

# **BUILDING A HIGH-PERFORMANCE SALES CULTURE**

**THE INGREDIENTS TO  
DRIVE LONG-TERM  
GROWTH AND SALES  
EXCELLENCE IN THE  
BUILDING MATERIALS  
INDUSTRY**



**Sales Effectiveness**  
INCORPORATED



# BUILDING A HIGH-PERFORMANCE SALES CULTURE

*The Ingredients to drive long-term growth and Sales Excellence in the Building Materials Industry*

## BACKGROUND

For the last 15 years, our focus has been helping clients build a commitment to “Sales Excellence” as part of our sales transformation work. We approach improvement in a completely holistic way which has led us to helping many top organizations achieve and exceed their goals.

In the process of working closely with a wide variety of Building Materials organizations, we have seen many instances where doing business in new ways worked well, leading to lasting change. We have also seen other organizations where, despite efforts of leadership, the change took hold briefly but lasting change was not seen.

We recognized there was a missing link that led some organizations to achieve the goals they focused on. In some cases, organizations were following similar methods and were often both motivated and committed – yet still, one succeeded and one did not.

We were driven to discover the missing link, and we did. That link is the organization’s culture – and because we are in the world of sales, this missing link is even more specific: it’s their “sales culture.”

Subsequently, we began a journey to understand Sales Culture, to determine its role and the factors that made a difference. We believe we have identified what it takes to drive improvement in a sales culture. This eBook is designed to challenge your thinking, and then to determine if you are ready to begin the journey. This eBook is not a manual. It is intended to get you started. Here is what we will cover:

- Today’s realities in the Building Materials Industry
- Why High-Performance Sales Culture?
- What Research is Saying
- The Ingredients
- Success Factors
- Where to Start
- About Sales Effectiveness, Inc.

We will:

- ✓ Begin by looking at some of the realities we all face in the Building Materials Industry today and look at why you should be paying attention to Sales Culture
- ✓ Examine selected research so you’ll understand that these ideas are backed up by evidence in addition to our own observations.
- ✓ Cover what we have named the “ingredients” of a high-performance sales culture, and encourage you to rate yourself relative to those ingredients.

This is not a how-to e-Book, but rather a tool to help you and your team leaders think. It will provide direction if you are wanting to create or shape a high-performance sales organization.

# TODAY'S REALITIES IN THE BUILDING MATERIALS INDUSTRY

- First and foremost, we all know that **Competition** in the Building Materials industry is relentless. We don't believe that will ever stop.
- **Employee Engagement** and loyalty is impacting many companies. Gallup's latest research shows that 31% of employees are truly engaged at work (51% are disengaged and 17.5% *actively* disengaged). This may or may not apply to your organization, but strong employee engagement is a key differentiator.
- **Commoditization** is at an all-time high. And when a product or service truly becomes commoditized, customers will often select you based on price.
- Even so, customers demand more **Innovation** and **Value** from their suppliers as they seek to differentiate themselves. While Building Materials leaders relentlessly seek to have an edge in superior products, that competitive advantage often is short-lived.
- **Organizational Instability** – From technology to the nature of the workforce, we live in a world of constant change. While change is real and at times accepted, our ability to be agile and act consistently is not easy.
- And finally, **Turnover** and **Talent Scarcity** – the impact of turnover and scarcity of talent has increased the amount of time and cost needed to hire, to get teams up to speed, and to develop lasting customer relationships.

COMPETITION

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

COMMODITIZATION

INNOVATION AND VALUE

ORGANIZATIONAL INSTABILITY

TURNOVER AND TALENT  
SCARCITY

While everyone in our industry is facing many of these realities, some companies seem more sheltered to these trends than others. Their results don't necessarily reflect the same realities. They almost seem "immune." Why is that?

It is our strong belief, that these companies recognize and apply the value of "**culture**" in their organizations – and specifically their sales organizations.

In our view, culture is critical. We believe it is **the "differentiator of the future"** and it can make the difference for you as a leader in the Building Materials Industry.

The strength of culture has been recognized for a long time. Peter Drucker, one of the world's most foremost business strategists, stated it quite succinctly: "*Culture eats strategy for breakfast!*"

In general, we spend significantly more time focused on *strategy* – and while a solid strategy is critical to success, strategy cannot be carried out without the right culture. Try as you might... it just won't work.

# TODAY'S REALITIES IN THE BUILDING MATERIALS INDUSTRY

Culture is essential to driving change. But the word 'culture' itself is a little unclear for many, particularly from a business to business perspective. What does "culture" mean to YOU?

Here is a formal definition: *"The set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and behaviors that characterizes an institution or organization."*

Bruce Temkin, founder of the Customer Experience Professional Association described it this way: *"Culture is how people THINK, BELIEVE and ACT. It frames what people do when no one is looking!"* In essence it is **BEHAVIORS** that make the difference. And when you *really* focus as a leadership team to DESIGN and IMPLEMENT the behaviors you want, the impact can be **HUGE**.



For most companies, culture evolved over time, either as a reflection of the founders or due to deliberate or gradual changes along the way. Culture and Engagement are indeed hot topics in today's leadership circles.

## WHAT RESEARCH IS SAYING

In a 2016 global study of 7,096 executives, Deloitte found that:

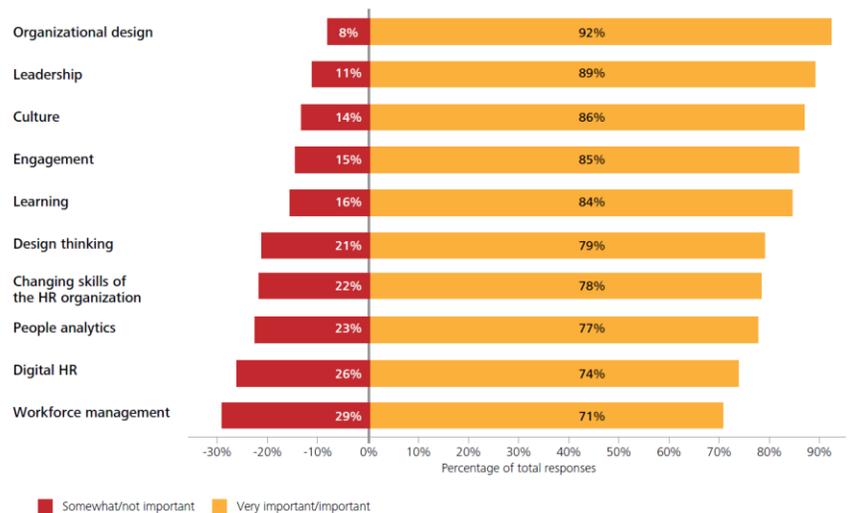
- Culture ranked third as one of the top issues organizations face.
- 86% of executives believe that a strong culture is important to business success.
- 82% believe that culture provides a potential competitive advantage.
- Yet, only 19% of executives believe they are driving the "right culture!"

Culture's power and impact can be significant.

In a Forbes magazine article entitled 'Does Corporate Culture Drive Performance,' the author highlights the 11-year study by John Kotter and James Heskett, which compared how 12 firms with great cultures performed vs. 20 companies with not so great cultures. The stock price for the strong culture companies increased by 901% compared to 74%; revenues increased by 682% and net incomes by 756%, versus 166% and 1%, respectively.

While the premise behind a strong CULTURE is understood by many, most companies are recognizing that **culture does not just 'happen' but that it needs to be designed, cultivated, measured and managed**, just as other elements of the enterprise are. The research continues to affirm culture's link to performance.

## 10 GLOBAL HUMAN CAPITAL TRENDS RANKED IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE



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# WHY A HIGH-PERFORMANCE SALES CULTURE?

Here are reasons you should focus on developing a high-performance culture with your sales teams:

- A strong sales culture unites
- Culture sets expectations
- Culture teaches 'how to behave'
- Culture enables *commitment and customer loyalty*
- Culture differentiates – it is the ULTIMATE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE. Culture is the hardest thing for competitors to copy.
- Culture is the foundation for *accountability* and *ownership* – and therefore, it is where SALES LEADERS must place significant attention.
- Culture drives a WINNING Mindset.
- And finally, as with most sports teams, culture focuses on PEOPLE, ACTIONS and BEHAVIORS that drive RESULTS!

Nadella Satya, Microsoft's CEO has this to say:

***“Anything is possible for a company when its culture is about listening, learning, and harnessing individual passions and talents to the company’s mission. All employees must embrace a ‘learn-it-all’ curiosity. Creating that kind of culture is my chief job as CEO.”***

*- Nadella Satya, CEO Microsoft*



Some clients say that improving culture requires an all-company commitment for it to work – that if one segment of the organization is not in alignment, progress falters. We understand that argument. However, culture work is hard and insisting that the entire organization must transform at once does not need to be a requirement.

Our experience affirms that culture improvement can happen at the functional or, for the premise of this eBook, at the Sales Organization level. Changing the Sales Culture is about sales leaders seizing the opportunity to get to the new place they want to be, and making progress *one bite at a time*.

If you want to improve your culture, then, you should understand the health of your sales culture today in order to define what the future should be. What follows are *ten ingredients* of a High-Performance Sales Culture. Each page will look at one of the ingredients, highlighting practices we see being followed by building materials sales organizations who are strong in each ingredient.

- Customer Experience
- Sales Leadership
- People
- Growth Playbooks
- Sales Process
- Compensation and Celebration
- Metrics and Scorecards
- Learning and Skills Mastery
- Sales Enablement
- Mindsets

Many of these will reflect things you may be doing well already, others will likely present opportunities for improvement. At the bottom of each page, there is a quick way for you to evaluate how you are doing relative to that ingredient. Take a few moments to rate yourself as you read.

# THE INGREDIENTS OF A HIGH-PERFORMANCE SALES CULTURE

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

**C**ustomer Experience (CX) is the ultimate barometer of success. Superior Building Materials sales organizations ensure *everyone* in the organization takes ownership for their role in connecting with, creating and enhancing the customer’s experience with your organization.



Here are some of the things these companies do to be customer-centric:

- They continually judge their performance through the eyes of the customer. Through “Voice of the Customer” feedback, they anticipate what customer requirements will be and involve the customer in every facet of the business.
- They define SELLING as “the satisfaction of customer requirements.” In light of that definition, selling is the responsibility of *everyone* within the organization. Everyone touches the customer directly or indirectly. Everyone is a link in the chain of providing value to customers.
- With customers being more demanding, high-performing sales teams position their products and services based on the problems they solve and not solely on the features and benefits they provide.
- They conduct business reviews with the top customers every year to ensure alignment with the customer’s business objectives.
- They map out the customer ‘journey’ and examine the factors and ‘touch-points’ that drive satisfaction and retention. They dig deep into all the touch-points the customer experiences to determine where the bottlenecks and areas for improvement exist.
- They are fanatic about response times as it communicates their commitment to excellence.
- And, if a deliverable does not meet expectations the first time, they make things right in order to build long-term loyalty and customer retention. In other words, they recover well.

### HOW ARE YOU DOING?

We truly excel here.	We are effective. Strong opportunities for improvement exists.	We need significant improvement.		
<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Carlos Quintero** is the founder of Sales Effectiveness, Inc. He is a change agent and strategist for senior leaders who seek to drive growth. Carlos has over 24 years' experience in sales, sales management, marketing management and consulting. Carlos holds a Bachelor of Science in Management from Clemson University, and an MBA in Marketing from the Wharton School. He is **the author of three books:**



- **Catalyst<sup>5</sup>** – *Making the Leap from Sales Manager to Sales Leader*
- *How to Become a Sales **RAINMAKER!*** and
- **MINDSETS!** – *Discover and cultivate the 12 essential mindsets of a Rainmaker*  
<https://saleseffectiveness.com/resources/books/>

Carlos and his wife Carla live in Greenville, South Carolina.

## ABOUT SALES EFFECTIVENESS, INC.

Sales Effectiveness, Inc. focuses solely on helping Senior Executives in the Building Materials Industry drive excellence and accelerate growth for their sales and service teams. We help senior executives drive positive change in their organizations. We help them transform and accelerate growth by establishing focus and equipping them to radically improve how they work with customers. We help them create a cycle of continuous improvement that builds capability, consistency and growth.

We are:

**TRANSFORMATIVE** – We are change agents, revitalizing teams, people and best practices

**ENGINEERED** – We engineer innovative solutions to inspire growth

**BOUNDLESS** – We demonstrate that continuous improvement has no limits

The process of creating a High-Performance Sales Culture requires time, diligence, objectivity, and a belief that desired results are driven by a commitment to excellence.

If you wish to have an ally in your endeavors, please let us know. We can help.

Good luck and our sincere best wishes!

**SALES EFFECTIVENESS, INC.**

770-552-6612 or 864-349-1032

[www.saleseffectiveness.com](http://www.saleseffectiveness.com)

