



Role Rejection Dismantle This Cause of Stress and Turnover

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A high-performing rep walks into your office and says, “I quit. The money isn’t worth the pain I go through to get sales.”

During your weekly sales meeting, reps request that you change their titles to advertising consultants. After all, they reason, their job is to do consultative selling.

Later you analyze sales and realize, once again, that too many reps are staying in their comfort zone and selling mainly to existing accounts without venturing into the much-needed area of new accounts.

These three examples are faces of the same type of Sales Call Reluctance®: Role Rejection. Discovered by Behavioral Sciences Research Press, for whom I’m a licensee, the various types of Sales Call Reluctance® are behaviors that inhibit prospecting.

Role rejection is a bizarre type of call reluctance. It is not obvious to the naked eye; you can rarely guess who has it. What’s more, those who suffer from it usually aren’t aware of its existence or sting.

What is Role Rejection? It’s a secret, unconscious shame of being in sales. Reps internalize the negative stereotype of salespeople, and then spend an inordinate amount of energy proving to themselves and others that they’re not really typical, “slimy” salespeople. Role Rejection is very stressful, and we know that stress affects results.

Let’s dig deeper into the examples above:

Successful people can resign sales jobs because of Role Rejection; they fall prey to QWS syndrome, or Quitting While Succeeding. Reps with Role Rejection appear to be positive people meeting quotas until they quit, perhaps to teach school, become an accountant or string beads in Aruba ... *anything* but sales.

They also love deflected titles, like advertising consultant or account executive. No one is deluded by the titles, but reps often prefer them, not realizing they want distance from the dreaded word *sales*.

Role Rejection affects going after new accounts because reps haven't learned to prospect in a way that's comfortable. They may meet goals but miss a lot of market potential. They may also be too embarrassed to ask for help, especially if they're veterans who have relied on existing accounts for revenue.

Role Rejection is completely learned and highly contagious. Fortunately, it's easily cured. Take these immediate, easy steps to eliminate it in your sales force as well as prevent its future contamination:

- First, examine your messages. Role rejection can be spread by the words of sales leaders.
- Second, help reps learn to prospect and make cold calls in a way that fits their personalities.
- Third, remind your reps of the role of sales in the economy. Existing and new account sales are critical to maintaining *all* jobs from editorial to janitorial, as well as helping business customers increase sales and profits. The sales profession increases our well-being and others', but most reps don't realize it.

Bottom line: Your own words and actions have a dramatic affect on the subtle but toxic and contagious Role Rejection. Don't feed Role Rejection, kill it!

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