

SALES STAR



Mike Coscetta: The Cutco King

[By Akbar Ali]

When it comes to sales, Mike Coscetta isn't just a big-time player; he's in charge of some ultra-valuable real estate. Coscetta is the Vector/Cutco Cutlery division manager of the New York City area, known as the "Dynasty" division, which includes all of Manhattan, its surrounding boroughs, and Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk counties). One look at his sales record, and it becomes apparent that he's capable of succeeding in any market, big or small, and has helped make Cutco one of the largest and most recognizable brands now found in more than 14 million North American households.

Coscetta's entry into the sales industry was not something he was actively seeking when it happened; it all started rather serendipitously with a letter in the mail inviting him to an interview. Though he had never worked for a major sales organization before, he felt confident that it was something he would be able to turn into a feasible career.

"During the recruiting process, I really saw that I could excel in this field because it rewarded hard work and motivation, two traits I have always possessed," he recalls.

He was also motivated by the fact that a large number of his family members had run their own successful businesses, while others had found success working in the sales industry itself.

"I had no reason to doubt the field or my potential in it," he says.

Coscetta first worked with Cutco as a college student, when, like so many others, he needed a way to put himself through school. He attended Harvard University and affirms that, expectedly, "the experience was incredible." While there, he says, he was presented with an unlimited number of opportunities to pursue any interest he might have — opportunities to explore any academic subject and join any number of conceivable organizations — in addition

to an impressive social network. He was heavily involved in the Harvard College Republicans, the Financial Analyst Club, and the university's Pi Kappa Alpha colony during his senior year.

After graduation, he continued developing his career in the company, getting promoted within Vector to district manager of Morris County, New Jersey.

"I was a successful district manager, having broken the record for the best summer by a new district office," he says.

Coscetta's early success enabled him to

Q. What do you do for fun?

A. Travel, fishing, concerts, hanging out with friends.

Q. What CD is in your CD player right now?

A. DJ Tiesto — *Magik*.

Q. What is the last magazine you read?

A. *Robb Report*.

Q. What is your favorite TV show?

A. *Seinfeld*.

Q. Who is your role model?

A. General Patton.

Q. What makes you laugh?

A. George Carlin and any stupid comedy.

create new methods and programs to ensure company growth and sales success:

"We developed a championship organization very quickly, implemented key sales programs within my district, and soon enough, within the whole division, a career FSM program, a fair and show program, and a personal recruiting program."

It wasn't long before he was able to secure another major promotion.

"My success as a district manager put me first in line to get promoted to run the division when my division manager left in February 2005," he adds.

Among his most memorable successes is a new record he set for the best-ever first summer sales for a district manager, totaling more than a staggering \$619,000.

"This record means a lot to me because we built an office from scratch and created a national champion organization within three months, having developed three scholarship sales reps and a long-term FSM program that helped my office create a culture of success," he reveals.

Another memorable milestone during his career was his promotion to division manager, which brought with it many important lessons:

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“This taught me so much because I was now managing other managers, and it made me realize that not everyone possesses the same skill level [or] the same ability to pick up information. I learned patience, I learned to become a better listener, [and] I learned how to teach other people how to teach. I also realized that there was still *a lot* for me to learn when it [came] to dealing with subordinates and motivating them.”

Coscetta has also had two notable mentors who have helped advance his career over the years, including J.P. Hamel, his first district manager, who was only 23 years old when he hired Coscetta and who had established himself as a professional success in his early years.

“I envied the lifestyle and success he had created for himself at such a young age. I always knew I would succeed in the business, and he proved to be a great person from whom to learn sales management. He was

my direct manager for five years before he left, and I credit him for much of my success as a district manager.”

The other important mentor in Coscetta’s career was his first division manager and current region manager, Rick Castro.

“While J.P. taught me the ins and outs of running a Vector office, Rick Castro always offered a bigger picture, a larger-scale view of our business — [a] vision that always caused me to think bigger. As my region manager, Rick has been crucial to my development as a division manager, and his past successes as a top division manager is what caused me to want to be a division manager,” he says.

Having risen through the ranks quickly and successfully and having managed a great number of young salespeople, Coscetta guides budding sales professionals with the following principles:

“Put a premium on activity. Sales is a very simple business, and one can achieve a high level of success through hard work and goal setting. Believe you can be a top sales rep, and you will be. Learn how to connect with people and how to motivate others, and that paves the way for one to become a sales manager.”

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