



Scott Bergeron leadership solution

MULTI-TASKING MANAGERS COST DEALS AND INCREASE TURNOVER

Sales managers pride themselves on their superhuman abilities to multitask and "keep the wheels of America turning." While they may be doing 10 tasks at once, chances are good they're probably doing them half-assed (I'll include myself here, as well). I've met with literally thousands of sales managers — I'm a former sales manager — and I can tell you that every Saturday thousands of sales managers go home with their brains half-scrambled.

A 2014 Forbes.com article cites a Stanford University research study that notes, "Multitasking is less productive than doing a single thing at a time. The researchers also found that people who are regularly bombarded with several streams of information cannot pay attention, recall information or switch from one job to another as well as those who complete one task at a time.... Multitasking reduces your efficiency and performance because your brain can only focus on one thing at a time. When you try to do two things at once, your brain lacks the capacity to perform both tasks successfully."

So, if sales managers are able to stay focused on one deal at a time, wouldn't they make more deals? Sure, but this is the car business, right? Yes. And in the car business, sales managers are taught that they need to react to *everything* right away to keep order. But there is a lot that we can do to reduce sales manager multi-tasking:

The problem: Half-scrambled brain. The cause: Multi-tasking. The cure? Stop it.

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1. **Determine the right number of sales managers needed during peak traffic times.** Then adjust your managers' schedules to keep them working deals when deals are there to be worked. If it's slow in the morning, don't have two managers on. If traffic peaks later in the afternoon, have them come in at 3 p.m.

2. **Get rid of slow/archaic computer hardware and software that slows efficiency.** Is your computer slowing managers down? It must be, because every time I go into a dealership, they blame their computer for the slow process that still exists for 80 percent of Saturday deliveries. Get fast workstations with dual or even triple monitors that won't scramble your managers' brains like the single monitors of yesterday. You'll see the ROI the very first Saturday.

3. **Don't meet during peak delivery times.** If a manager is making a deal every hour worth \$3,000, there is nothing more important right then. *This should be his/her only task.* This might seem obvious, but the sheer volume of "drop-in" meetings involving manufacturer reps, advertising people or even a service manager can slow down a sales manager.

It's OK to say "not today" and not allow multi-tasking. It's OK to say, "Let's talk about this Tuesday morning." Sales managers staying on task will lead to more deals. When deals are waiting, multi-tasking simply doesn't work.

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