

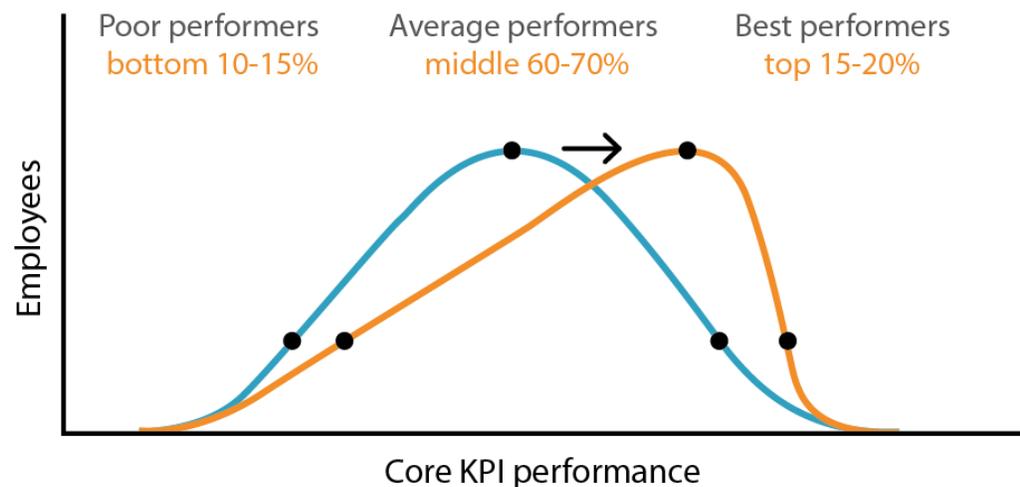
Move the Middle. Start Coaching.

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Everyone is familiar with the statistics, but in case the infamous bell curve is new to you, **70% of your workforce falls in the middle**—referring to the middle of your company’s revenue earning potential.

Let’s refresh. The **bell curve** we are mentioning looks like this:



However, did you know that your **B players hold the greatest potential** to move your organization forward? Contrary to popular belief, solely focusing on your top A players will not give your sales the greatest lift. Now, this is different.

The Focus

So, why is all the focus always on the top players? Well, let's face it, sales calls with an A player are much more fun. They will probably close the deal. You will go grab a few beers to celebrate. You will get to brag. Your ego will feel good.

But the reality is this, they would succeed whether you were there or not. They are top performers and, for whatever the reasons, they have the right training, experience, connections, and tools to close the deal.

Unfortunately, your other 60-70% aren't there yet. It's this middle who could really use your time on their sales call. They could use your expertise, encouragement and insight. Or maybe they were a top performer at that their last company—before the acquisition—and they simply need more of your product knowledge?

The Shift

So, how do you shift? Is it possible to give your B players more attention and turn them into A players? We think so, and that the results could give your organization **significant sales lift**.

We recommend you start with a simple 'coaching' conversation. Although coaching isn't new to sales management, when was the last time you sat down with a sales rep and directly asked them about their performance? Asked them what is working or not working? What's holding them back?

A study conducted by the Manchester Group on the effect of coaching estimated a greater than 5:1 return-on-investment ratio. An article in *Public Personnel Management* reported a study comparing training alone to coaching combined with training. Training alone increased productivity by 22 percent while a combination of training and coaching increased productivity by 88 percent. (Manchester Group).

Strategic Coaching

If you did only **three things** today to start being more of a coach to your B players—here's where **we recommend** you start:

- 1) **Ride Along!** Go on a sales call with your rep and watch them in action. This will allow you to see their missing gaps. Listen and take notes. Then follow up with your observations—use this as your platform for change, letting them know that you are on their team. Make it social. Make it fun.

- 2) **Set smaller goals and mini-rewards.** Your B player may be struggling for various reasons, and competing for the top 5-10% can be daunting. Consider setting smaller goals and dangling small carrots to keep your B players engaged and motivated. You will be amazed how a small reward can lead to big results because your reps are feeling encouragement, gaining confidence, and building a stronger tool box.

- 3) **Celebrate small successes!** It's important to celebrate the little wins like landing a significant RFP or presentation, as they are the foundational first step to closing a new piece of business. Make sure you give the work along the way a 'celebratory' shout out so your reps know you are watching and that you are invested in their win.

There is also a bonus result with this strategy. The shift in your B players will undeniably turn the heat up on your A players. Enjoy watching them scramble and fight to keep their number one spot. Your sales numbers will appreciate the protective fight!

In summary, we believe that **by focusing on the middle 60-70% of our team, there is great potential to move your sales organization forward.** It is here, where small achievements can make a significant financial impact. If you are able to create a shift in your B players through strategic coaching, you will see an increase in sales engagement, as well as overall employee satisfaction and retention.

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