

Personal Best

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Annual sales forecasts can be like the weather: highly unpredictable and due to a variety of unseen factors. Yet NCO Financial Systems, a collections agency in Fort Washington, Pa., habitually meets its aggressive sales goals. The secret: President Chuck Piola **discusses personal goals with each of the sales representatives before setting any company goals or forecasts.**

While one rep may need to earn only \$40,000 a year, another may be motivated to earn \$75,000. That's fine by Piola, as long as all 25 meet their targets. "It's not important how much a representative expects to sell as it is to find out how," says Piola. "Are they willing to come in to work on Saturdays? Do they have accounts in the works that could yield those numbers? How many cold calls are they going to make a week?"

These meetings motivate sales representatives as well as stress the importance of meeting their annual goals. Their chances of fulfilling their quotas are much greater if reps set their own targets. "By troubleshooting sales targets at the beginning of the year, we really increase our chances of reaching our corporate revenue goals," says Piola, who has driven NCO's sales from \$8 million to \$125 million since 1992.

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