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POWERFUL STRATEGIES FOR  
DRIVING HIGH PERFORMANCE



BUILDING A

**WINNING**

**SALES**

**FORCE**

Andris A. Zoltners ■ Prabhakant Sinha ■ Sally E. Lorimer

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## BUILDING A WINNING SALES FORCE

*Powerful Strategies for Driving High Performance*

Andris A. Zoltners, Prabhakant Sinha, and Sally E. Lorimer

Sales force effectiveness drives every company's success, but keeping a sales organization at the top of its game is a constant challenge. As experts in the field, Andy Zoltners and Prabha Sinha have helped sales leaders around the world perfect their sales strategy, operations, and execution. Combining strategic insight with pragmatic advice, *Building a Winning Sales Force* provides current and aspiring sales leaders with innovative yet practical solutions to many of the most common issues faced by today's sales organizations. The book shows readers how to:

- assess how good their sales force really is
- identify sales force improvement opportunities
- implement tools and processes that have immediate impact on sales effectiveness
- attract and retain the best salespeople
- design incentive compensation plans
- set goals
- manage sales performance
- motivate the sales force

With practical advice and case studies of companies that have conquered even the most challenging obstacles, *Building a Winning Sales Force* will enable every company to drive sales and stay competitive.

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# Building a Winning Sales Force

Powerful Strategies  
for Driving High  
Performance

Andris A. Zoltners  
Prabhakant Sinha  
Sally E. Lorimer

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# Preface

The sales function is front and center in the challenge to meet or exceed business growth objectives. Sales force effectiveness is a critical success factor, as sales leaders are challenged to respond to events within their companies, their markets, and their environment, while at the same time, striving to continuously improve sales force performance.

We wrote *Building a Winning Sales Force: Powerful Strategies for Driving High Performance* to provide current and aspiring sales leaders with innovative yet practical strategies for dealing with their most critical and frequently faced sales force challenges and opportunities. The book lays out an actionable and relevant blueprint for building and sustaining sales force success in any business environment. It is designed to help you assess how good your sales organization really is, identify current and future sales force improvement opportunities that have large bottom-line impact, and implement tools and processes that immediately enhance sales effectiveness. Drawing on our experience consulting with companies all over the world, we strive to make complex and elusive concepts easy to understand and to provide ideas that can be implemented right away to address challenges and opportunities such as:

- Creating a winning sales organization by aligning the sales system around company goals and strategies to drive results.
- Developing sales strategies that demonstrate value to customers and create competitive advantage.

- Sizing, structuring, and aligning the sales organization to effectively and efficiently realize market opportunity and drive long-term success.
- Attracting and retaining talented salespeople by developing world-class recruiting processes and building a sales culture that nurtures learning and development.
- Arming salespeople with the tools and information they need to meet customer needs and achieve company sales goals.
- Developing sales compensation programs that motivate high levels of sales effort.
- Setting territory-level goals that are fair, realistic and motivational and managing sales force performance so that goals are consistently achieved.
- Preventing sales force complacency – a silent killer of sales effectiveness.
- Implementing sales strategy changes as markets and company strategies evolve.
- Ensuring that sales resources are deployed to the right customers, products, and selling activities.
- Integrating sales and marketing strategies to create a successful customer facing organization.
- Using analytic tools and structured processes to constantly identify sales force improvement opportunities and enhance sales effectiveness.

Kash Rangan, our colleague and friend at the Harvard Business School, sums up the book's contribution when he writes:

This terrific book achieves the rare feat of providing robust frameworks for addressing the most important problems facing the sales forces of today. It has rigor and relevance rolled into one. The book brings a masterful combination of highly practical insights gained from hundreds of industry applications with the sophistication of decades of academic thinking and writing. It lays out the blue print for achieving excellence, presents lucid frameworks for tackling the core issues of how to size and

structure a sales force, provides deep insights on how to manage the human side (sales force recruiting, motivating and compensating), and provides advice on how to mold the sales force organization into a dynamic customer centric unit. Underpinning the key ideas is breakthrough thinking on some of the most difficult issues facing the \$800 billion industry.

We have written several books before this one, including *The Complete Guide to Accelerating Sales Force Performance* (Amacom Books, 2001), *Sales Force Design for Strategic Advantage* (Palgrave/Macmillan 2004), and *The Complete Guide to Sales Force Incentive Compensation: How to Design and Implement Plans that Work* (Amacom Books, 2006). These books have been mostly reference books. Bestselling author Neil Rackham shared with us “They are the best sales management books out there, but they are a serious read.” With *Building a Winning Sales Force: Powerful Strategies for Driving High Performance*, we aim to capture the attention of sales leaders, engaging them through an array of deep yet practical insights on what works when running a selling organization. Kash Rangan observes, “The book is organized into short, crisp chapters and concepts are illustrated clearly through stories and a broad range of examples.” For readers who desire greater detail, our reference books are a complement to this book.

## **How the Book is Organized**

*Building a Winning Sales Force: Powerful Strategies for Driving High Performance* includes twenty chapters organized into three major parts.

- Part 1 – A Blueprint for Sales Force Excellence – organizes the components and complexities of the Sales System into a framework that shows sales leaders how the decisions, processes, systems, and programs that they are accountable for (called the sales effectiveness drivers) influence salespeople, their activities, and ultimately customer and company results. By managing the sales effectiveness drivers well, sales leaders can build a high-quality sales force that engages in the right selling activities to meet customer needs and achieve company financial goals.

- Part 2 – Improving the Top Sales Effectiveness Drivers – presents strategic frameworks, case studies, and real-world analyses showing sales leaders how to get maximum impact from the top 12 sales effectiveness drivers — sales strategy, sales force sizing, sales force structure and roles, sales territory design, recruiting, learning and development, culture, the sales manager, leveraging information, compensation and incentives, territory-level goal setting, and performance management.
- Part 3 – Addressing Common and Challenging Sales Management Issues – helps sales leaders use the sales effectiveness drivers to create solutions for important sales force issues. The issues include those that we hear about frequently and consistently from sales leaders — preventing sales force complacency, changing the sales strategy, allocating sales resources profitably across customers, products, and selling activities, managing tensions between sales and marketing, and establishing successful programs for continuously enhancing sales effectiveness.

Readers who desire a complete look at how to build and sustain a winning sales force can read all the chapters sequentially. Other readers who are looking to solve a particular issue or concern can start by reading Part I. Then, they can jump directly to the chapters most relevant to their needs, guided by the diagnostic process suggested in Chapter 2.