

Running Naked

By Keenan



I remember early in my career participating in number of sales contests. One particular manager would create a contest for selling the most of a particular product, or the highest deal value, or the most revenue in a month. He would announce the contest to the team, along with the prize for winning. Which back in those days was usually the use of a cell phone for a month. I was totally motivated by those contests. I wanted a cell phone.

Beyond the contest, my manager did something that increased the commitment to the contest. He made us run naked. Running naked didn't mean we all stripped down to our tan lines and sprinted across the office, it meant we couldn't hide our numbers.

My manager undressed us by creating a leader board. The leader board tracked the results as they came in. Everyone on the sales team had visibility to what everyone else was doing. Sales reps could see who just closed a new deal. They could see who was in the lead and by how much. They could see who was losing. Everyone's success or failure was transparent. It was like running naked. Everyone knew how you were performing. There was no hiding.

I don't see this much anymore. I don't think it's a good thing either. I highly recommend to almost all my clients they make their team run naked. Contests and leader-boards are great ways to motivate sales teams and rally everyone around a single goal. Like a leader-board in golf, it keeps everyone focused on the prize. A leader-board is dynamic. It allows for day to day participation in the goals and objectives. Leader-boards engage participants. As leads change, numbers climb, and deals are sold, sales people keenly eye the board and address their strategy on making it to the top.

Tracking team performance at the individual level is a fantastic way to keep the team engaged. Delivering sales data on contests or just performance, in public on a daily basis keeps the entire team focused on what they are trying to accomplish and how close or far they are from success.

Without a leader-board or a public expression of progress, sales goals and objectives can become lost in the day to day. Without leader-boards and progress boards sales people lack the visibility into where they are in relationship to the team and to their peers. The peers piece being the most critical. We all have a tendency to compare ourselves

to others as well as assess our ability to succeed based on the success of others. Publicly posting sales reps success and progress give everyone an opportunity to compare their progress to the mean or the norm, the weak and the strong. It allows for sales people to readdress their strategies. It motivates them to be on top of the leader board. It provides a sense of accomplishment. It creates healthy competition. Leader-boards motivate.

Is there a leader-board on the walls in your sales organization? Is there a public way for reps to know where they stand against everyone else? Do you run contests and track the progress like watching a horse-race or Nascar race? You should.

Publish your team's progress publicly. Get em running naked, you'll notice the results.