



Sales Coach Series

First published in Infomatics

Career planning

First published on 01/05/2001

The Dilemma

I'm ready for my next sales career move. I need to be 'stretched' more but can't decide whether to move into a more senior or strategic sales role or sales management.

The Coaching

Firstly, think about your overall career goals - where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, look at your strengths. What do you enjoy most about your sales job?

Consider the following:

What are the key skills of a

- strategic account manager?
- sales manager?

- What are my skills and which role do they most closely reflect?
- Which skills do I need to develop?

Sales management roles, these days, usually require an element of personal sales target but will take you in a new direction.

Salespeople are often employed because they are 'self-starters' - able to manage and motivate themselves without the support of a tight-knit team. How would you feel about being accountable not only for the sales performance but well-being and morale of a whole team?

Think also about the reporting duties of a Sales Manager - are you happy with this aspect of the role? What about internal negotiations and politics?

Then consider the strategic sales role. This will involve selling higher value solutions at a more senior level within the client organisation. How do you feel about this?

Both roles require greater business awareness and personal 'clout'. Neither is 'superior' to the other - both require determination and dedication. The right choice for you is the one that best fits your personality, your strengths and ambitions - not necessarily the one you think you 'should' do.