

Introduction (00:03):

Welcome to the Same Side Selling podcast, dedicated to modern sales and marketing, innovation and leadership. Here's your host, Ian Altman.

Ian Altman (00:15):

Welcome to the Same Side Selling podcast. I'm your host, Ian Altman. We're joined this week by Colleen Stanley, president of the sales development firm Sales Leadership. Colleen is the author of three books, and we're going to be talking about her latest one, Emotional Intelligence for Sales Leadership. Salesforce named Colleen one of the top influential experts of the 21st century. And we're only 20 years into that century. We're going to discuss the greatest misconception about the gap between knowing and doing, hiring practices when it comes to IQ and EQ and the trends she's discovered about the greatest hiring mistakes and how you can use emotional intelligence to coach better performance. You'll learn a ton from Colleen Stanley,

Ian Altman (01:01):

Colleen, welcome to the show.

Colleen Stanley (01:03):

Ian thank you for having me happy to be here.

Ian Altman (01:07):

You know what I haven't seen you in person in ages. So I'm thrilled to have you on the show. Can you start by sharing something surprising about you that our audience may not know?

Colleen Stanley (01:17):

Okay. Let's see something surprising. Well, many and the keyword Ian is many years ago I actually participated in triathlons.

Ian Altman (01:28):

Really?

Colleen Stanley (01:29):

Yes.

Ian Altman (01:29):

What was the, what was the driving force behind that?

Colleen Stanley (01:33):

Well, you know, you and I are both in the prospecting sales development business. So I was single and I was prospecting for a husband and you know, what better way to find a lot of qualified opportunities than running around on a Saturday morning and swim gear.

Ian Altman (01:48):

Perfect. And this was not on LinkedIn. This was actual triathlon.

Colleen Stanley (01:52):

No, no, not on LinkedIn, not on YouTube. This was the old fashioned way knocking on doors.

Ian Altman (01:58):

I love it. But you know what that, um, that tells me a lot about you because it takes a lot to, uh, to enter and complete a triathlon. I get exhausted just watching them.

Colleen Stanley (02:08):

Well, here's what I learned with that Ian, um, you actually don't have to be that good of an athlete and I'm not taking this any, I'm not taking anything away from our iron man's. I have a friend that's completed two or three of them, but what I learned is just putting in the time. So I wasn't really that good at swimming. But if you put in the time you get better at swimming, I was always a decent runner learned how to bike. So some of it is just, just putting your time.

Ian Altman (02:32):

Yeah. And now it is with the motorized bikes. You know that they're probably not allowed to have those, that's probably illegal in the world of triathlons, but, but you know, I'm always looking for an innovative approach.

Colleen Stanley (02:44):

Yes, you certainly are.

Ian Altman (02:45):

So though, many people are going to take great interest in your triathlete, um, trials and tribulations. I want to talk about the greatest misconception that you see in this knowing versus doing gap that especially sales leaders have with their teams.

Colleen Stanley (03:02):

So often what I've seen in my years of working with sales leaders and sales teams is that they often they're working on the wrong end of the problem, but they're well intentioned, right? So let's say, for example, I think Ian, you've heard this complaint more than once from the folks you work with my salespeople talk too much and listen too little, right? So what they do is they spend more time teaching a questioning model, consultative selling skills. They're important. However, when you really take a look at it, it might be a soft skill an EQ skill that's missing. And it could be self-awareness, they're not realizing what's triggering them to do a verbal vomit or impulse control. I have this desire to help you, Ian. Um, so I go into a product dump. So I find it's kind of like diet and exercise. It's not one or the other, but when you teach both skills, that's when I find the magic happens in, in creating sustainable sales results.

Ian Altman (03:56):

Okay. And so this, this idea and, and cause I'm sure as you're giving these examples, people listening and many of the people in our audience are CEOs, senior executives and people who are leading sales organizations. I'm sure as you're describing this, like yeah,

I have people like that. So what are some of the mistakes that people make? So you mentioned there's one example of gee our people are talking too much, so I'm going to give them better questioning skills. What are the mistakes or traps that people fall into and then we'll get into how do you fix them.

Colleen Stanley (04:27):

So again, it kind of goes back to how I've counted. I've couched it kind of as a sales EQ in the IQ. So if you look at hiring, we're often betting someone for their industry experience, number of years selling, subject matter expertise. Again, very important. However, if you've ever run a workshop with managers and you know, we conducted an exercise called what's your worst hire, right? And the answers are hysterical, but they don't usually say, well, they didn't prospect. They didn't close enough business. Surprisingly they're saying they were a culture misfit bull in a China shop, not coachable, uh, disrespectful, you know, things like that. So what often is missing in the hiring process is vetting candidates for some of those important soft skills, emotional intelligence skills.

Ian Altman (05:12):

So, so, so it sounds like what happens is people when they're hiring focused so much on the quote IQ, so it's more the objective part or what they perceive as objective, Oh, this person's been our industry. They have a good track record or this and that, but they're not necessarily screening for, does this person have enough self awareness? Do they have enough empathy? Right? Do they, can they follow a process? Are they coachable?

Colleen Stanley (05:37):

Exactly, exactly. And you know, we work with really good salespeople like you do. But the fact is, and we've really seen it in the last couple of months, right. Business is changing. The approach to selling is changing. So you can be somebody that has just been masterful two months ago and you might be sitting here right now, going, I've got to change the way I do things. Well, that's a coachability, that's a person that's coachable. That's a person that has an aptitude and attitude for learning. That's not necessarily a hard skill. That's a soft skill.

Ian Altman (06:09):

Yeah. And it's interesting. Cause I see a lot of people right now have this mindset that says, well, you know, I don't really have to change anything because everything will be back to normal tomorrow. And I'm not saying that we're in the new normal. I don't buy into that. But I also don't think that we're going to be back to the way things were 60 days ago in a week.

Colleen Stanley (06:31):

We won't. And I think that would be called denial. It's a whole nother workshop. Right. Um, and, and I've heard the same thing. And I think there's a little bit of that just called hope. But the fact is the customer is going to dictate it. And I have heard from more than one customer, as much as they love the face to face sale.

They're okay not getting on a plane. They are okay having that first exploratory call on a video conferencing call, which maybe they wouldn't have even considered two months ago in some industries. Right? So the customer is going to dictate what we do and how we do it. And that's going to require a lot of flexibility. I think the popular term today is agility on our part.

Ian Altman (07:10):

I love that. So the customer will dictate how those interactions go. Now I want to, I want to get back to something you said, you, you said you did this exercise with people, what's your worst hire. And you mentioned a number of attributes. And you said, look, they don't say that they don't prospect. Well, they didn't close deals, their worst hire. What are some of the things that people point to? What do they describe when they identify their worst hire?

Colleen Stanley (07:35):

You know, the two things that usually come to the top, besides just some funny stories. I had one sales leader tell me that it's he was at lunch with a potential hire and he picked an olive off his salad. That was the deal breaker, just to let you know that. So table manners were were missing, but the coachability part and the ability to embrace, seek out and um, apply feedback. That seems to be a big one. And then if you back up, I often think what's behind the ability to receive feedback is humility, right? Being humble enough to know, Hey, listen, I got a blind spot here. Uh, maybe I didn't know, I had a blind spot. Perhaps I can learn some things. So coachability is one that seems to pop up. I will tell you, I think instant gratification pops up a lot because I'm a boomer. So let me I'll admit the age group, you know, I'm one of those work people, but the fact is it takes work to fill a pipeline. It takes work to become masterful at sales. It takes work to keep and keep building relationships. So sometimes good old fashioned work ethic and delayed gratification comes up too.

Ian Altman (08:46):

Yep. And what are some of the things that that leaders could do? Like for example, in my prior business, one of the things that I would often do is I would ask people the following question, I would say, well, tell me about a deal that you think you should have won, that you ended up losing and tell me why you think you lost it. And the funny part was, there's only two ways to answer that question one way is that there was some external force that I had no control over and I'm a victim. And the other way to answer that question, is there's something that I did wrong. There's something I didn't see. I didn't notice which is taking responsibility for it. And I would only hire the people that answered in the second way, because the first way I just thought, wow, that's a really good excuse. And it's probably not going to be their last one.

Colleen Stanley (09:34):

You know what, and you're right. And that is in a whole body of work by American psychologist, Julian Rotter, internal locus of control. And so human beings either have internal locus of control or

external. And what you described with the excuse makers, they actually become professionals at blaming. So I have a bad territory. I have a bad boss. The marketing department doesn't produce enough leads. I have the worst prospects. And so they're always finding an external excuse that impacts their results. Now the internal person is just what you described and they almost have this mantra if it is to be it's up to me. So if a mistake happens and even if it's caused by someone else, you know, production doesn't get something out, accounting screws up, they will still say, okay, what can I do to preempt that? What can I do even if I bet other departments that maybe aren't performing at full function? So internal locus of control is what you need to be vetting, hiring because I'm like you victims are nails on a chalkboard to me.

Ian Altman (10:40):

Well, it's fascinating because in, in, um, in one case, I remember this in my prior business, we were interviewing two people who were coming from the same company. And, and I asked you to, we asked that same question in the interview when one person said, well, the problem is that, you know, w you know, our products didn't do this and the management didn't do this and didn't know that and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, and went on and on complaining about their predicament in life. And the other candidate came in and said, well, I didn't, I didn't really appreciate and understand where our products were better or inferior, and I should have taken more time. And if I had known that we weren't as strong in this one area, I would have positioned ourselves differently. And I may not even have pursued this opportunity cause we probably weren't the best choice.

Ian Altman (11:28):

And I'm thinking it's two people in the same environment. And one person says, here's what I could have, should have done. And the other one says, well, it's these other people. And when you listen to it, the excuses are perfectly plausible. You think? Well, that makes sense. Yeah, that's fine. And I just always tell people when they're hiring, it's like, look, that's not going to be their last good excuse. They're going to have many other ones that are really good that you're going to think. Wow. I mean, that makes sense. That's why they didn't hit their numbers. Oh, that makes sense. Why they didn't prospect. That makes sense why their pipeline is weak, but ultimately they're still not doing the job.

Colleen Stanley (12:06):

Right. And, you know, I had a, I had a colleague once say, it's almost like if, if you've missed it and sometimes you do miss it in the hiring process, even with the best hiring process, but it's almost like the suitcase starts getting unpacked. Right. And every bit of clothing, yes. Another reason not to be successful on it. And what I have found Ian, this is this is where self-awareness for managers are important. You know, most really good sales leaders are hyper responsible, right? So it must be my fault. I need to give them more training. I need to give them more resources. Now I am all about making life easier for people, you know, get them focused on

selling. But there is a part, especially when you're growing a company, which you've done, life is not going to be perfect. So if this person is just continuing to unpack the bags, instead of spending that time on, okay, what can I control? What can I prevent? How can I manage? You're simply going to be a circus act. Cause all you're doing is jumping through hoops, trying to provide an answer for that next excuse. And that bag is really big. It's a big steam trunk or whatever they call those things.

Ian Altman (13:13):

I love it. Yeah. They're, they're going to keep unpacking. And I think to your point, oftentimes the best managers say, Oh, this person isn't doing well, it's my fault. But sometimes you have to look and say, okay, I have 24 people on my team. 18 of them are top performing. Six of them aren't. Maybe it's not me.

Colleen Stanley (13:32):

That's right. And I have done this with again, um, where I got this idea, it was actually from Dr. Henry Cloud. He's written a great book called Necessary Endings. Right. And so he talks about when you see successful people, they do exactly what you've said. If it is to be it's up to me. Right. But that's where you have to have the responsibility or excuse me, the awareness where you say, am I more committed to my seller's success than they are? Yeah. And there are managers. Sometimes they have to stop and say, I'm more committed than my seller is. And that's where you may have to have a truth telling conversation and maybe help them find another home.

Ian Altman (14:08):

Well, it's funny you say that one of the, one of the things that I often say to sellers is are you more committed to solving this problem than the client is?

Colleen Stanley (14:17):

Yes. It's the same, it's exact same scenario played out in sales leadership.

Ian Altman (14:22):

Yeah. Because, because if that, if the buyer, if the buyer cares about this problem, zero to 10 at a three, and you care about it at an eight, then bring your wallet because they're not paying for it.

Colleen Stanley (14:33):

That's right. That's right. Exactly. And I don't know about you, but boy did I have to learn that lesson the hard way. Right. And all of a sudden, you know, they'd be saying things like, well, this is interesting. We think it's a good idea. And all of a sudden I re I finally realized one day, no one has purchased from me that has found my solution interesting. Yeah. Right. And so it's just this. Yes. So I was more committed than my, my clients.

Ian Altman (15:00):

So in, in your, in your book, Emotional Intelligence for Sales Leadership, what are some of the things that you discovered in

writing this, that, obviously you knew because you wrote the, wrote the book, but what are the big aha moments for you when you were writing this, that you said, you know, I really crystallized this concept or that concept that obviously you knew before, cause you wrote it. But what are the things that really rose to the top that stood out for you?

Colleen Stanley (15:25):

You know, I would say the EQ competency of empathy. And so the aha for me is I, like many individuals, can be very situational about bringing this skill to a conversation. So Ian, I can tell you on a sales call, I'm not missing any of the clues. I'm hearing the verbal conversation, the nonverbal I can sell, I can tell who's comfortable or not. Well, guess what, I sit down with a seller and it's almost like I take my empathy hat off and I put my problem solving hat on. And so the seller says, Hey, you know, I just had that deal that I thought was going to close next quarter, new decision makers come in. And instead of even acknowledging like, wow, this is terrible. You must be discouraged. I'm just like, okay, we can still get this deal. So I had to really take a look at myself and how many coaching calls. Cause I'm a really great sales coaching call. Right. But I, nobody was hearing my advice because guess what? I wasn't demonstrating empathy before the advice. So I had to really take a look in the mirror, how many coaching calls I'd blown because I went into problem solving advice-giving before I demonstrated empathy, which I teach and preach all day long, by the way,

Ian Altman (16:42):

Which is interesting. I don't know if you've read, uh, Michael Bungie Stanier, his new book, um, The Advice Monster.

Colleen Stanley (16:49):

No I haven't, but maybe I need to, I will do that.

Ian Altman (16:53):

Or is it, or is it the let's see, so it's the coaching and maybe it's called The Advice Trap. Maybe it's called the advice trap, but he often talks about it, and he says, he said, yeah. So someone starts explaining a problem that they're having. And we immediately, our advice monster jumps in and says, Oh, let me tell you this. Let me tell you this. Let me tell you that. And he said, we all know that the first problem people raise is usually not the real problem, but we immediately start offering advice to solve that problem. Even though we know inherently that that's not going to be the real problem, it's going to be the secondary tertiary question that uncovers the real issue for them. And we're already giving advice on solving that initial problem. So it could even be that function. Like you talk about where you say, Oh yeah, our people aren't prospecting enough. And so our first, our first reaction could be, Oh, here's a way to get them prospect more instead of, so why do you feel they're not prospecting enough?

Colleen Stanley (17:50):

Exactly.

Ian Altman (17:51):

I just think they're calling the wrong people. Okay. And it's like all of a sudden, so it's not, they're not doing it enough. They're just not getting the right people. Now we're solving a totally different problem.

Colleen Stanley (17:59):

Right. And so if they're not talking to the right people, what's behind that? Well, they actually don't have the confidence to call the C suite, but why don't they have the confidence? Well, you know, the last time I checked the last time they called the C suite, they got shut down, took a face plant. So who wants to do that again? Right. So the root cause isn't a more effective prospecting script, which might be the case. It's the mindset around big offices and big titles. That's mindset coaching, which you're very familiar with.

Ian Altman (18:27):

Sure, sure, absolutely. So in, so in this book, so this whole idea of emotional intelligence for sales leadership, I know you talk about some of that from a hiring side and some on the coaching and mentoring side. So what are the, what are one or two big things that people can do to start to really embrace this? Obviously the first obvious obvious piece for them is go get the book because you create amazing content, but internally in their organization, when it comes to hiring, when it comes to coaching and mentoring, what's a good first step in each of those areas.

Colleen Stanley (19:03):

You know, this one is, um, it's been talked about Ian, but I'm still not seeing it apply enough. I think for everyone, they've got to slow down and apply some self awareness, right? So, you know, empathy is a mega skill as is self awareness because that what you're not aware of, you cannot change and that which you're not aware of your bound to repeat. So for a sales leader, it's doing, what's been preached for how many years now carve out some quiet time in the morning instead of checking your adult Binky right away, right?

Colleen Stanley (19:35):

You check all your emails and then you give your self a shot of cortisol and you're, you're stressed out now just establish some thinking time and it could be, how do I want to show up in conversations today? What seller might trigger me? Because you can have really good salespeople, but if they're going through a slump or they're going through tough times right now where they're having to do what we call the pivots and the changes, there might be some self doubt. Like, can I make this change? Am I going to make it fast enough? So you might have a seller that pushes back on your feedback. Even if you set up the coaching kind of conversation the right way. Well, if you get emotionally triggered, right, then you start defaulting into a fight response and a need to get it right versus, you know, get focusing on being right versus getting it right. Perfect. I would say, you know, really setting your mental

mindset and then reviewing the day before. How did I show up? I do find a lot of people because they are so busy, they are losing the art of simply being present and paying attention. And that means phones are off. I'm not checking my email. You're the only person I'm talking to because that's how you hear all of the conversation. That's how get past that presenting problem.

Ian Altman (20:48):

Sure. And then right now, when obviously you've got 30 million Americans unemployed, people may have an opportunity to hire in a way they haven't been able to hire in the past. I'm gonna say, so the last few years I can, I can say to somebody, look you need, you need to be more selective. And their answer was, Hey, we're just happy we found somebody with a pulse. Yes. Right. So what are some, what what's, what are one or two questions that they can ask so that they know they're getting that person with a strong EQ because as you pointed out, when someone, when you ask somebody who's your worst hire, it's not the, it's not the tangible skills. It's the soft skills that usually stand out.

Colleen Stanley (21:32):

So I might even back up to which, which skills you want to test for is do a win loss analysis. Right? And so on misfires you've had really analyze what was the misfire? Where did it come from? What were the associated soft skills and hard skills, because that backs up to the questions you need to embed in your interview guide. Right? So for example, if you're in a business right now, but it's going to take a lot of resiliency, right? There's, it's, it's not going to be an easy sale moving forward. And I think that's in most industries, but there's some that are really being hit. You may vet the candidate harder for resiliency. So tell me about the biggest adversity you've faced. What did you do? How did you overcome, what were the lessons learned? How did you apply the lessons? What's the hardest goal you've ever set? How long did it take for you to achieve that goal? Um, if you need someone that's teamwork, right? You've got a collaborative, um, sales environment. You might ask an interview question. Tell me about a time when you helped a teammate and you didn't get any credit or recognition? Yeah. So I think it's doing a win loss analysis. And then you back up the interview questions and vet for what your organization needs at the life cycle at this time in your company.

Ian Altman (22:48):

Beautiful. I love it. So, and the book is Emotional Intelligence for Sales Leadership. We'll have all that in the show notes. Colleen what's the best way for people to connect with you and learn more about what you're doing?

Colleen Stanley (23:00):

Well, we always, I invite you to go to our website, which is salesleadershipdevelopment.com and salesleadershipdevelopment.com, or reach out to me on LinkedIn, always happy to, uh, make a conversation there. So those are probably the two best places.

Ian Altman (23:15):

Colleen, thank you so much for sharing your wisdom as always.

Colleen Stanley (23:18):

Thank you for having me as a guest. Great to see you again.

Ian Altman (23:22):

Be sure to check out samesidesellingacademy.com and sign up for the free Growth in Crisis course. Colleen shared so much brilliant insight. Here's a quick recap of what I think you can apply to your business right away. First, your worst hires, usually don't lack IQ. They lack EQ. So ask questions that give you insight into their EQ. Second for managers, slow down and plan how you intend to interact with each team member to maximize the impact you can have for them. And finally perform a win loss analysis to see which hard or soft skills are driving your successes and leading to your frustrations and hire and coach accordingly. Have an amazing week, add value and grow revenue in a way everyone can embrace, especially your customer. Bye now.