



Round Table Wrap-up

Hunter vs Farmer Sales Roles

Held on Tuesday 1 February 2022, 09:00

Panel:

Neil Johnston (Chair),	Fero Retail Marketing
James Shippen,	Domino UK
Nathan Douglas,	Arco Ltd
Mark Erskine,	Seller Performance Ltd
Barrie Archer,	SKF Uk Ltd
Robin Slocombe,	Schlumberger
John Tunstall,	Sales Achievement System
Paul Norman,	Yara UK Ltd

Key Observations:

- Hunter and Farmer sales roles require different skills
- Personality and behavioural preferences will impact how well someone can perform the role.
- Sales reps will prefer to perform the role their behavioural preference favours.
- Skills needed to do either role can be taught.
- Management of each are quite different. Hunters can be challenging.
- Ideally, a sales team has both roles to cover different account cycles.
- Most sales teams cannot afford to differentiate by having sellers specialise in a role.
- Deciding when an account is to be moved from Hunter to Farmer is a challenge – very clear rules are needed.
- Teaming between the roles is vital and for the Hunter to introduce the Farmer as early as possible to a new account.
- Hunters are reluctant to hand over accounts. They see things as a loss of future earnings.
- The best Hunters are orchestrators of the customer engagement, rather than doing it all themselves.
- Compensation plans need to motivate the desired behaviour – not necessary simply measuring revenue e.g. number of new accounts, increase in value of renewals...
- There is risk to a business if the Hunter is the only contact the vendor has with the customer e.g. should the Hunter leave.
- Hunters are harder to find. Also tend to take more of the glory than Farmers.

Conclusions:

While Hunters and Farmers are often quite different, most sales roles require a bit of both in a salesperson. Behavioural preferences play a big part in how well each role is



performed. Management and incentives are key to getting the right activity and results from either. Excellent Hunters are hard to find and can be difficult to manage.

Questions explored:

- Can sellers do either role equally well?
- Can either role be taught?
- What is more important to be successful, product knowledge or sales skills?
- What is the right mix of farmers and hunters in a sales team?
- Are different compensation schemes needed?
- What does the customer want?
- Do salespeople need to perform both roles?
- What is the more difficult role?
- Are product specialist salespeople the ultimate Hunters?