

# HOW ABOUT ...

## DRIVING UP CALL CENTRE SALES BY REWARDING OUT PERFORMANCE

By Paul Lange, Director WOW Enterprise Performance Solutions



*Paul has over 17 years of experience in designing and implementing incentive, recognition and communication programmes. In 2007 he co-founded WOW which currently rewards 1,000s of participants across numerous channel programmes customised for top South African companies.*

Typical of any business that relies on a call centre as its primary distribution base, the company for which the Wham! programme was created relies 100% on the quality, resourcefulness and application of 1000 call centre agents across 3 sites in KwaZulu-Natal.

The company's success is completely dependent on 3 principle metrics:

- Quantity of sales delivered daily
- Quality of sales delivered daily
- Management of costs downward daily

To keep all 3 metrics simultaneously moving in the right direction on a daily basis requires disciplined, pervasive management at every level. While management skill effectively drives the on-going performance of the company, individual levels of motivation also play a huge role in every moment of the day of each sales agent. If in the 7 hour and 45 minute working day the agent can by diligent application or motivation find the energy to clinch just one more deal this will change the productivity of the company as a whole to a very material degree.

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Companies like this have been around for many years and are constantly seeking mechanisms to secure that one extra incremental deal from each staff member across the entire organisation.

**WOW** was asked to assess the sales staff as well as the support staff who provide platforms and delivery mechanisms, enabling the sales to be generated, customer queries to be satisfied and revenue to be invoiced.

The standard **WOW** staff appreciation index across 4 hierarchical levels is established by staff answering 8 questions. The same methodology has been used at more than 30 South African companies and allows for comparative analysis. The point of the survey is not so much to show whether staff feel appreciated, but rather to establish clear opportunities for quick wins to identify the 'low-hanging fruit' so that when the **WOW** programme is introduced, it can not only be tailored to the target audience's needs, but can also secure momentum early on, as the positive effects from staff and management's viewpoints are almost instantly evident.

The 2% minute survey also has a qualitative section which leads to direct guidance on how the programme should be customised for the staff body at which it is aimed.

In this instance, staff were suffering from motivation exhaustion, as over the years so many different approaches had been tried, each from a different angle and many very complex in nature. In every case, some form of winner was identified to receive a prize. Efficacy of effort was undermined by lack of communication and clarity on rules, no feedback on progress, and in many cases, no communication as to who the winners were. This had bred an element of suspicion around even the most well-meaning efforts by middle managers to dream up new motivational tools. Fortunately, the staff's view of top leadership was positive, as they craved the attention of a young charismatic CEO, seen reasonably regularly on the floor.

The **WOW** solution essentially consolidated the scattered expenses of a multitude of ad hoc initiatives and created instead a single unified progression of activities that would meet the needs not only of management, but also the real emotional needs of the staff themselves.

The programme was given the funky name of Wham! with the equally catchy slogan How about that! The 'W of 'Wham!' was mimicked by staff who turned it into a three-fingered salute, which in a few weeks was universally used within the company. New words entered the lexicon of staff, for example 'I was Whammed '(Recognised for special achievement);

'She was Whamtastic.' (Excelled repeatedly); 'Let's all get Whamified!' (Go on a celebratory get-together after hours) 'How about that!' became a much heard throw-away l i n e far more positive than the current generationXers expression: 'Whatever'.



Under this banner, WOW designed a set of modules, each of which allowed for individuals or teams to be recognised for pushing sales performance (or support of same) to new heights, The modules include:

### **Wham! Scratchcards**

This instant reward allows managers to recognise and reward staff at any time during the programme. Staff who are noticed going the extra mile are awarded with a scratchcard. They scratch to find their lucky number, call **WOW** to find out what they have won and receive their prize plus hoopla within 3 working days.

### **Wham! Nominations**

This module is a simple, yet highly effective vehicle for recognition by peers. Every quarter of the programme, staff are asked to nominate their peers in line with a specific theme. All approved nominations receive a certificate of recognition and go into a lucky draw winners get a low cost, yet high prestige prize from Wham!

### **Wham! Celebrate**

This module is designed to reward non-sales teams for excellent performance. Each team has a target and when they hit that target for 3 consecutive months they win a team celebration of their choice (with a set monetary value per team member). Once they have earned a celebration, they start again and work towards the next one.

### **Wham! Surprises**

Drawing from a monthly cash allocation, team leaders and managers can surprise individual staff with a fun reward for doing an exceptional job, giving them an extra boost to keep performing at this level.

### **Wham! Rewards for business**

The premise behind this module is that each staff member "owns the business" in the sense that each one plays a vital role in achieving the overall business goals of the company. By helping get the business, they get the rewards. Staff earn points every quarter based on set criteria, Not there yet; Getting there, Right on target, Outperforming. The maximum possible points are earned when the company achieves 'Outperforming'. The number of points earned is also linked to a consequence checklist encouraging staff to improve in every aspect of their individual work. At the end of the 12-month period, the accumulated points are exchanged for vouchers from the participant's choice of retail stores.

### **Wham! Suggestions**

To focus staff on identifying ways to improve efficacy in the workplace, the Suggestions module is structured around a team lunch. Teams are taken out for a light lunch during which ideas are brainstormed. Each team must come up with at least one suggestion. All suggestions that are implemented appear in the programme newsletter and on the website.



In addition, for any suggestion that is implemented in the company as a whole and results in an annual cost saving of more than R 10,000 - 10% of the cost saving, up to R5,000, is be allocated to the team for a celebratory evening out together

### **'Wham! Airtime for Attendance**

This module was run as a short-term sprint to address the specific need to improve attendance. Staff received free SIM cards and were given the opportunity to win R100 airtime and 1000 SMS's per month if they had 100% attendance over a month period.

Although the programme was launched with an end date 12 months on, during the review process in the 10th month, client and **WOW** felt that there was sti11 more juice to be squeezed from Wham!

**WOW** therefore designed an add-on module which leverages three phenomena

1. the innate competitiveness of successful sales people,
2. their need for short time horizons (i.e. instant gratification) and
3. their insatiable appetite for fun activities between bouts of hard shift work.

The new module **Wham Sales Sensation** is a rolling 3-month themed competition where everybody can be a winner, as long as sales keep coming and improvements in core metrics continue to be achieved.

Every morning each sales person is matched to a new challenger (usually someone within sight of themselves) and has the opportunity to earn tokens twice during the course of the day.

1. For outperforming their challenger by 12h30 they win 1 token
2. For outperforming their challenger by the end of the working day they win a further token

Key to the success of the daily sales drive, each sales person has a daily benchmark target (a realistic, but mathematical improvement on recent historical performance), which they must meet or beat to earn a further 2 tokens regardless of whether they win or lose against their daily challenger.

At midday the sales agents are formally updated as to their progress and at the end of the day they are encouraged to check their updated earnings on their **WOW** web pages The following morning, they are formally updated via SMS and advised of their new sales challenger A **WOW** algorithm determines who challenges who.



This basic daily competition is themed in a way that allows for fun campaigning and excites the imagination of the sales agent. During the run of the competition, the best agents earn 3-4 tokens per day they keep check on their personal websites (password protected) as their tokens accumulate and then redeem them for more valuable prize tokens that can be used for any non-cash reward. There is no limit on choice for prize token exchanges.

But the real power of Sales Sensation lies in the recognition to sales agents. Agents who are unbeaten for a week get a Super Star Flag to fly above their desk, while those who hit token milestones are inducted into a celebrity status group (literally on a red carpet) at each of the sites and receive a Celebrity Banner to put up at their workstation. In addition, all sales agents compete on a campaign specific performance ladder where the top performers receive handwritten notes of recognition from senior management, their names are posted on the programme website and they are invited to the celebrity breakfast at the end of the 3-month cycle.

The Sales Sensation module relies on accurate, clear and emotive messaging and is judged a success when the overall deals per agent average climbs steadily. Paul Lange of WOW Enterprise Performance Solutions comments that although such an intensive module may not at first appeal to all sales organisations, the fundamental principles of using the competitive nature of people in a micro-environment allows for rapid, repeated behaviour change to take place.

The client has this to say about the success of the Wham! Programme "An organisation our size needs to bridge the gap between staff and management and with the tools that VVOW provides we are able to do that by getting involved at ground level, supporting our staff and recognising our staff for good performance"

"These modules work because staff are communicated with on a daily basis via SMS, email, posters and the staff's own Wham! website"

"Whether it's an iPod, a weekend away or simply lunch with the entire team, these prizes have a real impact on the performance of these employees".

**WOW Enterprise Performance Solutions** (Pty) Ltd implement the total programme on their client's behalf. Economies of scale (WOW programmes run in several call centres) and experience allow this effective set of modules to be communicated, administered and managed as a low cost intervention for the client.

Details about **WOW** are to be found on [www.wow4results.co.za](http://www.wow4results.co.za)