

# Building Winning Sales Culture

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Part of: Habit 7 – Culture

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**Why you need it:** a winning sales culture will supercharge your sales – but it needs to be alive across your organisation, not just your sales team

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People

02

Read time

**10**  
minutes

Level

**Simple**

Audience

  
**Sales Leader  
& MD**

Benefit

**Inspiration**

## About this guide

The method of building winning sales culture will depend on the business context but this guide provides some insights for leaders.

We have identified some key themes from a culture workshop that was part of our 2025 Sales Excellence event. For each, we have given you a few practical examples.

## Tips for success

Sales culture doesn't change overnight. Once it starts working, it must be protected with careful hiring, visible leadership, recognising what matters, listening to mood, behaviour and energy.

## Customer & Market Segmentation Output

3 or 4 key areas of culture improvement and a few practical ideas on how to improve.

Use this to create a 'Sales Culture Plan'.

## Useful links

- [People: Culture](#)
- [People Overview](#)
- [Sales Excellence](#)
- [Sales Excellence toolkit](#)

# Building Winning Sales Culture guide

Building winning sales culture is key to delivering Sales Excellence. A winning sales culture is not confined to the sales team – it reflects how the whole organisation thinks about growth, value and the customer.

The method of building winning sales culture will depend on the business context but this guide provides some insights for leaders. The ideas in this guide came from a Culture workshop held with 80 Diploma leaders.

## 1. Define the purpose – and keep returning to it

*Winning cultures know what they are building towards.*

- Anchor everything to a shared sense of direction, not just the target, but why it matters.
- Great sales cultures are built around customer.
- Avoid overly-focusing on past performance. Purpose-led teams focus on the future.
- Share internal success stories: “What difference are we making?”

*Practical examples:*

- Use non-financial KPIs e.g. Celebrate a retained customer, problem resolution or technical innovation.
- Create a “Why We Win”-real stories from real deals, showing value delivered.

## 2. Customer Intimacy (Deep understanding of customer needs)

*Wrong culture stifles performance long before wrong targets do*

- Strong culture includes pace- a rhythm of progress.
- Emotion: think about the emotion you want to unlock and how your purpose and behaviours support that.
- Over-structuring, command and control, micro-managing all kill agility.
- Culture differs between branches, regions etc. That must be understood and connected to the core.
- M&A risk: absorbing new sales teams without caring for cultural continuity.

*Practical examples:*

- Let local teams trial new sales approaches.
- Spotlight what’s great about a team’s culture, not just what’s different.

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## 3. Build psychological safety

*Winning culture means it's safe to try, safe to fail and expected to learn*

- Learn from mistakes, don't bury them- build honesty and resilience.
- Trial and error should be encouraged, with fast feedback.
- Talk learning, not failure. Especially effective if a leader can share too.
- Honest upward feedback is as important as top-down.
- It's okay to be competitive, without being divisive.

*Practical examples:*

- Loss reviews: informal peer sessions on what we learned.
- “Low risk / high reward” experiments within the team.

## 4. Celebrate, Recognise and Reward (not just money)

*Recognition fuels belonging and confidence.*

- Mix financial and non-financial reward.
- Celebrate whole team contributions: operations, engineering, marketing.
- Personalise rewards.
- FUN! Have fun – positive energy creates momentum

*Practical examples:*

- Recognise uplifting colleagues – ask team to vote.
- Mini-award for behind the scenes heroes.

## 5. Hire for culture, not just credentials

*Colleagues who don't reflect positive culture do more damage than you think.*

- Sales is a team sport where individual performance counts.
- Even a high performer who undermines the team weakens the culture.
- Hire on attitude and ability to grow, not just prior results.

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*Practical examples:*

- Psychometric tools can be useful but simple questions are just as effective – ask about their customers and how they understand their needs.
- Hire the best person for what you need to achieve.

## 6. Equip and empower the team to win

*Show people how to sell*

- Coaching leadership – show them how to win, don't just tell them to do better.
- Lead by example: make culture visible.
- Continue to lead culture when sales are behind- winning cultures are consistent.

*Practical examples:*

- Include a culture segment in sales meetings
- Share “internal win” stories- best effort

## Conclusion

Sales culture doesn't change overnight. Once it starts working, it must be protected with careful hiring, visible leadership, recognising what matters, listening to mood, behaviour and energy.