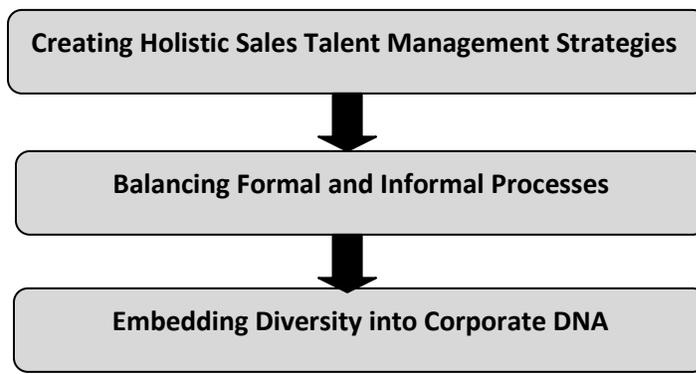


## Triple Sales Talent Strategies of Leading Companies

*Designing the sales force is an important element of sales force talent management lifecycle*

Sales force talent management strategies have become crucial to distinguish leading companies from the rest. Successful companies focus more on designing the sales force talent management strategies. The combined study of GMA (the Grocery Manufacturers Association), NEW (the Network of Executive Women) and ATKEARNEY (global management consulting firm) has identified three leading talent management strategies of successful companies as follows.



*Designing the sales force* is organizing the sales force based on the demands of customers effectively. Sales force is the most significant and valuable investment that a sales and marketing organization will make. As a key promotion tool in conveying company information, it is crucial that any sales force design is aligned around the needs of the customers and successful companies will change outdated sales force structures in order to keep pace with market shifts. To do this successfully, companies must devote significant effort to design the sales force they need and have robust processes in place to make sure that it is implemented successfully\*.

**1. Creating Holistic Sales Talent Management Strategies:** Companies with holistic talent management strategies incorporate a broad, integrated, mutually reinforcing talent management practices for their sales force as follows.

- **Ensure consistency across boundaries:** Sales force step outside of traditional boundaries and talent silos and focus on cross-functional and multi-regional initiatives
- **Collaborative relationships between HR and Sales:** Companies that collaborate HR and sales force perform 11% better than companies rely only on one department.

- **Integrate talent management with long-term perspective:** Sales talent has greater impact on future success even though the focus is on short-term challenges. Forward thinking companies better face economic downturn and consider it as an opportunity to attract talented sales force who would otherwise difficult to get. Successful companies have emphasized work-life balance and personal development during economic down turn which reduces costs in the long-run.

**2. Balancing Formal and Informal Processes:** Successful companies have integrated formal and standardized talent management processes with less formal and customized employee programs to accommodate personal touch as follows.

- **Good and bad of formality:** If talent management processes are too formal and rigid, companies risk losing cultural diversity and personal engagement.
- **Formal processes with personal touch:** Companies that integrate formal and personal talent management practices for sales force are more effective. A leading company evaluates and pays its 40% of sales force based on people related metrics. Companies use informal mentoring and one-to-one coffee chats along with formal evaluation methods to minimize managerial bias in performance appraisal.

**3. Embedding Diversity into Corporate DNA:** Successful companies consider diversity as a means to nurture sales force creativity, build employee bonding, and encourage higher-quality thinking. Diversity incorporates many dimensions such as age, sex, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation to have the following advantages.

- **Access to new talent:** Companies that focus on diversity has the advantage of recruiting talent from specific populations. For example, a manufacturer consciously encourage the local gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender as a way to attract talented sales force.
- **Better customer relationships:** Reflecting the diversity of their customer base keeps them in closer touch with values, priorities and buying habits of specialized shoppers.
- **Enhance innovation and productivity:** Diverse workforce stimulate innovation and are more resilient and dynamic that adds up to greater productivity. For example, companies with more women on their boards have outperformed the market averages for return on equity (5.2%), return on sales (5.3%), and return on invested capital (3.85).

Topic	Course
Designing the Sales Force : Personal selling and sales force management: Unit 21.7	Marketing Management

**Source:**

- *Talent Triage: Raising the Bar for CPG Sales Force Talent Management, GMA, NEW and ATKEARNEY*
- *\*<http://www.mercurial.com.au/sales-marketing/sales-force-design/>*