

HBR: Ambition Creates “Stunning Increases” Across 4 Sales Productivity Metrics.



Executive Summary

- Clayton Homes Sales Director David Schwall adopted Ambition in Summer 2014 for his sixty-person inside sales team.
- Schwall used Ambition score reps using real-time Salesforce metrics and run a 3 month competition modeled after fantasy football.
- [Harvard Business Review](#) analyst Ethan Bernstein found that Ambition created “stunning productivity increases for sustained periods of time.”

About

A Berkshire-Hathaway Company, [Clayton Homes](#) is a national, vertically integrated housing company. Through its family of brands, Clayton Homes builds, sells, finances, leases and insures a full spectrum of affordable housing and is the nation's leader in housing.

Challenges

Schwall was looking for a way to improve team camaraderie, transparency and performance at his Clayton Homes call center. Looking for new ways to incentive his middle and lower-tier performers, Schwall adopted Ambition and decided to use Fantasy Football as inspiration for a summerlong sales contest.

“A number of employees who participated in the fantasy league liked that the system seemed fair and kept them engaged: Scores were recorded in real time and calculated based on meaningful factors, and everyone (employees and managers) could see the same data.” Ethan Bernstein.



Ethan Bernstein
Analyst, Harvard Business Review

How Ambition Helped

Schwall set up Ambition to score rep performance in real-time using 3 Salesforce metrics, weighted and benchmarked based on standard performance expectations. Individuals scored points against a single, synthetic “Ambition” score based on three metrics:

1. Calls they made to high-potential leads.
2. % of calls leading to confirmed store appointment.
3. % of leads transferred directly to the retail store.

Schwall had all 5 of his managers draft each member of Clayton's 60 person sales force onto a team. Different teams went head to head each week; the top four faced off in the playoffs. Office TVs showed leaderboards, but were careful not to publicize poor performance.

“The fantasy sports context helped alleviate the costs of transparency, making people more comfortable with basing perceptions of competence and status on the cold, hard numbers. As one employee explained to us, ‘I’m used to seeing scores in sports, so I guess I didn’t really mind being publicly scored in Ambition.’”

Ethan Bernstein.

Results

Per Bernstein's analysis, the fantasy sales contest directly resulted in tangible, massive boosts across four key sales performance metrics. “The inside sales team (which now handles 30,000 leads per month) saw an 18% spike in outbound calls, doubled the percentage of calls that resulted in an appointment, and increased the number of transferred calls eightfold. Overall, visits to retail stores tracked back to referrals by the inside sales team are now up over 200%.”

Bernstein found that Ambition also increased peer accountability. The sales competition itself “wasn’t just about carrot-and-stick motivation, but prolonged discipline.’ Employees saw Ambition as a feedback tool for themselves, not as a ‘big brother’ tool for their managers.” The result: handsome payoffs for Clayton's bottom line and a feature article in HBR.



David Shwall
Sales Director, Clayton Homes

Watch ChowNow VP of Sales Drew Woodcock walk through his Ambition account.

