



The Benefits of Providing All Departments with Basic Sales Training

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If you've ever engaged in any kind of fitness routine, you know the value of engaging in different types of training. Imagine if you stayed on the same machine or did nothing but jumping jacks during your workouts. Not only would you get poor results, you would burn out more quickly than you would if you'd engaged in different types of training.

Cross-training among different departments is important, but providing sales training to each department should perhaps take priority. Why?

The more your different departments understand what sales and marketing mean to your company, the more they will be able to support your sales and marketing—and revenue-driving—efforts in ways both big and small. Company leaders like to say that reputation is everything, and yet most companies don't nurture their companies' reputations internally by valuing their employees enough to let them know that they're not just bookkeepers, warehouse managers or machine operators, but critical to the overall success of their organizations. Company-wide sales training helps employees in all departments better understand their critical supporting roles. It gives them opportunities to gain and then use knowledge of your sales goals and challenges to create new revenue and cost-savings streams. It also gives them more reasons to invest themselves in your company on a personal level and take greater pride in their positions and work. Purchasing and accounting, research and development, human resources, operations, and logistics and supply chain departments can all benefit from even very basic training in your organization's sales and marketing strategies and processes.

Ultimately, sales training is about learning how to persuade and influence others. Consider the fact that virtually every person within your organization has the opportunity to persuade and influence others in positive and beneficial ways every single day, whether those others are fellow employees, potential customers, partners, suppliers or parcel and freight carriers. When employees beyond those within your sales and marketing departments are given the opportunity to learn the art of persuasion, the importance of effectively influencing others, and the true value of maximizing your company's earning potential, the positive impact on your bottom line and on employee morale can be significant.

When you begin a sales-focused cross-training program, it may be in your best interest to first focus on those departments that are directly connected to your sales department, such as purchasing and accounting departments. Then, focus on other departments. Remember that your sales training program shouldn't just inform employees in other departments about what your sales department does, but give them a big-picture view of how various departments directly impact sales and the ways in which learning sales techniques can benefit everyone in your organization.

Alternatively, depending on the size of your organization, it may be in your best interest to focus your sales training efforts on groups of individuals within your organization that have prior experience or a background in sales, or who have expressed an interest in sales and marketing. If you don't know who wants sales training or would benefit from sales training the most, you may want to conduct an employee survey that will help you determine interest levels and levels of experience.

If your company doesn't have a robust sales training program or the ability to do things like conduct effective employee surveys and accurately analyze the results, you may want to consider partnering with a third-party sales training and analytics company that has experience in serving organizations of your type and size.

Keep in mind that the economy may be on an upswing, but that even the manufacturing renaissance we're currently experiencing is not progressing as quickly as many economists had anticipated. Downsizing is still a probability for many manufacturers in 2014. Training multiple departments in sales and marketing functions now may safeguard your business in the future—when focusing on sales becomes critical to not only your organization's success, but to its survival.



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