



GUIDELINES

ON EFFECTIVE REGIONAL SALES MANAGERS

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Over and over, the manufacturers' agents complain of the inadequate training received by the RSM; often it is the manufacturers' agent rather than the principal doing the training.

As Foodservice Manufacturers and Manufacturers' agents search for greater sales and profitability the business relationship between them must be sounder than ever. A key element in determining and enhancing this relationship is the capability of the person the principal hires to manage the manufacturers' agent—the Regional Sales Manager.

Unfortunately, an issue that instantly galvanizes the manufacturers' agent community is the ineffectiveness to date of the Regional Sales Manager to perform the functions necessary to maximize the joint sales effort. Over and over, the manufacturers' agents complain of the inadequate training received by the RSM; often it is the manufacturers' agent rather than the principal doing the training.

The few good ones are promoted, leaving the manufacturers' agent to train the replacements. The principal must recognize the value of the good RSM. If this Guideline does nothing else, it must convey how important the position is to the manufacturers' agent. These guidelines outline the necessary attributes of the RSM in order to enhance the performance of the manufacturers' agent. THE IDEAL Regional Sales Manager should:

I. Be A Self Starter With A Strong Work Ethic

II. Understand and Respect the Relationship Between The Foodservice Manufacturers' Agent And The Manufacturer

A partnership utilizing the combined talents of both organizations for maximum performance

1. The manufacturers' agent is an independent contractor, not an employee
2. The manufacturers' agent must sell multiple lines to offer low cost service and expand penetration

III. Be An Effective "Hands On" Trainer Of Manufacturers' Agent, Distributor, And Operator Personnel

A. Product Knowledge

1. Features and benefits; proper product preparation
2. Competitive advantages and disadvantages
3. Conduct ongoing competitive cuttings
4. Pricing—per unit and/or plate
5. Nutritional analysis
6. Menu applications/especially cross-menus with other products in manufacturers' agent's line
7. Recipe ideas
8. Overcome standard objections
9. Keep abreast of market conditions and trends

B. Marketing Knowledge

1. Principal's strategy
2. National account programs and approvals
3. Growth programs
4. POS
5. Utilization of advertising, promotional activities/coupons, etc.

C. Administrative Support

1. Delivery schedules, minimums, lead times
2. Liaison between manufacturers' agent and manufacturer customer service representatives
3. Ensure efficient flow of paperwork (program billbacks, show monies, etc.)
4. Pro-actively resolve unauthorized deductions with manufacturers' agent

IV. Be A Decision Maker

- A. An empowered RSM earns the respect of both customer and manufacturers' agent. Time productively spent by decision makers usually results in sales.
- B. Be responsible-deliver on promises
- C. Establish guidelines for the manufacturers' agent to make proper commitments for the manufacturer

V. Be Organized

- A. Plan goal oriented visits in advance
- B. Proper and timely follow-up when necessary
 1. Letter to customer after sales call for greater impact
 2. Recap of sales activity to manufacturers' agent principal contact

VII. Be Accessible

Twenty-four hour or less response necessary to respond to crisis and daily business decisions

1. Use voice mail to maximum advantage
2. Designate back-up for emergencies

VIII. Be A Positive Influence

A strong positive RSM can tip a close decision

- » The RSM should enjoy a relationship with key customers and be part of the sales team

IX. Be A Problem Solver

- A. Have a thorough understanding of distributor and end-user operations
- B. Creative utilization of all the manufacturer's sales and marketing tools to solve customer problems

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VI. Be A Motivator

- A. Enthusiasm and creativity are necessary attributes to energize everyone to realize greater sales
- B. Be a team player-lead by example
 - » Work willingly with principal contact and other personnel

X. Be A Communicator

- A. Discuss and document problems and opportunities clearly
- B. Review mutually developed goals and plans to achieve them