

## Strategic Sales Training - Introduction

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You have spent time and resources establishing the proper sales strategy and hiring the right people to execute that strategy. Now you must train those people to execute the strategy. In this next series of articles, we will delve into the critical, yet often overlooked, topic of sales training.

Why do so many companies fail to do this step? Perhaps it is because when they start looking into sales training programs they become overwhelmed with the generalities and exhausted trying to find a training program that fits their needs.

By trying to simplify and generalize to a larger audience, most training programs miss the mark. They get so “watered down” that they are ineffective. How many training programs have you seen teaching how to sell widgets? What is a widget after all, who makes widgets, and what do widgets have to do with selling your particular product or service? I’m poking fun, but really!

This situation is exactly what led to the launch of The Sales Matrix. After researching dozens of training companies and interviewing dozens of trainers, we threw up our arms and decided that if it was going to be done right it had to be done by us.

Now, what will you do if you do not have a training expert on staff? The key is proper planning! Developing the proper training program is just like building the proper sales strategy and recruiting program.

### **Some key steps in the training program are:**

1. Customizing the training program you choose to your people and your market;
2. Defining your desired outcome for the training;
3. Interviewing and selecting the training program; and,
4. Defining your plan for ongoing success and reinforcement of the training.

In this series of articles we will walk you through each step of this process so that your selection of a training program is a good one and yields the desired results.

The first step, customizing whichever training program you choose to your people and your market, is relatively simple; you have done much of that work in the sales strategy development and staffing stages.

Recall that during sales strategy development you asked yourself a series of questions to help define what you are selling, to whom, and how. Then, in the staffing phase you designed specific profiles and traits of the people needed to execute that strategy, along with documentation (roles and responsibilities) of the expectations of your staff to implement the strategy.

These steps provide the “bookends” of customizing your sales training program. In summary, your sales training program begins with training on the sales strategy and ends with training on

your expectations of how your sales staff will execute the strategy in their day-to-day roles and responsibilities, and how you plan to reinforce and inspect it all.

The middle part of the sales training consists of training on the individual sales skills to be executed by the sales staff. This is where you can work with your chosen sales training company to ensure that the proposed training aligns with the skills needed to execute the training. We will delve into this in Article 3.1.3 - Interviewing and Selecting the Training Program.

However, for the training to be successful, we must first address defining your desired outcome for the training. That will be the subject of our next article.

Until then...

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