

Applied Research  
CORPORATION

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# The Sales Leader Pathway®



*Building better Sales Managers faster*

Sales managers drive your sales results. They are your competitive advantage. And, filling these key positions with the right people is critical, not just to your success but to your company's very survival.

Average and below average sales managers can result in millions of dollars of missed opportunities, lost customers and lost employees. You need to ask yourself:



*“How many average to below average sales managers can my organization afford?”*

Having the right people leading your sales efforts enables you to capitalize on, rather than merely react to, rapid market changes. And, the right sales leaders create and maintain teams of productive, loyal sales professionals who in turn create and maintain productive, loyal customers. This requires an investment. So, the next question to ask yourself is,

*“How much can my organization afford to invest in the effectiveness of our sales leaders and how long can we afford to wait?”*

There are costs associated with identifying and developing the right people just as there are costs associated with promoting the wrong people. These costs include more than just training and development dollars. Your potential managers are almost always your most productive individual contributors. As they make the transition from sales professionals to sales leaders, making the most of their time out of the field is essential.

To drive results in a competitive marketplace, you need to find the fastest, most accurate, most cost effective way to make sure the right people are executing your sales strategy. *Applied Research Corporation* can help.

*Experience is the best teacher.* Management skills can be taught in a classroom but leaders develop on the job. We know how to target on-the-job development in a way that inspires growth, creates accountability and accurately assesses readiness. *We can deliver the right competencies, realistic job previews and honest feedback.*

*Sales Leader Pathway* is a comprehensive suite of assessment instruments and development activities that will help you ensure that your emerging managers are ready to lead sales teams in the field.

## The Sales Leader Pathway®

The **Sales Leader Pathway** is based on a competency model that **Applied Research Corporation** has developed and refined over nearly twenty years of delivering assessment, coaching and on-boarding support to sales organizations. Each competency is defined by *specific, observable behaviors that correlate highly with success as a sales leader and that can be customized to your organization.*



The first step on the **Pathway**® is the **Sales Leader Pathfinder**®, an efficient early identification tool that gives you an accurate view of an individual's management potential and motivational fit with no "out of field" time.

**Sales Leader Pathfinder** identifies candidates' predominant leadership and problem-solving styles and summarizes their overall readiness to demonstrate sales manager competencies.

**Sales Leader Pathfinder** gathers data from online assessments and in-depth phone interviews with individuals and their managers. A comprehensive feedback report summarizes the individual's overall readiness to learn and use leadership skills. The report includes:

- \* An overview of the leadership style and capability
- \* A summary of strengths and development needs
- \* An assessment of readiness for management development
- \* Development recommendations

Step two in the process is the **Sales Leader Pilot**<sup>®</sup> is a development-planning workshop that teaches participants how to create a plan, actively seek out and use feedback, leverage their strengths and avoid behaviors that could derail them. During this highly interactive, one-day program participants will:

- \* Define the competencies they personally need in order to make the transition from individual contributor to manager
- \* Redefine feedback as "*performance information*" they can *actively seek rather than passively await*
- \* Learn to separate their *feelings* about feedback from the *facts* it contains
- \* Make sound judgments about the *motives and perspectives* of feedback givers
- \* Develop a profile of their *strengths and developmental needs*
- \* *Identify the "derailers"* that can hamper their transition into management
- \* Create a *measurable, competency-based, self-directed professional development plan*

The third step is the **Sales Leader Beacon**<sup>®</sup> - an early assessment process and realistic job preview that identifies strengths and development needs while providing actionable development recommendations.

**Sales Leader Beacon** exposes potential managers to the realities of the job. It measures their ability to effectively demonstrate sales leader competencies in a wide range of mini-simulations that mirror the leadership challenges they will face.

Participants are provided with accurate feedback that focuses on the skills they need to establish credibility, demonstrate business savvy, and build effective relationships. They also receive face-to-face feedback, as well as a written report that outlines their strengths, development needs and recommendations for activities to accelerate their learning.

**Sales Leader Beacon:**

- \* Identifies who is or is not ready now to take the next step in developing into an effective manager
- \* Exposes candidates to the realities of the sales manager's job enabling them to make an informed decision about their own career path
- \* Builds management bench strength through candid performance feedback and solid development planning

Step four of the **Pathway** leads to the **Sales Leader Skill Steps**<sup>®</sup> - a series of workshops based on our proven coaching model. The **Applied Research Coaching Model** outlines a process that helps managers effectively:

- \* Build trust and respect
- \* Prepare for the coaching session
- \* Conduct an effective coaching dialogue
- \* Create an action plan
- \* Gain commitment
- \* Follow up

The workshop series includes:

- \* Coaching Fundamentals (One Day)
- \* Counseling Poor Performers (One Day)
- \* Building The Team's Bench Strength (One Day)
- \* Managing Conflict (Half Day)

The workshops teach potential managers how to influence others and build partnerships with their sales teams while creating an environment of understanding, mutual trust and respect.

**Sales Leader Gateway**<sup>®</sup> is step five of the **Pathway**. The **Gateway** is a one-day assessment and development center that identifies “ready now” potential. Using a simulation, it places candidates in the type of environment in which they will be expected to lead. Trained and seasoned assessors observe their performance and gather detailed metrics. Areas of strength, as well as development needs, are identified resulting in readiness ratings for each candidate.

Working in a computer-based, interactive simulation, participants return phone calls, answer e-mails, prepare proposals and read financial reports while identifying priorities and dealing with issues that range from routine to strategic. They are challenged to establish relationships while addressing potentially difficult performance problems, peer issues and customer negotiations. They evaluate financial, customer and market data and make proposals that require them to exert influence in a meeting of their peers.

Candidates are interviewed about their career history to provide additional perspective to their performance in the assessment exercises. They are challenged to think about their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as to give feedback to other participants. A comprehensive data integration process directly involves management and human resources professionals in discussions of each candidate’s performance, readiness for advancement and recommendations for development.

You can select the entire **Sales Leader Pathway** program or you can customize it or combine its **configurable, stand-alone** components in a way that enables you to implement your existing management development programs more effectively.

***Your competitive advantage comes from  
having the right people executing your  
sales strategy at the right time.***



# Applied Research

C O R P O R A T I O N

[www.arclead.com](http://www.arclead.com)

203 Main Street  
Metuchen, NJ 08840  
Phone: 732-549-8891  
Fax: 732-549-9179

211 Piccadilly  
London W1V 9LD ENGLAND  
[Info@arclead.com](mailto:Info@arclead.com)