



Train Sales Leaders, Not Just Sales Associates

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When budgets get cut, training is sometimes one of the first casualties. And if training survives the cut, often it includes training for just the salespeople. But it's just as important to train your sales leaders.

Because of cost restrictions, very few organizations have created management development programs.

That means most companies do not have a formal plan for how to train and lead others. Sales leaders have been neglected for decades because most companies invest in training their sales force, but few have formal training and development programs for their sales leaders.

Most Sales Leaders Receive Little Formal Training

The American Society of Training and Development (ASTD) conducted a study that revealed some somewhat surprising facts:

- Only 11 percent of companies have a formal plan to train their sales managers to a high extent.
- Another 22 percent of companies do not have a training program for their sales managers at all.
- And 66 percent train their salespeople on how to improve their selling skills at least once a year.

If you want to build your sales steadily with sustainable momentum, invest more in training your sales leaders how to do their jobs.

This is especially true if you have promoted a star producer into a management role. He or she probably received a lot of training in sales technique but is expected to move into management with no preparation for learning an entirely new skill set.

How can a company expect to get great results from its field-management teams when little effort is made to train them in how to do their jobs?

There is no DNA cell that delivers great leadership skills from one generation to another. No one is a naturally born leader. Leaders are developed and trained.

The Skills Your Sales Leaders Need

Managing a sales team requires a specific set of skills. Expecting sales leaders to do their jobs well without training can create frustration and burnout. Providing them with the appropriate training sets them, and your company, up for success.

Seek out training that will help your sales leaders do the following well:

- Recruiting, interviewing and selecting producers who have great potential and fit the organization's culture
- Recognizing each salesperson's unique talents and optimizing them for the benefit and success of the individual, sales team and agency/firm
- Ensuring synergy among various ages, genders, cultures and selling styles on the sales team
- Coaching salespeople in prospecting, setting appointments, selling and closing
- Teaching veteran producers how to mentor junior producers
- Being a change agent who can lead the entire sales team in a direction the company or agency/firm needs to go
- Using the company's resources wisely
- Keeping up-to-date on industry trends, regulatory changes and technology updates

In Summary

When you train your sales leader, it makes a positive impact on the entire sales team, not just that individual. Investing in training for your salespeople only is like watering half your garden.



Consider FSLEdNet for Management Training

One effective resource for training new or experienced managers is FSLEdNet, an innovative virtual platform designed for financial leaders who are building a region, an agency or firm, a sales unit or a sales team. You can get access to hundreds of high-impact sessions for all levels of experience, divided into five distinct elements of success. These sessions are short and easily digestible, averaging less than 10 minutes. Your managers can access the video training anytime, anywhere, on their computers, smartphones or tablets.