

Progressions Inc.

Sales Training & Consulting



## **Rules for Getting the Most from Your Sales Training Dollars**

- 1) Determine needs. Start by diagnosing your problems and challenges. Unless you know what you're looking for and the challenges are within your company, how can you truly determine the best training program for your own success? Spend your training dollars wisely by knowing exactly what is wrong with the sales process and what areas you want to address. Once the problems are identified then work with your group individually and collectively to ask their point of view as to the needs and challenges that a training program might help amend.
- 2) Identify current gaps and future needs. It's not enough to understand the challenges that your sales reps are facing today. If your industry like any others is full of change, you must anticipate the type of training you will need for the future. One needs to be looking into the future at least 3-5 years out and developing a training program that identifies current needs and future needs.
- 3) Define measurable results. Know what you are looking for before entering into any program. It's important to understand exactly what the training is intended to accomplish in terms of revenue, market share, profit and employee development. Far too often sales managers provide the skills training that they think their team needs without having a real idea of how that training will increase sales. Ideally sales managers should be able to quantify the results of the training. They should have a solid expectation of what the investment towards training will bring by way of payoff. Measurable results should be defined in advance.
- 4) Customize the training. A cookie cutter approach to training seldom works. A training program should be customized to each organizations individual needs, challenges, products, promotions and future goals. Role plays are always an excellent form of practice and confidence building. They should be designed to use real life examples for one's company to illustrate by way of practice the desired behaviors and skills for selling.
- 5) Keep it simple. Focus on one, two or three different skills in a program. When too much information is introduced, it's hard to identify those areas of importance.



*Lynn Giuliani · Progressions, Inc.  
P.O. Box 28172 · Bellingham, WA 98228  
www.progressionsinc.net · (360) 733-6557*

Rather than a train-a-thon, consider providing training in digestible and retainable modules and build on skills gradually. Training should be ongoing. It should never stop. Therefore there is always room for new ideas, skills and practice.

- 6) Training is a process not a one time event. So many times you hear “There’s another flavor of the month!” Training should become a part of a company’s culture and an ongoing commitment to excellence. Ideally a curriculum of training programs should be distributed to all employees. In so doing they can see the commitment the company makes to improve their performance. The result is employee retention, development, additional sales and stellar service. If you are reacting to a challenge or crisis you are too late. A training program needs to incorporate current and future needs and be well planned. It should be part of your strategic planning and communicated to all in advance. A guideline for the investment is approximately 2-3% of the sales person’s annual income. It’s an investment in commitment and if done correctly a considerable return.
- 7) Coaching will make your training stick! So many companies bring in a training consultant or program and fail to follow-up with coaching and leadership. If the employee sees through ongoing coaching, mentoring and support that their leaders are fully engaged in the message and goals of training they will follow. Ideally every employee deserves individual time and attention each day from their leader. Coaching is the venue to make this happen.
- 8) Reinforce training in a variety of ways. This can include visits from senior management, success stories and news letters, review and discussion in weekly meetings, and incentive compensation. The number one principle in leadership is you get what you reward. Reward the success from your training and enjoy the returns!

Training is an important investment for any company. It should be an ongoing part of your company’s culture. It is a process and simply takes time as it represents change. “Burn the bridge behind you!” As you take your company forward, incorporate new goals and behaviors that help you grow, and implement change, you will undoubtedly experience some resistance. Know and accept that change is necessary for growth and to stay competitive and help employees realize that you are investing in their future by providing new resources that will help them in your company or wherever their future takes them.

Here’s wishing you success through learning and development!



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