To Train or Not to Train ….

*Why Spend Money on Sales Training?*

Why do you keep spending money on sales training? Every year you invest in programs to improve your reps’ skills but over and over again you see diminished returns. Will you be budgeting the same amount of dollars as you did last year? Will you run the same basic sales training programs yet again?

This is what I call “training insanity.” How can you expect to get a return on your investment in sales training if do the same thing every year and yet you expect a better outcome each time. All trainers know that 87% of new learning’s are lost after 30 days, unless the ideas/skills are reinforced. As a smart business person you can only ask why **post training reinforcement** is not part of the process. If that is the case then you might as well just slash the training budget.

If you factor in the true cost of training, which includes the cost of taking reps off the road, flying them to a central location, housing and food, as well as the cost of maintaining a training department, you are spending a ton of money with minimal return. Maybe what you need to do is look at the problem differently!

And if you incorporate reinforcement into your training model, you will realize that ongoing reinforcement is highly dependent on individual sales manager to provide feedback. Realistically we know that sales managers are far too busy to do that on a continuous basis! Hmm you say, isn’t that their job? Shouldn’t they be in the field coaching and reinforcing sales rep training to improve performance? The reality is that the majority of sales managers don’t understand their role and are in fact poor coaches.

Now we get to the crux of the training-spending pit. It’s simple. Unless you have sales managers who can coach, there is no reason to spend money on sales rep training! So, how do you stop the insanity? I believe that before you spend one penny on sales rep training you must invest in training your front line managers and their direct supervisors. Train them to become great coaches and you will improve their ability to support training initiatives. It’s the old adage, provide people with a fish, and they will eat for a day, teach them how to fish and they will eat for a lifetime. Don’t wait until your boss looks for the next area to cut. Be proactive make your training programs work.

In an environment of “do more with less”, I say do less, but do the right things and do them well! Create the infrastructure to support and reinforce your training investment before you spend one more dollar on sales reps training.

Just stirring it up,

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**Steven Rosen, MBA** is a sales management expert who helps pharmaceutical companies transform sales managers into great sales coaches. Steven’s works with sales executives to; hire top performing sales reps and managers, develop their team into top sales managers and achieve greater personal and professional success.

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