

How **compassionate leadership** **inspires** sales performance



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"I can't change the direction of the wind,
but I can adjust my sails
to always reach my destination."
~ Jimmy Dean



Over the last few months, we have experienced the dramatic winds of the global pandemic and the associated changes in how we work and do business.

Those winds of change have impacted how buyers want to interact with our sellers and what they buy. Sales teams must be realigned to emerging market expectations and be trained and motivated to address those changes. These changes require strong leadership and, according to our research, the right kind of leadership.

This summer we conducted a study of the workplace perceptions of sales producers. We asked them how they felt about their work experience, focusing on several factors that align with a well-known [compassionate leadership model](#) developed by Brad Shuck, Ph.D., University of Louisville.

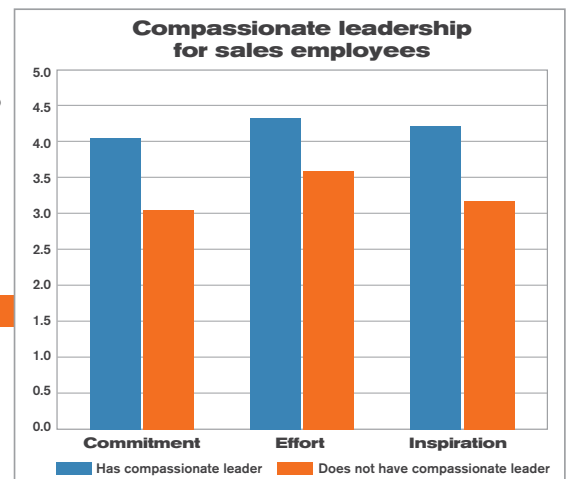


Sales reps rated survey items such as:

- Were they understood by their leader?
- Were their ideas taken seriously?
- Did their leader act with their best interests in mind?
- If they did good work, would their efforts be recognized?

The results were clear:

Sales employees who rate these parts of their work experience and sales leadership highly are, on average, more engaged and inspired than those who don't.



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Sales representatives who indicated they had a compassionate sales leader:

- Were more **committed** to their current employer,
- Reported increased **effort**, and
- Were bringing more **creativity** and **inspiration** to their jobs.

We also asked our sales representative panelists about a time when they felt inspired at work. Some showed tremendous creativity and passion in helping customers and advancing the best interests of their employer:

- A financial services representative developed a different strategy to work with his clients and, as a result, increased his sales by 80%.
- Another helped her employer develop and test the messaging strategy for a new product.
- Another representative committed to completing additional sales training programs to better handle emerging questions he would face in the market and as a result, improved his performance.
- One salesperson worked to build the case for a new, improved process and convinced management to adopt his approach.
- One panelist was passionate about helping a charity her employer supported and got more donations than her peers.
- A retail sales representative took it upon himself to deliver a replacement part to an automotive customer so the customer could make it home.

These are outstanding examples of salespeople adjusting their sails to improve their sales.

Some panelists didn't feel as inspired, and commented quite differently. Many couldn't identify a time when they were inspired by their work, sadly saying "I've never been inspired." Perhaps even worse, some sales reps reported that leaders were actually taking actions that demoralized them, including not trusting them and, in their view, micromanaging. It wasn't surprising that panelists who weren't inspired reported they were looking for a new job.

Compassionate leadership is the call for our challenging times. When sales employees are more inspired and engaged, they're more likely to produce better sales results.

There are brisk winds out there. Reset the sails of your sales leaders to lead with compassion to experience remarkable results.

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