

Sales Coach Series

First published in Infomatics

Moving from sales support to field sales

First published on 01/03/2000

The Dilemma

I work in a sales support capacity and want to become a field salesperson within the year. How do I achieve this?

The Coaching

Firstly, you have a time-specific goal - so that's a great start!

Next think about these questions.

- **What are your motivations for moving into field sales?**
Some pre-sales support staff become salespeople because of the higher salary and kudos only to find that they don't enjoy the constant pressure to achieve target and having to negotiate the commercials.
- **What do you need to be successful in a sales role?**
Write a description of the role you want - the objectives, targets and the tasks you will perform. Think about the knowledge, skills and attitude required - the more detailed the better. Splitting these elements across three columns on paper may aid focus. Visualise your self in the role, for instance attending a prospect meeting or closing a sale. Find a colleague who will role play scenarios with you and give you feedback (the beers will be on you for this!). Ask the salespeople about their skills and approach. Now identify the knowledge, skills and attitude you already possess and the areas you need to develop.
- **Does the company know?**
Get your manager and colleagues to buy-in to your plan so that you can work towards it together - rather than surprising them at your next appraisal! If possible shadow some of the salespeople at customer meetings. Discuss with your manager the areas you need to develop and ask for help and input.

Finally, demonstrate your commitment. Take ownership of your learning and be prepared to work hard!