teams face endless obstacles: Maybe their product doesn't live up to the tech specs of a newer or more well-funded competitor in the field; maybe the team is trying to get a new product off the ground that has zero name recognition; or maybe the group of sellers is lacking real-world experience.

Regardless of the issues, it ultimately comes back to the sales leader to get the team on track. Typically that requires a sales leader to transform themselves into a Smart Shark while building a team of Smart Sharks capable of generating opportunities, tracking progress and closing deals.

But it's not always easy. Sales leaders themselves often have to overcome some harsh realities:

- The Battlefield Promotion. This is a leader who was thrust into the job by circumstances—a promotion or departure above sees them inherit the sales leader role with little preparation, training or even clearly outlined targets.

WHAT IS A SMART SHARK?



"Smart Sharks" are inspired by the Great White Shark, considered the smartest shark in the ocean. The Great White circles its prey, analyzing the situation so it can build and execute a perfect attack strategy. Smart Shark sellers similarly operate off data, embrace a rigorous process and ask great questions so they have the best chance at finding success. When a seller is a Smart Shark, there's no wasted effort. They do their homework, there's good-decision making and though they certainly bring a killer instinct to the table, they also know exactly when to strike. This isn't the just story of one of nature's best hunters running on pure aggression—leave that to the thoughtless, teeth-gnashing crocodiles and piranhas. Sharks study their target relentlessly, so they can strike with incredible efficiency.

Check out our companion white papers "The Rise of Smart Sharks" and "Win Deals like a Smart Shark" for more on AuctusIQ's approach to maximizing your approach in sales and talent acquisition.



- A Sales-Specific Skillset. After a career of perfecting an ability to close deals, a natural seller is asked to become a people manager, which requires a set of skills they haven't yet perfected.
- Flipping the Script. Being a top-tier seller is all about building a process that enables personal goal achievement. Now, the promoted sales leader must adjust to focus largely on the goals of others.

These examples are just a few of those seen constantly across the business world. To revisit a comparison to the gridiron: Being able to throw a football with incredible precision might make Peyton Manning or Tom Brady among the best NFL QBs of all time, but it certainly isn't indicative that they'd make great head coaches (or even offensive coordinators) given the chance. Heck, the world's premier sports agents and NFL GMs regularly miss on projecting how Heisman winners and college champions will perform at the next level, with many top picks finding themselves out of the league within a few short years.

The business world operates the same way.

In a University of Minnesota study, three professors analyzed the performance of 53,035 sales employees at 214 American companies from 2005 to 2011. During that time, 1,531 of those sales reps were promoted to become sales managers.

They found that, by the numbers, the most productive salespeople were more likely to:

1. Be promoted to roles as a manager, and
2. Perform poorly as managers

Why?

The research team found that promotion decisions placed too much weight on current performance as a seller and not enough on trying to promote the best potential managers. "As a result, the performance of a new manager's subordinates declines relatively more after the managerial position is filled by someone who was a strong salesperson prior to promotion."

The hidden costs are even higher, with a company that doesn't build leaders through methods such as coaching actually paying twice for the mistake -- and it's a painful double whammy! The team loses one of its best sellers and gains a leader that isn't prepared to get the most out of the remaining team members -- a situation the researchers called "extremely costly." (Source)

Yet, like Bill Murray reliving a vapid nightmare over and over in "Groundhog's Day," company after company will still make the same mistake thinking it will lead to instant, positive results while totally ignoring investments in building out their team members' individual leadership skills.

CoachingIQ is built to arm sales leaders with every tool that they need to avoid the same pitfalls, and it does so by putting each seller in a proven sales process while growing through a guided coaching methodology.

And yet, while spending the time needed to build your team's competencies, working through a refined framework gives most managers more time to reflect and consider the big changes on the horizon that might impact their team, business or industry.



WHY PERFORMANCE COACHING IS THE ULTIMATE TOOL FOR GROWTH

A smart sales leader, whether thrust into the role on short notice and looking for results or a veteran looking to maintain growth, will always win by embracing a thriving, development-oriented culture of performance coaching. Why? Because a sales leader with a road map won't get turned around and sent down the wrong path. Instead, they'll arrive early and find time to learn from the journey and start planning the next trip.

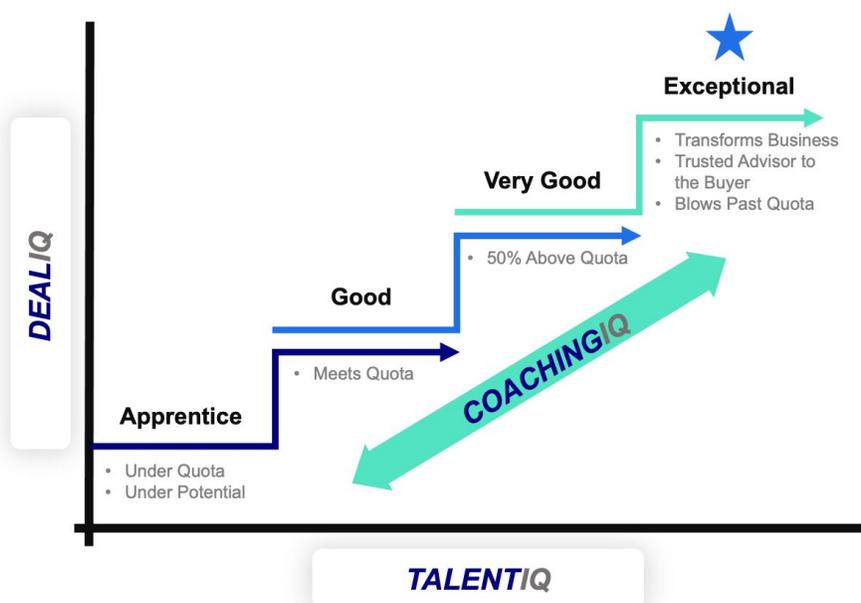
But performance coaching isn't old-school mentoring. Modern coaching relies on science-based methodology that pushes leaders to new levels of understanding of themselves, their teams and their place in the business process -- all with the goal of delivering undeniable success. It's built on methodical and recursive assessment of every team member and targeted learning tailored to each person. This focused approach helps maximize growth in areas that will pay the largest dividends and build a vibrant team that builds its own inertia.

And it works.

According to one study of companies that were able to provide specific figures that calculated ROI on coaching investments, the vast majority -- 86% percent -- indicated the company had at least made its money back. But everyone knows breaking even isn't the goal, which makes diving further should fill you with even more optimism. Incredibly, 19% of companies indicated an ROI of at least 5000% of the initial investment, while another 28% saw an ROI between 1000% and 4900% -- in other words, nearly half of companies saw a return of at least 1000%. The median company return was 700%. It's a no-brainer: Given an opportunity where you can expect a return of 7 times the initial investment while learning the best approach would border on being considered gross mismanagement. (Source: ICF 2009 report)

WHY PERFORMANCE COACHING MATTERS

Traditional coaching is looking at the team as a unit and training to general needs. Performance coaching is identifying specific areas of improvement, focusing in on them, and measuring the outcomes.



Consider where your team lands on the chart above. And think about what a sales leader needs to do every day, week, month, and quarter to coach every seller towards being exceptional.

Think about it: If you have successfully transformed a team of novice sellers into expert deal makers, astronomical growth that will dazzle the socks off of any board of directors will surely follow. And it's not necessarily some far-future return, either. While programs focused on team-wide growth certainly



have merit, one-on-one coaching is extremely powerful in that it can develop team members much more rapidly.

That's why CoachingIQ offers an array of training modules for each coaching member. Need to develop selling competencies, refine a team's forecasting ability or understand how to best leverage specific skill sets on the team? We've got you covered.

DEVELOPING EXCEPTIONAL SALES LEADERSHIP

The CoachingIQ platform is your guide to flourishing -- it's like Nick Saban stumbling onto the opponent's playbook the night before the national championship -- in that it has everything you need to put yourself in the position to earn the win. Through a series of six modules, leaders can learn everything from setting their daily, weekly and quarterly cadences to coaching sellers through a deal. Each module includes tested methodology and practical tips that will allow you to get the most out of your team.



Consider how you and your team might benefit from a small increase in any of the areas covered in the CoachingIQ modules. Can you already feel the scales tipping in your favor?



COACHING SMART SHARKS BEGINS WITH UNDERSTANDING WHAT MAKES THEM SMART

So, now you know a Smart Shark sales leader *must* do three things:

1. Work the deals
2. Work the development gaps
3. Work the leading indicators

How do you efficiently achieve all three?

It's built around understanding the individual core competencies of each individual member of your sales team. Then help them achieve their goals by leveraging their natural talents and helping them build their competencies (skills).



By evaluating each seller in a few key areas, the sales leader can have a refreshing, 360-degree view of each employee's growth. To do so, the CoachingIQ platform simply tracks how each seller rates in 10 selling competencies, critical expertise, sales activities and key outcomes.

If your sellers can't navigate a deal (one of the key competencies), they won't succeed. It's that simple.

The CoachingIQ system makes it easy to track your team's efforts in each area. It allows for sales managers and sellers to get on the same page about competency strength and the greatest gaps and how to close them through focused training and development. It can even offer insight into which team members might best complement each other when tag-teaming a sale.

Perhaps more than any other approach, coaching has the potential to have the biggest impact on your



bottom line because of the compounding nature of its outcomes. As each member of your team develops their selling competencies to their full potential, it's inevitable that they'll soon be teaching each other, coaching up the next wave of junior sellers and creating a snowball effect in terms of the positive outcomes that result from a culture of coaching.

Need proof? Let's return to that world-class leader, Nick Saban. Saban's success is irrefutable. But what about the culture of success he's built? It might be *even more* impressive.

During Saban's time as a head coach, the resulting coaching tree -- a matrix of those who coached under him and went on to coach a program of their own -- reads like a list of Who's Who in college football. Jimbo Fisher, Will Muschamp, Mark Dantonio, Jim McEwain, Lane Kiffin, Kirby Smart, Steve Sarkisian, Derek Dooley and others. Sure, some also held head coaching jobs before working through Saban's program, but nearly all came out better-positioned after their time in Tuscaloosa. Need proof? Since 2015, he's faced his own proteges three times -- the Jim McElwain-led Florida Gators in 2015 and 2016 and the Kirby Smart-led Georgia Bulldogs in 2018 -- in the SEC championship game. In just his time at Alabama, nearly a third of Saban's 39 full-time, on-field assistants have gone on to become head coaches, typically at big-name programs.

It's time to start thinking about your team's development the same way. If you land talented sales people and continue to develop them to their fullest potential through groundbreaking coaching processes, it's easy to see how the results will follow -- and keep reverberating outward.

When performance coaching meets a targeted action plan structured within the CoachingIQ platform, your team will be able to focus on those efforts that move the needle most and put you in position to grow for years to come.



ABOUT AUCTUSIQ

Our name is service from a Latin word, Auctus, meaning “growth,” paired with a high-growth, predictive analytics that aim to improve the “intelligence” (IQ) of your business. We’ve walked in your shoes, perfected new ways to sell, and successfully implemented sales practices and growth strategies that work. It’s why we built this company -- to bring what we’ve learned and to come alongside CEOs and CSOs like you, to provide you data, insights and a business process to improve your sales force’s effectiveness.



TROY KANTER

Co-Founder & CEO
of AuctusIQ

CEO of Auctus/Q Troy’s first growth story was Kenexa (NYSE: KNXA). He was cofounder of one of the platform companies and served as President/COO where Kenexa went from start up to IPO to over a 30% seven-year CAGR resulting in a \$1.48 acquisition by IBM.

Troy then served as the President and CEO of the holding company of the world’s largest sales training businesses that included brands such as Miller Heiman, Spin Selling, Achieve Global, Forum and CSO Insights. Now, as the CEO and Co-Founder of AuctusIQ has combined data science, technology and learning to create an innovative, data driven approach to transforming sales forces.



DR. COURTNEY MCCASHLAND

Chief of Science &
Strategy & Co-Founder
of AuctusIQ

Courtney served as president of Kenexa’s Global Assessment Division and subsequently as Global Head of Science and Strategy for IBM’s Smarter Workforce, where she worked with executive leaders of Fortune 500 companies architecting predictive assessment systems to hire for fit and turn talent into performance.

An entrepreneur at heart, Courtney founded then merged or sold five successful companies. Through these innovative ventures, she has served on the executive team for seven fast-growing organizations with a focus in talent research, analytics and financial services.

During her career, Courtney’s talent assessments have been published in best-selling books, including *The Survivors Club*, by Ben Sherwood and *StandOut* and *Go Put Your Strengths to Work* by Marcus Buckingham.

She completed her master’s degree in qualitative and quantitative research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and her doctoral degree in organizational leadership at the University of Southern California, where she graduated summa cum laude.

Sales Excellence as a Service



AUCTUSIQ.COM | 402.227.6495 | contactus@auctusiq.com