



Global Sales Internationalism Leadership

How to succeed where others fail?

"...build a team from the ground up.

There are no divas here!"

—John Leahy, Chief Commercial Officer at Airbus

Management's philosophy is essential element

—Article written by Donald Heathfield, Principal at Global Partners

What enables some global companies to succeed in turbulent times while others struggle to maintain the status quo?

The answer lies within the ability to develop and manage global sales, specifically, their sales leaders.

The turbulent environment of 2002 has made sales difficult, putting more pressure on sales leaders during this period of slow growth. And yet, companies such as Airbus, STMicroelectronics, Johnson & Johnson, and many others, have been succeeding despite the obstacles in their way. This year, Airbus exceeded Boeing in total number of orders for the first time and STMicroelectronics moved from #6 to #3 among global semiconductor manufacturers. In addition, Johnson & Johnson has leapt from #21 to #9 in the BusinessWeek Global 1000. What is it that is enabling their success?

The answer lies within the ability to develop and manage global sales, specifically, in the quality of their sales leaders. How do organizations develop global sales leaders like Airbus' Chief Commercial Officer, John Leahy, and STMicroelectronics' CEO, Pasquale Pistorio? Leahy is an American in a European company with a global sales force of 500. To produce extraordinary results, Leahy broke down the walls between departments and "built a team from the ground up. ...There are no divas here. ...Salesmen, contract specialists, airline analysts and pilots all work together," he commented in a Time Magazine interview.

The linchpin of Sicilian-born Pistorio's success has been his vision of global partnerships with companies such as Nokia, Nortel and Robert Bosch. For Pistorio, who rose through the ranks of Motorola's sales organization before taking over what would later become STMicroelectronics, building relationships with key customers has helped him to increase and protect his market share in the fastest growing market segments. Stephen E. Shawler, Vice President and General Manager of Essilor Lenses, a division of Essilor, a French global company that earned over \$1.8 billion in sales last year, suggests that "Good sales leaders are the ones who keep their priorities in line. They set clear goals and objectives, hold people accountable, concentrate on ROI, monitor and track key results and focus on what generates business."

"Effective global sales leaders have good networks and people who can listen, learn and bring their experience with them," comments Shawler. Furthermore, a survey—conducted by international consulting firm,

Global Partners, Inc., based in Boston—of Global Fortune 500 Companies from North America, Europe and Asia, finds that the most important qualities of global sales leaders are: providing vision and focus, leading

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global teams effectively, forming international relationships and partnerships, and spending time developing other sales leaders.

So, how can these qualities be developed in our own sales managers to obtain significant results? Essential developmental steps include: providing international learning opportunities, obtaining challenging positions away from the home-country, immersing into the culture of foreign customer organizations. Moreover, having strong role models and continual feedback and coaching

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creates valuable learning opportunities that underlie the best global sales careers. One such example is the career of William C. Weldon, Chairman and CEO of Johnson & Johnson. Although Weldon began his career in 1971 as a sales representative, he has held a variety of sales and product management positions; he undertook an international business development assignment in the Philippines and became the executive vice-president and managing director in Korea. He became a managing director in the United Kingdom and returned to the U.S. as a vice-president of sales and marketing; by 2002, he had progressed to the Board of Directors. Surely, without international rotations, mentoring, challenging stretch assignments and cultural sensitivity, Weldon could not have achieved the significant accomplishment of becoming the sixth Chairman in the 116-year history of Johnson & Johnson.

By developing your sales managers in this manner, your organization gains executives who are culturally sensitive, are able to align multiple perspectives from different local cultures, are able to transfer best practices and gain buy-in easily. They have the heightened ability to understand customers world-wide, becoming a true partner in these turbulent times. Their personal knowledge of unique country conditions gives them the ability to drive a global vision and combine global and local perspectives to maximize sales results. It's these international qualities of "communication, education and experience" that can transform your sales managers into successful global sales leaders, like Leahy, Pistorio and Weldon.

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