

# HOW TO ENGAGE AND RETAIN THE BEST SALES TEAMS

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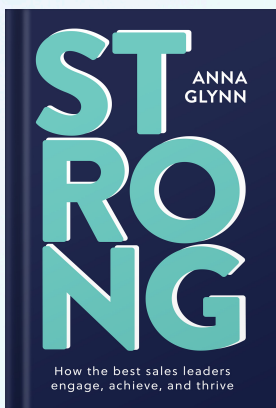
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I'm a speaker, author and coach.

My key role is to translate research into practical strategies to empower leaders and teams to amplify their impact, realise greater results and thrive. In my practice, I have supported a number of global organisations from a range of industries to achieve long-term sustainable performance, and more. My mission is to create workplaces where people can be at their best each day and are better off having worked there.

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*STRONG: How the best sales leaders engage, achieve, and thrive by Anna Glynn*



In today's competitive landscape, one of the most pressing challenges facing organisations right now is the retention and engagement of their sales teams. This concern is not simply speculation, it's substantiated by recent reports from PricewaterhouseCoopers and Development Dimensions International.

Sales leaders are acutely aware of the gravity of this issue. After all, the departure of a salesperson doesn't just leave a vacant role; it can also mean the erosion of existing client relationships, impacting customer retention. This is why the financial implications of a salesperson's turnover can be staggering, often amounting to four times their pay. But why are salespeople leaving in the first place?

One of the most significant reasons is the decline in engagement, not only in Australia but globally. Sales teams are under immense pressure, and when they feel ill-equipped to meet these demands, they become disengaged, leading to dissatisfaction and reduced performance. The cost of staff disengagement, according to Gallup, is a staggering \$3,400 out of every \$10,000 worth of salary paid.

It's clear that maintaining an engaged and motivated team is paramount, especially in sales, where motivation is a fundamental trait.

So, what exactly drives engagement and motivation? Contrary to popular belief, money isn't the ultimate motivator of sales teams. Research suggests that we're most motivated when our fundamental psychological needs are met. Let's delve into these four key needs that apply to all individuals, including those in sales.

## 1. UNCOVER PURPOSE

Understanding your purpose

is a powerful motivator. What's even greater is when your individual purpose ties in with your organisation's purpose as this is when people find meaning in their roles. Sales teams need to understand the impact of their product or service on their clients; this realisation can significantly boost their motivation. When they see how their work contributes to a larger goal, they find greater meaning in their role. This alignment of personal purpose with an organisation's mission sets a clear pathway to success and can help salespeople through challenging times.

## 2. BUILD COMPETENCE

Competence is about our desire to build knowledge and develop skills to feel capable in our roles. We want to work for employers who support our growth and help us become our best. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by constant challenges, we want to feel that we have the mastery to overcome them. A long-term career path that allows continuous advancement is also crucial. To motivate and retain sales talent, they need opportunities to learn, grow, and develop in their roles. This could include formal avenues like workshops, coaching or mentoring, or informal methods like offering feedback, role-shadowing, rotating roles or responsibilities, and providing challenging work.

## 3. OFFER AUTONOMY

Autonomy in our roles means having control and choice over how we work, when we work, and with whom we work. This sense of freedom energises and satisfies us, enhancing our overall engagement. Achieving autonomy doesn't necessarily mean working remotely; for some, this may not be feasible. Instead, it could involve flexible start, break, and end times, or the opportunity to choose the type of work to undertake or who they work with.

## 4. STRENGTHEN BELONGING

Relatedness taps into our inherent need to belong and form meaningful connections with those around us. Given the significant amount of time we spend at work, cultivating strong relationships with our colleagues is essential. These connections not only motivate us but also enhance our productivity, energy, and engagement - qualities that are particularly valuable in today's demanding environment. When you feel a sense of belonging and support from your team, you're more likely to be committed to your workplace and less likely to consider leaving.

When these four fundamental needs are met - purpose, competence, autonomy, and belonging - salespeople are highly motivated, engaged, and inherently satisfied with their work. Conversely, when these needs are frustrated, salespeople are more likely to be disengaged, and eventually seek opportunities elsewhere. A team of intrinsically motivated salespeople not only performs better but also remains loyal and committed. However, if they feel disconnected from the company's purpose, overwhelmed by performance pressure, or their needs remain unmet, they become a flight risk. Therefore, it's imperative that organisations cultivate an environment that nurtures these needs, so sales teams thrive.

Anna Glynn, author of 'STRONG: How the best sales leaders engage, achieve, and thrive,' is a sought-after speaker, author, and coach renowned for her expertise in sales and positive psychology. With a focus on building thriving sales cultures, Anna supports leaders and teams to amplify their impact and achieve long-term sustainable performance. Explore more at [www.annaglynn.com.au](http://www.annaglynn.com.au)