



Round 3: Coaching & Development

Your role: **Brown & Brown**
Sales Leader

Team size: **30** direct reports

Pay structure: **100%**
commission

Setting: **Friday afternoon**

The situation

You are a sales leader at **Brown & Brown**. Your team is 30 salespeople who all report directly to you. Every one of them is paid **strictly on commission** — there is no base salary, no floor, and no bonus structure. What they earn is entirely tied to the business they write.

On Friday afternoon, your **#2 salesperson** — who has earned **\$300,000** in commission income this year — comes to you with an off-cycle request.

30

salespeople on your team

100%

commission — no base, floor,
or bonus

#2

in new business written this
year

\$300K

this rep's total annual
commission

What the salesperson says to you

"Boss, I'm in a bad financial bind and I need a bonus payment of \$30,000 now. It is extremely important! I know we don't usually do this but I need help. I have really been working hard the past several years and I've made money for the company. I am currently in second place in this year's new business written. I really need your help with this. I have a lot of activity in my sales pipeline and I am confident that my new accounts will be big for the rest of the year. I know I can work a lot harder and better if I can get this problem behind me."

Tensions to navigate

- A commission-only pay structure with no precedent for advances or bonuses
- Fairness to the other 29 reps under the same plan
- Retaining a top performer who's under real personal pressure
- A pitch based on future pipeline, not closed business
- Urgency ("now," "extremely important") pressuring a fast answer

What good coaching looks like here

- Listen first — understand the bind before reacting to the ask
- Acknowledge their contribution without pre-committing to anything
- Be honest about the compensation structure and why it exists
- Separate the financial request from the performance conversation
- Land on a concrete next step — not just a yes or no

This is a live coaching moment, not a compensation negotiation — how you listen and respond will matter as much as what you decide.

Lead the person, protect the policy.