

Introduction

Revenue is the primary measure of your company's success. Your revenue is directly related to your sales. That makes your sales team the lifeline of your business. If you want to drive results for your reps, team, and company - **sales training** is the most important investment you'll make. Companies in the U.S. feel the same way. They spend \$20 billion a year training their sales reps.

The problem is that sales training is a broad and complex topic. This guide is designed to be your complete sales training resource. Inside, you'll find information on sales training types, programs, strategies, and more.

Proper sales training will be an investment in reinvigorating your team and revenue. Study this guide to make your sales training investment as valuable as possible.



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What is Sales Training?

It sounds self-explanatory. Sales training is the act of training your sales team. The definition gets complex when you consider how many *types* of sales there are. A sales rep trained in telemarketing might not do well in field sales.



Not to mention the techniques, product knowledge, and mindset that create the core of a successful salesperson.

Sales training that works is an investment that reinvigorates your team and revenue. It will be suited toward your industry and personalized for your business.

The training itself can be a motivational seminar or an in-depth workshop. Sales reps can be trained one-on-one or in a group. Your reps can even use sales exercises to train each other for practically nothing.



Why Should You Consider Sales Training?

A lot of sales reps start their career without any training at all. The sink-or-swim nature of sales creates the idea that good performance is intuitive. You either swim (and sell) or sink (and fail).

It's true, sales is a difficult career.

That being said, you don't need natural talent to succeed. Like all difficult things, salesmanship can be learned - even mastered - with the right training.

Considering the fact that it costs an average of \$114,957 to replace a sales rep, throwing your sales team a life preserver can benefit your entire organization.

Investing in sales training sends a positive message to your sales team. It shows interest in their performance, results, and careers. It also happens to be the perfect recipe to bring out the top-performers on your team.

Before we dive into the fundamentals of proper sales training, we need to cover



how to choose the right program for your team. Defining your sales process is the best way to understand how to improve it.

Chapter 3

Benefits of Sales Training

Sales Training has numerous benefits, both for your sales team and company-wide. The importance of sales training is well-documented. Recent statistics show how essential a well-trained sales team can be for the bottom-line of your organization.



[50% of reps give up the 1st time a prospect objects](#), without attempting to build a relationship or keep in touch.

[66% of all salespeople miss their quota](#)

Over half of all salespeople close at less than 40%

40% of salespeople don't understand their customer needs.



It takes an average of 8 cold call attempts to set a meeting with a prospect

[Continuous training gives 50% higher net sales per employee](#)

[77% of executive buyers claim salespeople don't understand their issues and where they can help, and 78% claim salespeople do not have relevant examples or case studies to share with them.](#)

A well-trained sales team has a dramatic impact on company performance, not to mention the individual benefits. After receiving sales training, the sales activity of a rep increases drastically.

Sales training inspires and motivates your team, making them eager to practice their new skills and engage customers. Increased customer engagement equals more overall sales, an effect that compounds over time.

Sales training has the added benefit of improving confidence, especially when reps are trained by an authority-figure in sales. Confident reps will naturally sell more. Combining the increased confidence of sales training with the strategies your sales team learns is a definite recipe for success.



How to Cut Your Sales Team's Training Time By Half

Sales training is only half the battle. Your reps need to be efficient and productive as quickly as possible. Maintaining your sales team's focus throughout the sales cycle can be a balancing act in itself.

So much time and money is invested into hiring and onboarding sales reps that any decrease in the amount of time spent selling will eat into your company's profit.

Unfortunately, only [39% of a sales rep's time](#) is spent selling or interacting with prospects and customers.

The time sales reps spend on **pre-sale** and **post-sale** activities has increased 15%. Time spent on **non-sales administrative work** is up 21% as well.

This paints an unfortunate picture for productivity. Why invest time and money



into sales training when your team spends so much time not selling?

L'Oreal asked a similar question when they examined their onboarding process. Their solution was to find a way to reduce training time while maintaining scale and sales efficiency.

[The L'Oreal sales team adopted Badger Maps as their solution, reducing their training time for new reps by 50%.](#)

L'Oreal reps were taking an average of **1 year** to reach full productivity. Badger reduced total training time to **6 months**. Badger acts as L'Oreal's training program by educating new reps on territory, customers, and best practices.

Badger Maps allows new reps to learn sales essentials at a much faster rate. Customer information, routes, and new leads are provided directly through Badger. This process saves L'Oreal valuable time that can be invested into a greater ROI for the sales team.

The key to efficient sales training is overcoming problem areas. Whether reps need guidance in product knowledge, methodology, technique, or improving performance in the field - facing these obstacles head-on is the best way to develop a master sales team.



Choosing your Sales Training Program

Choosing the sales training program that's right for your company depends entirely on your sales process. Your sales process is the customer-facing side of your business. Everything leading up to (and resulting in) a sale is considered part of the process.

What type of business are you? The sales process for a b2b company is different than that of a consumer-facing business. Leads are gathered differently, there are more decision makers, and a distinct form of product knowledge is required.

Choosing a sales training program that isn't the right fit for your business is like throwing money away. Here's a brief overview on how to define your sales process to make sure your training investment is well-spent.



Types of Sales



There are generally two types of sales. Your sales process might involve a bit of both. Narrowing down the elements you rely on from each will show you what your sales training should focus on.

Transactional

A transactional sale is *simple* and *short-term*. These types of sales require *less trust* from the consumer. The buying decision is heavily influenced by impulse. The elements of a transactional sale to keep in mind:

- Sale based on **price, features, and availability**
- Buyer's enjoy comparing and negotiating, price

shopping

- Sell in high volume at low price
- Requires customers ready to **buy now**

Transactional sales are less complex. They involve commodities and impulse buys. Salespeople who thrive in transactional sales are able to quickly recall product knowledge and competitor pricing while maintaining an upbeat attitude.

Consultative

These are *complex* and *long-term* sales. They are often service or solution based and require *trust* between buyer and seller.

- Sale based on **value and benefits**
- Buyer's often afraid of making the wrong choice



- Sell in low volume at high price.
- Requires educated customers

Consultative sales are high pressure. They require reps who can understand and educate consumers while building a strong sales relationship.



Defining Your Sales Process

Defining your sales process with the above sales knowledge in mind is essential. Any one area of your sales process might be based in transactional or consultative sales. Examining what's working and what isn't shows you on the type of sales training you'll need.



Look for improvements that can be made in these areas of your sales process:

Lead Generation

Finding your customers, or helping them find you. This might be accomplished through cold calling, advertisements, inbound marketing, or other forms of lead generation.

Lead generation is the most essential part of the sales process. If you don't have customers coming in you'll have a tough time selling anything.

There are two types of leads:

Cold

These are people you've either cold called, emailed, or approached blindly.



These are leads who haven't shown any interest in what you sell.

Warm

These are prospects that have shown interest. They might find you your company naturally or be a cold lead that you've built a relationship with.

Your sales team needs to interact with leads with a strategy based on how they're collected.

Qualifying

Reaching out to the list you've created. This is the part of your process where your leads are contacted.

Qualifying your customers is just confirming their interest. You're making sure that your business fits their needs so that neither of you wastes any time. Some transactional sales might end here.

Demonstrating Value

Communicating the value of your product to your buyer. Value demonstration becomes more effective as your sales rep learns about your buyer.

This is where sales skills come into play. Your buyer needs to be educated on how your product will improve their life. Communicating the value of the product is a sales rep's primary job.

Convincing

Getting a decision from your buyer. Conquering objections is a key part of the convince phase.

Your prospect will have doubts or fears about their decision. Convincing your buyer requires building trust and communicating value to them.

Closing

The actual sale. This will vary depending on the complexity of your sale. Contracts might be finalized or new terms agreed on.



A sale doesn't end when it's closed. Relationship management is an important part of keeping your customers happy and coming back.



Types of Sales Training



Public vs Private Sales Training

Public sales training programs are events or seminars that involve a presenter and an audience. They can be motivational or cover a general sales system focused on improving revenue. A presentation can be a great motivational tool for transactional salespeople.

Private sales training is much more in-depth. Your team will receive personal instruction on the sales skills and methodology suited to your industry. Private training is a good idea if long-term core improvement is needed.



Product Sales Training

Product sales training is your sales team's knowledge of the product they sell and how it fits into the lives of your customers. Any sales rep can benefit from greater product knowledge.

Sales Methodology Training

Sales methodology training improves the approach your sales team is taking throughout the process.

Your methodology is how you collect, handle, and retain customers.

Sales Skill Training

Sales skills can be thought of as how well your team is carrying out their sales methodology.

Sales skill training focuses on the nitty-gritty of sales. Communication skills and selling techniques are personally taught and usually supported by live practice.

Sales Automation Training

Sales automation training involves making your reps more knowledgeable about the tools they use. Lead generation and CRM software are necessary components of any sales process.

Learning how to use them effectively is an important part of sales training that is often passed over.

Each type of sales training is catered toward a specific stage of your sales process. If you've analyzed your sales operations you probably have a good idea about which area could use improvement.

The rest of this guide will cover the types of sales training in detail; including fundamentals, popular programs, and strategies of each.



Product Sales Training

Product sales training educates your sales team on *what* you sell and *how* it helps your market. It might seem like common sense, but you shouldn't underestimate the power of product knowledge.

A strong understanding of product knowledge benefits a consultative team and enables sales efforts.

This section will cover various strategies that use product knowledge to close deals.

Product Sales Training Overview

Product sales training is an all-around study of what you sell and how it fits into the marketplace. Generally, [product](#)



Your Customer's Needs

Your customer isn't buying your product out of the kindness of their heart. Product training covers *why* your customer buys from you - including their problems and frustrations.

Your Product as a Solution

Your product is solving a problem for your buyer. Connecting your sales team to this reality sets the tone for customer interactions, making them beneficial for the rep and the customer.

Industry Regulations

Each rep has to act in accordance with industry standards and regulations. This material is often dry and overlooked, making it all the more important.

Your Marketplace

Understanding the ecosystem your product lives in gives your sales team a broader perspective. Your product is one of many your customer might use in their daily life.

Your Value Proposition

What is your company's mission? Why do you exist and interact with customers? Answering these questions will provide your value proposition, the leading benefit



of what you sell.

Your Competition (and how you win)

Your competitive advantage relative to your competition. This is the unique selling point you have in your market. Your customer service, support, or the superior quality of your product are all potential advantages.

Common Challenges of Product Sales Training

Product sales training is obviously important, why isn't it more common? When it does occur, [why isn't it more effective?](#)

There are 3 common problems with product sales training:

Information Overload:

Information overload describes situations where there's a massive amount to learn without the proper time to learn it.

Product sales training is filled with information that's only applicable in unique situations.

The sad truth is product knowledge without *context* isn't remembered as well as *relevant* information with a basis in daily life. Overwhelming your sales team with information that doesn't have immediate relevance results in very little of it being



retained

Sales Effectiveness:

Customer needs are varied and complex. A sales team's effectiveness is based on their ability to understand these needs without relying on scripts. Balancing product knowledge with real-world application is necessary for sales effectiveness, but also very difficult.

Time Crunch:

Sales teams must remain competitive and reach full-productivity as quickly as possible. That means sales team training is becoming an increasingly time-sensitive investment.

There's constant pressure for reps to become competent quickly. That often leaves little time for the sales team to understand as much product knowledge as they should.

Product Sales Training Solution Strategies

The common problems of product sales training can be avoided altogether. Incorporate these strategies into your training program to ensure your team absorbs the information.

Case-Based Learning:

Case-based learning involves

training reps in the situations they'll



actually encounter. Creating relevant scenarios for your reps to learn from will avoid information overload.

How to create case-based Product Sales Training:

1. Get your most experienced reps, managers, and training developers to create the training material using as much product knowledge as possible.
2. Use their knowledge to define the most commonly encountered sales situations. Categorize them by types that are relevant to your business (high value sale, cold call, consultative appointment, transactional sale, etc)
3. Work through these sales situations to discover the thought process behind each. Really digging into each type of sales situation will let you know what kind of product knowledge is required for each situation.
4. Any non-essential product information can be compiled into a reference guide for less-common situations.
5. Incorporate the sales methodology and skills your top reps use in each scenario.
6. Now that your sales scenarios involve relevant product knowledge you'll always have engaging product sales training material.

Point-of-Need Information:

Point-Of-Need Information is product knowledge that can be accessed at critical moments of the sales process. Providing your sales reps with all of the material a



customer may require is a cornerstone of efficient sales enablement.

Paper manuals for the field or an online knowledge base that reps can refer customers to are excellent examples of quality point-of-need information.

Knowledge Sharing:

Knowledge sharing involves encouraging your reps to learn from each other. Meetings that encourage reps to express their victories, losses, and methods of improvement are engaging and beneficial team-wide.

A strategic approach to sales product training will improve team-efficiency immediately. It's a great investment that can (and should) be done in-house. Product knowledge has the added benefit of making sales methodology and skill training more relevant and effective.



Sales Methodology Training



Sales Methodology is the approach your team takes during the sales process. It focuses on the systematic side of your sales activities; call preparation, sales meeting format, improving overall sales effectiveness, finding high-quality leads, and managing customer relationships.

Sales methodology training supports *all* of your sales efforts. It can bring massive



improvements to your sales process overnight if implemented effectively.

Sales methodology goes hand-in-hand with sales strategy. A good strategy creates an environment for both your sales rep and customer that leads to closed deals much more often.

Sales Methodology Training Strategies

There are a variety of methodologies designed for different aspects of the sales process.

Studying each one individually is valuable, implementing the one that best fits your business is ideal.

Conceptual Selling

Conceptual selling was developed by Miller Heiman of [MHI Global](#). It focuses on the idea that the consumer does not buy a product, they buy the results of that product.

This is similar to focusing on the benefits of your product over the features it contains. People are looking for a solution, understanding how you provide that to them makes your product more appealing.

Conceptual selling uncovers the decision-making process of the customer instead of leading with a pitch. Being customer-focused is an idea that occurs often in sales training, and for good reason. Buyers have a lot of options, understanding their needs and wants is essential to earning their loyalty.

[Conceptual selling breaks the sale](#) [down into 3 stages:](#)



Getting information

Ask questions to determine the making decision-making process of your customer.

1. Who are they?
2. What are the problems they're facing?
3. Why do they need your product?

This has the added benefit of qualifying your prospect. Questions like these validate the buyer's need for your product.

Giving Information

Giving information involves tailoring your solution to the needs of your prospect. This stage is about connecting their problem to your solution.

- How your solution fits their concept
- How your solution is a better fit than competitive solutions
- The unique strength of your offer, custom-fit to your prospect's concept

The information you give should be only what your customer *needs*. Don't waste time by focusing on irrelevant details.

Getting commitment

Getting commitment from your prospect is extremely important. You want them to commit to another interaction at the very least, and an agreement to purchase as the relationship progresses.

- Get a commitment of further engagement after every interaction
- Get greater commitments as the sales relationship progresses



- If your customer refuses a commitment they are doubting your solution. Discover the reason behind their hesitation and provide more information on how your solution solves their specific problem

Your entire interaction with your customer should be based around their concept of the solution they need. That means listening is more important than speaking. If you can understand their problem you'll be the best fit for their solution.

SPIN Selling

Spin Selling is a sales model and book by Neil Rackham. He and his company, Huthwaite, analyzed 35,000 sales calls to dissect the essentials of closing sales.

Rackham learned that asking questions was much more efficient than making statements.

There were 4 types of commonly asked questions:

Situation questions:

Understanding buyer's reasoning for purchase

Problem questions:

Involving the buyer's challenges and pain points. Keeps the conversation focused on the need they have for what you're selling.

Implication questions:

Concerning the negative effects of the problem. These questions put the results of the problem (and your solution) at the forefront of the customer's mind.



Need-Payoff questions:

What your solution does for the buyer. “How much money would this solution save you a year?” Getting the buyer to explain the value of your product is more effective than explaining it yourself.

The SPIN selling methodology focuses on **problem-based** questions to increase the chance of success. Planning the exact questions you'll ask in advance is even more effective.

Challenger Sales Approach

The Challenger Sale is an extremely popular sales book by Matt Dixon and Brent Adamson. The Challenger model takes a different approach than others. It suggests that customers are tired of answering questions and want more value from their sales reps.

The challenger approach categorizes every sales rep as one of five types:

The Hard Worker: Persistent, interested in self-development

The Lone Wolf: Delivers results, difficult to manage

The Relationship Builder: Creates relationships, classic consultative rep

The Problem Solver: Detail-oriented, ensures all problems are solved

The Challenger: Loves to debate, pushes the customer. Strong understanding



of the customer's business

The relationship builder, a classic methodology, was the *least* efficient model for sales reps.

The Challenger model was the most successful in every study done. 40% of top-performers use a challenger approach instead of the other four.

In complex sales, that number rises to 50%. Customers making complex decisions appreciate a sales rep who understand their business and can simplify the decision by being sure of their solution.



Chapter 11

Sales Skill Training

Sales skill training increases the efficiency of sales skills and techniques. It covers the "how" of sales, the nitty-gritty and personal aspects of closing deals. Sales skill training is typically in-person and physical.



Sales skill training depends on regular practice. The training program will generally provide a regimen for each rep to follow designed to improve selling skills. Live coaching, practice calls, and peer-review of technique are essential aspect of sales skill training.

The sales skills your team requires depends on your sales process. An inside sales team should focus on tonality more than body language, for example.

That being said, there are fundamental sales skills that every salesperson should know. These skills are basic aspects of communication and persuasion and should be covered by any sales skill training program you invest in.



Sales Skill Training Fundamentals

The most fundamental sales skills are also useful in everyday life. Surprise, communication and persuasion are daily activities. This section is written directly to your sales rep to help convey all of the different skills that go into sales.

Conversation

Conversation creates sales. Communication has been the basis of every sale since the dawn of time. How *well* the value of your solution is communicated decides if it's sold or not. That's not changing anytime soon.

Conversational skill is a priority in any sales skill training program. [Time magazine](#) studied “The Art of Conversation” and found 5 fundamental rules:

1. Put others at ease
2. Put yourself at ease
3. Weave in all parties
4. Establish shared interests
5. Actively pursue your own

In sales, the conversation is between you and your (potential) customer, which creates a unique dynamic. Both of you are trying to get something from the conversation. You want a sale and your customer wants a solution, both of you want the best deal possible.

With that in mind, let's look at the rules of conversation from a sales perspective:

- Put yourself at ease – Be calm, cool, and collected. If you seem nervous you'll make your customer nervous. Speak slowly and with intent to show



confidence in the situation and your solution. The success of the conversation (and ultimately, the sale) is completely based on trust. By appearing at ease in the conversation you're making your customer feel equally confident.

- Put others at ease – Make your buyer feel comfortable. Don't control the conversation. Listen and make sure they understand they're being heard. Their time is as valuable as yours, respecting their side of the conversation ensures they'll respect yours.
- Weave in all parties – Don't leave anyone out of the conversation. You can *never* be completely sure about who has influence in a group. Leaving a key decision maker out of the conversation, or ignoring their concerns, is a surefire way to lose the sale.
- Establish shared interests – Connect the conversation to the life of your buyer. They are looking for a solution to their specific problem. You can make your offering much more relevant by connecting it to their life. This also shows that you're listening, and that you care about more than just the sale.
- Actively pursue your own – Don't be afraid to actually sell. You aren't doing anyone any favors by ignoring the purpose of the conversation. Balancing the sale with genuine interest in your customer will help you stand out as an excellent salesperson.

These rules help ensure that the sales conversation develops in a mutually beneficial way for your rep and your buyer. Make your sales team memorize them and watch the revenue flow. The following skills are based in conversational ability. Improving them should be daily practice for your sales team.

Presentation

Presentation skills help you get your message across. You never know when you'll need to present your product to one person or when a group will need a demonstration.



Present confidently with appropriate body language. Speak slowly to help your audience absorb the information.

Your presentation (along with your sales pitch) should actively guide your prospect into being a customer, not ignore them so that you can get your message across.

Active Listening

Listening to your prospect is *the* most effective way of getting the sale. Active listening involves hearing what your customer is saying while also understanding what they mean.

The questions you ask your prospect should be based on the details they give you. Your job, as a sales rep, is to weave together your prospect's problems and the solution you're selling.

Storytelling

What better way to weave ideas together than storytelling? Salespeople *must* be good storytellers. You need to communicate the value of your solution to your customer's life, telling a story to your prospect about how your product helped someone just like them is the best way to do that.

Practice speaking with a narrative structure. Provide a setting, characters, and conflict with a satisfying resolution (involving your product!) and you'll capture your prospects attention *and* close the sale.



Building Rapport

Rapport creates relationships. Relationships make sales. Your prospect needs to like you, or at least tolerate you, before they'll buy from you.

Establishing rapport involves *connecting* with your prospect. Trade opinions, share stories, and bond over common ground. Don't rush into the sale while ignoring that your prospect is a person, just like you.

Assertiveness

Being assertive doesn't mean being rude. You can be assertive in a friendly, and even passive, manner.

Direct the conversation towards the goal of the meeting. Both you and your prospect know why you're meeting, there's no shame in bringing the goal of the meeting into focus at the appropriate time.

Conquering Objections

Overcoming objections is one of the most uncomfortable aspects of sales. You have to *disagree* with someone, a scary idea for salespeople and non-reps alike.

It helps to understand that you're not disagreeing with the *person*, only their *idea*. If you're sure that your solution will make their life better than you're doing them a favor by bringing them to your point of view. People are naturally unsure, it's your job to give them all of the facts they need to make a decision.



The basic process of overcoming objections is to:

Understand - “What’s preventing you from making a decision today?”

Empathize - “I understand why that might be an issue”

Overcome - “Will *this* fix ____? If not, what will?”

A good sales skill training program teaches your team to overcome common objections in your industry. Specificity is key when addressing customer concerns.

Closing

Closing a deal is getting a decision from your prospect, hopefully turning them into a customer.

There are a variety of ways to improve close rate, but there’s one fundamental thing you’ll need to do:

Ask with confidence - Consider asking for the sale mandatory. If you’ve used your sales skills effectively your prospect will be ready to buy, if not, they would have left already.

Still, a decision is a scary thing for prospects. By asking for the sale (with confidence) you’re taking the pressure off of your customer and placing it on yourself. This is usually appreciated and prevents any delay on the part of your prospect.



Cross-Selling & Up-Selling

Cross-selling and up-selling are advanced skills. They involve selling to your customer even *more*, either a related product or a more expensive version of what they're buying.

Getting more from each sale is a hallmark characteristic of a good salesperson.

Cross-selling involves selling related products that your customer can use in addition to the one they've bought. A good way to introduce a cross-sale is to connect the related product with another need of your customer.

Up-selling involves pitching a more expensive version of your product after your prospect has decided to buy the regular version.

A good way to think about up-selling is that you're giving your customer more options. As long as you know they'll value the upgraded version more than the regular you're doing them a favor by mentioning it.

Both cross-selling and up-selling require a deep understanding of your customer's business. Before you ask them for a greater investment of time and money, you need to know how that investment will benefit them.

Cross-selling and up-selling are both best for when a relationship has already been established. That is, when you've already closed a sale with this customer.

Sales Skill Training Exercises

Sales skill training exercises can be performed in-house at very little cost. The benefits of even informal sales training more than justify the expense.



Regular training will keep your sales team sharp and focused.

Here's an overview of the types of exercises that will improve sales skills.

Create Call Plans:

Call plans are detailed descriptions of your customer, along with their goals, challenges, and any questions you'd like to ask them.

Do this before every call. Compare notes with colleagues. Find the type of plan that works best and make it standard.

Practice Questions:

Practice asking questions that get to the heart of your customer's buying decision.

Create a list of questions that find customer's state, pain commitment, and budget.

Practice Story Sharing

Story sharing is the process of sharing how your solution has helped others. Putting the value of your solution into stories makes it relatable for the listener.

Stories are also excellent ways to pass along information. It's easier to explain the benefits of your offer by explaining how someone else has already benefitted



Practice Sales Calls & Conversation

This is a fun one. Partner with a team member and go over different sales scenarios. Practice selling to different customer types in different situations, then trade places. Throw your partner some curveball objections to see how well they can recover.

Sales Skill Training Programs

Sales skill training programs are in-depth, usually multi-day, sessions on sales skills. There are a variety of training programs catered toward different industries, products, and styles.

Investing in a program that suits your business is one of the best decisions you can make, Here the most popular sales programs and what they cover.

Dale Carnegie Training

Dale Carnegie's book "How to Win Friends and Influence People" revolutionized the sales industry and relationship building in general.

The Dale Carnegie Training Program continues the novel's legacy with its approach to sales skill training. There's a heavy emphasis on practicing social skills in live situations.

Their flagship "[Dale Carnegie Course](#)" teaches all of the essential sales skills for nurturing relationships and closing deals. It covers:

- Applying a proven process to recall names and facts
- Utilizing a proven process to strengthen relationships



- Using your experiences to communicate more confidently
- Persuasively communicating in a way so people are moved to action
- Becoming more animated to energize and engage listeners
- Communicating clearly and concisely
- Creating an “all-win” environment
- Giving positive feedback on the strengths in others
- Dealing with challenging interpersonal situations more effectively
- Using flexibility to create positive change
- Increasing your ability to manage worry and stress

The entire course is taught over a 3 day seminar designed to transform reps into charismatic sales machines.

[RAIN Sales Training](#)

RAIN Sales training focuses on advanced sales skills. Sales techniques, including overcoming objections and closing deals, are taught over a varied amount of sessions.

RAIN has multiple programs covering essential techniques like **negotiation**:

1. Sell the value of your solutions and reduce price pushback
2. Lead masterful sales negotiations that lead to win-win solutions for you and your customers
3. Respond to objections in a way that gets the prospect closer to the close
4. Anticipate and address buyer objections before they come up
5. Win against lower-priced competitors
6. Deal with customers who are just trying to get concessions
7. Avoid critical mistakes in the negotiation process that kill credibility and the sale



and **persuasion**:

1. Use the 16 Principles of Influence to lead more productive sales conversations
2. Combine emotion and justification to make your prospects truly invested in working with you
3. Reverse direction in order to keep your conversations on track if you sense the buyer is backing off
4. Stand out from the rest of the pack
5. Get verbal, written, and public commitment from your buyer
6. Make your influence felt
7. Convince more prospects to buy from you
8. RAIN Sales training is a great investment for any sales team that needs a more advanced approach to dealing with customers. If big deals have been slipping away this is an excellent solution.

Richardson

Richardson is an established sales training company focusing on a variety of sales training. All of their training is specialized to your industry and business needs.

Their consultative [selling skills program](#) covers:

1. Raising the quality of sales calls with your clients to make them more productive
2. Sellers must approach informed buyers with insight that adds value to the conversation
3. Discovering client's needs and linking these needs persuasively with your solutions



4. Resolving objections and resistance in a client-focused manner

5. Closing effectively in order to move the deal forward

Richardson is known for their sales skill program, but they have several others covering advanced consultative sales. If your team needs complete training in sales efficiency, Richardson is a great option.



Sales Automation Training

What is Sales Automation Training?

Sales Automation training involves any software designed to streamline your sales cycle.

Many tasks that salespeople have had to complete by hand are now easily done with sales automation software. The convenience of automation tools definitely outweighs their learning curve.



Sales automation training may not be the most exciting aspect of onboarding, but it's an essential part of preparing employees.

These are the tools your sales team uses daily. Your entire sales team should know the sales technology in place like the back of their hand.

Best Sales Automation Tools

There are many different types of sales automation software. Each is designed to maximize efficiency in a different area of your sales process.



The right tool depends on the needs of your business. A CRM might be the solution you need if you're losing leads or customers. A lead generation tool may be in order if your pipeline is consistently empty.

Here's an overview of some sales automation tools to supercharge your sales stack:

CRM Tools

A CRM is a great way to keep track of customers at every stage of your sales cycle. Different CRM's specialize in specific aspects of customer relationship management. The key is finding the CRM best suited for your sales team.

[Salesforce](#)

Salesforce is the biggest name in the industry. It is all-inclusive, meaning it provides solutions for sales, services, marketing, and even a platform to build apps for your company.

Salesforce has been around since 1999, so they understand a variety of industries and use-cases. Although expensive, Salesforce is an advanced solution for any-size team.

[Zoho](#)

Zoho offers an array of services, including a CRM. Their CRM is popular due to the user-friendly interface and wide-range of integrations it offers.

For example, Zoho easily integrates with Gmail - making appointment scheduling a smooth process for your team.

Zoho is a more affordable option than Salesforce, making it a smart investment for new or small companies.

[Agile](#)

Agile is a great inexpensive CRM that combines visual data with relationship management.



Agile offers training videos on its website, making the learning process quick and efficient.

[Base](#)

Base is the most visual CRM listed so far. Base shows graphs, plots, and other visual depictions of your sales cycle. This is especially helpful if you want to communicate goals or results without the hassle of digging through data.

Base is priced competitively, making it a great option for large teams who love visuals.

If you have more trouble finding leads than you do managing them, lead generation software might be what you're looking for.

[Badger Maps](#)

Badger Maps is a map routing software that offers lead generation, CRM integration, and data visualization.

Badger offers complimentary team training and a 21 day free trial. This is a great way to learn and test a valuable solution for your outside sales team.

Lead Generation Tools

If your company is only looking for lead generation, there are plenty of options that pull leads from different sources. Some scrape the internet for potential customers, others give you email patterns for top companies. Here's an overview of the main contenders:

Lead generation is the process of getting new customers, aka the most important part of business. Before technology, lead generation was time-intensive and painful. Today, software makes generating leads easier than ever.

[Salesloft](#)

Salesloft was one of the first types of prospecting software. It allows you to find leads in your industry and send them cold emails. It also offers Salesforce integration so that new customers can go straight into your CRM.



Salesloft offers three pricing structures: group, professional, and enterprise - making it an appropriate solution for any-size company.

[Growbots](#)

Growbots works by scraping LinkedIn to find qualified leads in the industry you want to target. Like Salesloft, you can cold email leads after you gather them. Pricing starts at \$500 per month, which is a justifiable expense for a small company looking to grow.

[Toofr](#)

Toofr is helpful if you know the first name, last name, and company of your prospect. All of this information can be found via LinkedIn, but the process can be a burden on team operations. This is a great tool for individual sales reps looking to make specific contacts. Pricing starts at just \$29 per month, a worthwhile investment for quality leads.

[Zoominfo](#)

Zoominfo is a service that supplies lists of employee email addresses from large companies. This may be more appealing than lead generation software depending on your needs.

Finding the right sales automation tool is a valuable process. A tool that is a good fit for your team will greatly improve productivity.

Understanding the best strategies to use for sales automation training will help speed up the learning process.

Best Strategies for Sales Automation Training

Pilot the tool

Let a couple of your more tech-savvy employees learn to love the tool before you roll it out to your whole team. This way, your employees can learn from their coworkers who they know and trust. Many software companies will offer free trials, so have a couple of employees sign up and test the tool.

Let the company do it for you

There are many software

companies that will offer demos in



either group or one-on-one once you sign up for the software. This is especially true for startups where they will pay you the most attention because your business is just as important to them as their software is to you.

Create Internal Training Materials

Regardless of the solution you use, create a best practices guide around it. This can be distributed internally to cut down training time for new reps. Developing internal training systems is the best way to optimize the learning process.

Sales Automation Training Courses

Training courses are a good investment if you're looking to get your sales team up-to-speed on a new tool quickly. The right course will cover basic and advanced applications for your sales team, quickly turning your team into experts.

John Barrows

This is one of the most popular sales automation training programs. They cover Salesforce, Box, LinkedIn and more. The lite version is free and the premium version is \$50 a month. Depending on your needs and the size of your sales team, this is a great option. [Read more!](#)

SalesHood

SalesHood is a sales automation training program that automates a variety of sales processes and software, including; onboarding, CRM usage, and employee training. [Read more!](#)



Jim Cathcart

Bio: Jim Cathcart, CSP, CPAE is the original author of Relationship Selling™ plus 16 other books. He is one of the most award winning professional speakers on Earth and has delivered over 3,000 seminars and speeches worldwide. In 2012 he was inducted into the Sales & Marketing Hall of Fame by Top Sales World Magazine. His books and concepts are being taught in universities and corporations around the world. He is also a professional guitarist and songwriter plus a mountain trail runner based in California. <http://cathcart.com/>



1. How long have you been in sales? What industry?

I've been both a sales person and a sales trainer in many capacities over the years. I started out as a kid selling my old toys and comic books from a table in my front yard, then selling various products and services door-to-door. As a young adult I sold cars, mutual funds, life insurance and business services. Once I got into the field of Training & Development I sold Earl Nightingale's training materials and then my own. I started in this field in 1974 and went full time on my own in 1977. My clients have been in hundreds of industries and professions. I started in Financial Services: Banking, Life Insurance and Investment Products.

2. What do you incorporate in your sales training? Can you describe the process?

I'm the original author and champion of the concept known as "Relationship Selling™". I wrote the first book by that title and worked through the resistance in the market when I first introduced the phrase. People used to say, "Jim you have to choose; it's either a relationship or a sale!"

My belief is that Relationships are either Assets or Liabilities depending on how you manage them. In Relationship Selling™ we approach connections as Assets and track and manage them accordingly.

In Sales Training topics must include: Sales Philosophy (What is selling and why does it matter?), Sales Process, Sales Techniques, Self-Management and Self-Motivation, Interpersonal Communication, Understanding Buyer Differences: Values, Thinking Style, Personality Type, Velocity differences, and cultivating Trust.

3. How does technology shape your sales process? What tools do you use/recommend to use?

I don't specify a particular approach to technology in sales because companies and markets vary as to which is the best tool. Clearly we must optimize our selling with the media, instruments and strategies that generate the most trust and credibility as well as the best outcomes. Life is much easier with the right technology.



4. What is the key component of your sales training?

Mindset. It shows up in each phase of the sale. I teach Relationship Selling™ with a structure that I call “The Eight Competencies” structured around the skill sets needed for each phase of selling: Preparation, Targeting the right buyers, Connecting with them to gain trust, Assessing their needs and wants, Solving their problem, Confirming their commitment to buy, Assuring satisfaction and Managing Sales and Self.

I continually reinforce the Mindset that: Selling is an act of friendship, not a process of simple persuasion. The purpose of Selling is: To Make Life Better For The Buyer.

5. What are the best results you’ve seen from your sales training process?

I spent 6 years working with a life insurance agency and they went from nearly out of business to winning the President’s Trophy twice in a 5 year period with a fifteen fold increase in production (\$17 million to \$231 million) and a minimal increase in their sales force (19 agents).

6. What are the most important skills you can have as a sales trainer?

Self Awareness, Self Motivation and Self Management. If you can understand and control yourself effectively then you will also understand others better and be able to reach more of them. Self Motivation means getting yourself to do what needs to be done even when you don’t feel like it.

7. Why should companies invest in sales training?

Because if they don’t, they won’t make as many sales. If you don’t train sales people then you cannot control your outcomes. It should be tracked and “valued” constantly. If you can’t prove the value of the training then you should switch to a different training program.

8. What was your most important learning experience?

When Doug Macdonald told me to stop selling and start helping. He said,



“Jim you know all the right words and you can manipulate people into saying Yes but that’s not your job. Your job as a sales person is to help them and earn a profit by doing so. When you cannot help someone then you shouldn’t be selling to them. There are plenty of other prospects. Make what you do count.

9. How do you connect with your team?

The question is too broad for me to provide a useful answer.

The way I connect with my clients is a combination of in person, by phone, email, text, social media, webinars, podcasts, video training, executive coaching, staff training, and providing some of my 17 books and other recorded programs. I especially want everyone to get a copy of Relationship Selling™ and The Self Motivation Handbook.

10. What advice would you give a new sales trainer?

Be sure you focus on Outcomes! Don’t get stuck in processes unless those processes lead to desirable outcomes. It is the helping that matters, the selling is just a way to get there. All sales people should get better each month for their entire career. The way you know it’s working is that they need you less and less in order to produce sales increases.



Barb Giamanco

Bio: Barb Giamanco heads up [Social Centered Selling](#). She's the co-author of *The New Handshake: Sales Meets Social Media* and authored the Harvard Business Review article *Tweet Me, Friend Me, Make Me Buy*.

Known internationally as a thought leader in Social Selling, Barb is a sought after Sales and Social Media Advisor and Speaker.

With successful C-level background in Sales, Technology and Leadership Development, Barb's experience speaks for itself. She capped her corporate career at Microsoft, where she led sales teams and coached executives. Through the years she has sold \$1B in sales.



1. How long have you been in sales? What industry?

25+ years. While still in corporate America, I sold for four tech companies with the last being Microsoft. Now that I own my own business, I primarily sell services into the technology and telecommunications markets.

2. What do you incorporate in your sales training? Can you describe the process?

When we design programs, we start by helping the customer create a



strategy for what they want to accomplish. The actual training is done both virtually and in-person, depending on the customers circumstances. For example, if they have a large sales force spread out across the United States or internationally, we often do virtual training that is recorded and broken down into specific segments making it easier to digest. After every program, we also incorporate ongoing coaching for 6-8 months and help the clients leadership team carry that training reinforcement and training forward.

3. How does technology shape your sales process? What tools do you use/recommend to use?

Our primary focus is helping salespeople integrate the use of social media into their selling process. This is also known as social selling. Common platforms are LinkedIn, Twitter, InsideView (business intelligence), Feedly, Paper.li and other social channels that may be applicable for the customer.

4. What is the key component of your sales training?

The why and the how to integrate social selling strategies to attract and engage buyers in new ways. The primary purpose is to improve prospecting and lead generation results.

5. What are the best results you've seen from your sales training process?

The salespeople we've worked with (over 30,000) have seen results such as expanded networks with the right line of business buyers and executives, an increase in inbound sales inquiries, an increase in net/new sales meetings and more.

6. What are the most important skills you can have as a sales trainer?

I've walked in the shoes of every salesperson and sales manager that we work with. For that reason, I know what life as a seller is all about. I can relate to their world and their challenges. Someone with no sales background will find that hard to do. I'm also quite skilled in how to use technology and social channels effectively to achieve specific sales results.



7. Why should companies invest in sales training?

Buyer expectations are higher than ever. What worked back in the day, is outdated now. Buyers do not want the feature dump and your demo isn't that important (at least in the beginning). The Harvard Business Review reported that more than 70% of executive buyers said that the ability for a salesperson to demonstrate that they can solve business problems is key to their decision making process. It is a new world and it is costly for a business to let their salespeople figure it out as they go. They need to be training in how to be good consultative sellers and that training should happen on an ongoing and consistent basis. The problem is that often companies think of training as an event and not a process, which is a big mistake.

8. What was your most important learning experience?

That learning never ends. Every day I make it my business to learn something new. That keeps you relevant. No matter how much experience you have, you never can know it all. Salespeople who think they already know it all are definitely setting themselves up for failure. That is more true today than ever. With new technologies popping up daily, salespeople have to keep up. And, because buyers expect more than your dog and pony show, you need to keep your communication, presentation, problem solving, consultative selling skills sharp.

9. How do you connect with your team?

We stay in touch using multiple methods – email, phone, Ryver for ideas collaboration and document sharing and we use Office 365 to edit and update our training documents. For large files that we need to send to customers, we typically use Dropbox.

10. What advice would you give a new sales trainer?

Do your homework. Preparation is key. I spend time really getting to know the company who hired me. Part of the upfront design of any training program we deliver includes personally interviewing sales managers and salespeople to really understand why a day in their life is like. We also do an anonymous survey to learn as much as we can. It is also important to learn about the customers



competitor, get to know their marketplace, etc. It takes more time, but that's how you establish credibility.



Dr. Christopher Croner



Bio: Dr. Christopher Croner is a Principal with [SalesDrive, LLC](#), a firm that specializes in the selection and deployment of high performing salespeople. Dr. Croner is co-author of the book, *Never Hire a Bad Salesperson Again*, detailing his research and practice in identifying the non- teachable personality traits common to top producers. Dr. Croner developed the proprietary [DriveTest®](#) diagnostics system, including the Drive Interview® for salesperson selection. Using this system, he has helped over 750 companies worldwide to hire and develop top-performing salespeople.

Dr. Croner has served as an adjunct faculty member at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology, teaching personnel selection in the Industrial Psychology Master of Arts program. Dr. Croner is an active member of the Consulting Section of the Illinois Psychological Association and former Co-Program Chair of Chicago Industrial/Organizational Psychologists (CIOP).

He received his BA in Psychology from DePaul University, and his Masters and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

1. How long have you been in sales? What industry?

Although my title is not sales, anyone whose job requires communication with current and potential clients is in sales. In that regard, I have worked with over



750 companies worldwide since 2002 as a member of the Human Resources industry.

2. What do you incorporate in your sales assessment? Can you describe the process?

Regarding the assessment process, the DriveTest® is taken online. Each question uses a forced-choice format, designed to eliminate faking. For each question, the candidate reviews three statements, all of which sound positive.

For example:

- I consider myself a leader.
- I have great relationship skills.
- I am very organized.

The candidate must choose which of the statements is most like them and which is least like them. This question format forces the candidate to make some very difficult distinctions, but it gives us a much better sense of their real priorities.

3. How does technology shape your sales process? What tools do you use/recommend to use?

Technology is critical to our sales process. Some of the tools we have found most effective for managing relationships include Salesforce.com, iContact (for managing our email list), and Formstack (for managing payment information).

4. What is the key component of your sales assessment?

The DriveTest's key component is measuring the three non-teachable characteristics our research have found to be critical for high-performing "hunter" salespeople: Need for Achievement, Competitiveness, and Optimism, collectively known as Drive. We also measure the more teachable core skills important for just about every sales position, including Confidence, Persuasiveness, and Relationship skills.

5. What are the best results you've seen from your sales assessment/training process?



The key benefit to expect from using the DriveTest is identifying higher-potential sales candidates to move to the interview process, rather than spending time with candidates who simply tell you what you want to hear. The DriveTest was validated with salespeople in a variety of industries. Our research found that those who were scoring a 4 or 5 on Drive (the highest levels), were almost twice as likely to be identified as a sales leader by their manager than those scoring a 1 or 2.

6. What are the most important skills you can have as a sales trainer?

One of the most important skills for a sales trainer is targeting training to a salesperson's specific needs, rather than a "one size fits all" approach. After we have identified each person's unique training needs, listening is also critical to understand his or her personal vision and goals. Finally, holding the salesperson accountable with regular follow-up is essential.

7. Why should companies invest in sales assessment?

Unfortunately, many sales managers end up feeling burned by candidates who talked a good game in the interview, but did not perform well thereafter, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars in missed targets, lost customers, and salary/benefits. Beyond the age of 21-22, we cannot increase Drive, which is the easiest thing for a candidate to fake in the interview and the hardest thing to accurately rate. Sales candidates can be especially skilled at figuring out what you want to hear . . . and that may be the only sale you get out of them. Using a well-constructed, validated assessment saves time and allows you to focus on candidates who are much more likely to perform well for you.

8. What was your most important learning experience?

As discussed in our book, one of my most important learning experiences came when we were first developing our Drive model over a decade ago. We had a candidate who scored strong on both Need for Achievement and Competitiveness who performed poorly attempting to sell a product new to his market with a long sales cycle. As we learned, this type of product requires an evangelist with unwavering Optimism. Unfortunately, this salesperson's was



pessimistic, and he had trouble overcoming objections. He parted ways with the company after 6 months, offering to pay back every dollar of salary he received. This caused us to research Optimism in depth, recognizing that without it, even a highly motivated salesperson can lack the certainty and perseverance necessary to succeed.

9. How do you connect with your team?

As mentioned above, the most important strategy for connecting with your team is to get to know them as individuals, learning about each team member's most important personal aspirations and goals. Listen carefully to understand what is most important to that person and provide them with resources (e.g. coaching, books, training) tailored to their individual needs.

10. What advice would you give a new sales trainer?

Focus on developing skills that are teachable (e.g. persuasiveness, relationship skills, time management), rather than trying to instill traits that we cannot teach, such as Drive. Use assessments up front to determine each salesperson's innate level of Drive and their scores on the teachable skills, make sure they are in a role that fits their level of Drive (i.e. Hunter vs. Farmer), and develop the teachable skills thereafter.



Dave Kurlan

Bio: Dave Kurlan is the founder and CEO of [Objective Management Group, Inc.](#) (OMG), the industry leader in sales assessments and sales force evaluations and named the Top Sales Assessment Tool from 2011- 2015. Dave is also the CEO of Kurlan & Associates, Inc., an international consulting firm specializing in sales force development. He possesses 30 plus years of experience in all facets of sales development, including consulting, training, coaching, recruiting, systems, processes, and metrics.



Dave is also a top-rated speaker, best selling author, radio show host, successful entrepreneur and sales development industry pioneer. He was inducted into the Sales & Marketing Hall of Fame in 2012.

1. How long have you been in sales? What industry?

43 years, and in multiple industries but the last 31 years in the sales consulting industry.

2. What do you incorporate in your sales training? Can you describe the process?

Sales Training is about creating a lasting change to the thinking, approach, behavior, strategy, tactics, skills, process, methodology and



competencies required for sustained sales success. The process is to coach up the sales management team so that they can provide skilled sales coaching to their salespeople, in the context of the sales process and the content being provided; We follow that up with a live one-day kick-off, bring the sales process to life and demonstrate how to execute the process through role play. Then we reinforce that with between 8-16 live, one-hour, online follow-up training sessions to go wider and deeper on each of the milestones of the sales process with an emphasis on role-playing.

3. How does technology shape your sales process? What tools do you use/recommend to use?

The sales process must be integrated into the company's CRM application. We use and recommend Membrain.

4. What is the key component of your sales training?

The key component is the consultative approach to selling which requires active listening and great questioning.

5. What are the best results you've seen from your sales training process?

While we've seen isolated incidents of great salespeople tripling their business, it's more typical to increase sales by somewhere between 30% - 100%.

6. What are the most important skills you can have as a sales trainer?

We must be able to engage our audience, keep them engaged and motivate them to change. The training must entertain and motivate while sharing and demonstrating the various required sales conversations through role-play.

7. Why should companies invest in sales training?

That's the point. They should invest in training if they wish to improve sales excellence and grow revenue and profit. They should spend money for sales training if they are providing it for the sake of providing sales training. Invest for change, spend to check it off the list out of obligation.



8. What was your most important learning experience?

Everyone is different and you can't judge someone's intentions or their eventual decisions by looking at them or listening to them. While first impressions are important, it's more important to make sure that you make a good first impression than it is that you develop a first impression of your prospect.

9. How do you connect with your team?

Daily huddles by phone, weekly live meetings.

10. What advice would you give a new sales trainer?

(1) Master the content so that when you deliver it you don't have to think about it and instead you can pay attention to the people you are training and their reactions and responses to the material you are sharing.

(2) Live it – don't teach anything that you haven't actually done yourself – successfully.



Dan McDade



Bio: Dan McDade founded [PointClear](#) in 1997 to help B2B companies with complex sales processes drive revenue through Account-Based Marketing services including lead generation, qualification and nurturing. For close to 20 years, he's been instrumental in developing strategies that assure 100% of leads delivered to client sales organizations are fully qualified to client specifications.

Dan is the author of ***The Truth About Leads***, a book about how to focus lead-generation efforts, align sales and marketing, and drive revenue. He also wrote [From Chaos to Kickass](#), an ebook detailing benefits of sales and marketing optimization; and he authors the blog [ViewPoint](#).

The Sales Lead Management Association named Dan one of the 50 Most Influential People in sales lead management for five consecutive years. In addition, he was named one of the Top 50 Sales & Marketing Influencers for three years by Top Sales World.

1. How long have you been in sales? What industry?

I have been in sales for about 30 years primarily in business services.

2. What do you incorporate in your sales training? Can you describe the process?

Years ago I wrote a sales management and sales training program for a well-known company so a lot of what we use comes from that. However, we incorporate bits and pieces from other sales methodologies including



SPIN, Miller Heiman Blue-sheeting, Solution Selling and more recently tips from Mike Weinberg's "New Sales. Simplified." The process includes about 50% classroom and 50% roleplay.

3. How does technology shape your sales process? What tools do you use/recommend to use?

We have our own proprietary solution built on SQL called PinPoint. It handles all data capture and workflow (list segmentation, touch cycles, segmentation) plus is the source for extensive reporting.

4. What is the key component of your sales training process?

The objective of each stage in the sales process. The opening – create interest. Transition – give the call back to the prospect – let them feel they are in control. Dialog – establish need. Close – satisfy the need.

5. What are the best results you've seen from your sales training process?

I love to see sales reps hit an "ah ha" moment – the moment when they can see the process come together and they recognize that they can benefit from following it.

6. What are the most important skills you can have as a sales trainer?

Empathy, confidence, pace, selflessness and of course, great communication skills.

7. Why should companies invest in sales training?

When there is no process then it is like a football team sending everyone out for a pass. It is likely that the QB is going to end up on the turf. Sales training should provide the basis for more accurate forecasting and a common method for evaluating results.

8. What was your most important learning experience?

You can't put in what God left out.

9. How do you connect with your team?

Of course, face-to-face is best, but most of my contact is by telephone.

10. What advice would you give a new sales trainer?



Tell them you are going to tell them. Tell them. Tell them that you told them. Ask them what you told them.

Deb Calvert

Bio: “[DISCOVER Questions® Get You Connected](#)” author, Top 50 Sales Influencer, UC-Berkeley instructor. Deb leads the Stop Selling & Start Leading movement and offers sales training, coaching and leadership development programs. Deb is certified as an executive and sales coach and is a Certified Master of The Leadership Challenge®. She has been training sales trainers and coaches for more than 15 years.



1. How long have you been in sales? What industry?

I've been selling something all my life. Vegetables from the garden, door-to-door, out of my little red wagon when I was 5... Camp Fire candy... and eventually newspaper advertising where I worked for 18 years before starting my own company [People First Productivity Solutions](#) where I now sell training and coaching services.

2. What do you incorporate in your sales training? Can you describe the process?

I believe that every sale starts with a connection. Our training focuses heavily on interacting with buyers in ways that buyers prefer. We conduct ongoing research with B2B buyers to remain relevant and current in our training. We also customize our workshops by _____ industry and company to ensure



immediate application. This starts with us "practicing what we preach" by surveying training participants and then delivering on their unique needs.

3. How does technology shape your sales process? What tools do you use/recommend to use?

It depends on the audience. I offer "sales hacks" round-ups once a year and incorporate those in training where it makes sense. In the UC-Berkeley sales training course I teach, we have a high number of SDRs from start ups. They tend to have very particular tech and tools needs that complement their own.

4. What is the key component of your sales training?

Connecting with buyers. *DISCOVER Questions® Get You Connected* reports on the foundation of how to connect. The companion workbook is customized for each group and gives participants their own blueprint for opening more sales and advancing more sales more quickly. They can do this because we teach them to respond the way buyers want sellers to.

5. What are the best results you've seen from your sales training process?

Increased sales! There are no other results that I'd celebrate unless there were also measured increases in sales productivity. A recent story from a Client is the kind that makes me smile -- a new hire went through our program and immediately, in her first 3 months, outperformed all but two of the veteran sellers on their team. Others in the course were in the top 10, too. This year, the veterans were clamoring to get into the course, too.

6. What are the most important skills you can have as a sales trainer?

An ability and willingness to be oriented to others. Really, truly listening and remembering and empathizing with participants makes a big difference in your delivery. A lot of trainers get this backwards. They focus on their own delivery and worry about saying the right thing, looking smart, being right, etc. They get so caught up in the content or in their own presentation that they miss the needs of the individuals in the training group. This can be learned, but it takes a certain kind of humility and vulnerability to be this sort of sales trainer.

7. Why should companies invest in sales training?

Trick question! Not all companies should invest in sales training. The companies who will benefit from sales training are the ones who:



- want their sellers to develop new skills and understand that will require investing TIME and money for more than a workshop.
- have sales managers who will also attend training so they can reinforce the skills and extend the learning.
- recognize that there's a difference between product training and training for sales skills.
- are more interested in long-term success than in making this month's numbers.
- have other sales productivity systems in place and don't think sales training is some kind of magic bullet.

For companies that are capable of handling it, they should invest in quality training because it will improve top line revenue, retain and attract top sales talent, improve customer satisfaction and protect their brand. I can't imagine why any company would want untrained sellers haphazardly representing their brand and hurting their image.

8. What was your most important learning experience?

I'm pretty hard-headed, so my most important learning experiences have usually involved some kind of failure. Being called out for being a horrible Sales Manager in my first job was humbling and made me really take stock of who I was and how I was coming across to others. Fortunately, I was able to abandon my stubbornness and try some new things. Being surrounded by really smart, caring people helped me see alternatives and gave me the positive feedback I needed to sustain that change.

9. How do you connect with your team?

Much of my team is scattered worldwide. We have 1-to-1 Skype meetings every Sunday night to talk about work for the coming week. We stay in close communication daily via email and rely heavily on Google Drive for collaborating. We use Time Doctor, too, for tracking work projects. Communication is key

10. What advice would you give a new sales trainer?

Get trained as a sales trainer. Don't make the mistake so many do of thinking it's about standing in front of room and telling entertaining stories about what worked for you. Study instructional design, facilitation skills, adult learning principles, coaching and listening. In my corporate Fortune 500 role, I trained new sales



trainers in 12 markets. The ones who took this advice seriously and sought professional credentialing and ongoing learning are the ones that have made the biggest impact and enjoyed the most success in the ten years since then.

Ken Thoreson



Bio: [Acumen Management Group, Ltd.](#) president, is a sales leadership professional who “operationalizes” sales management systems and processes to pull sales results out of the doldrums into the fresh zone of predictable revenue. As a sales management thought leader Ken is recognized as an expert in sales execution, channel management, revenue generation, sales analysis, compensation, forecasting, recruitment, and training within the sales function. Over the past 18 years, his consulting, advisory, and platform services have illuminated, motivated, and rejuvenated the sales efforts for companies throughout North America—from emerging, transitional to high-growth. Prior to founding Acumen, he led

a \$250-million national vertical software sales organization as vice president of sales.

As a speaker, Ken energizes audiences and recharges their personal commitment to professional excellence to help drive personal and organizational change and growth. In addition to the four released books based on his Sales Management Guru series, and Success Simplified, co-authored with Stephen Covey, Ken’s many articles and nationally recognized blog are excellent resources for executives who want to revitalize their organizations.



1. How long have you been in sales? What industry?

In sales professionally 20 years in the high tech sector, consulting for 19 years.

2. What do you incorporate in your sales training? Can you describe the process?

We believe in deep discovery to building trust and confidence and fully understanding the clients long term strategic objectives and then completing a “Acumen Flightplan map” showing how the products/services meet those objectives. It takes a lot of role play and case studies.

3. How does technology shape your sales process? What tools do you use/recommend to use?

We believe is the use of interactive web sites for the prospect to use, making your website a sales tool not just a marketing tool.

4. What is the key component of your sales training?

It has to be the focus on fully understanding the prospects customers; why do people buy from the prospect? And knowing the industry issues your prospect face. Most important is our Sales Management Training sessions where we teach individuals how to recruit/hire, lead/manage and develop their teams.

5. What are the best results you’ve seen from your sales training process?

Huge adoption within industries or channels, our focus on selling within a channel or independent distribution is huge.

6. What are the most important skills you can have as a sales trainer?

Keeping the training fun, interactive but also supportive.



7. Why should companies invest in sales training?

We believe that the first investment is in Sales Management training to ensure we have the right people hired and the internal systems are in place for success. This will reduce the turnover factor and therefore reduce Cost of Sales.

8. What was your most important learning experience?

Understanding the emotional factor of sales vs pure skills building. People need to have fun in selling and fully believe in the product/service, company and impact of their sales on the prospects organization.

9. How do you connect with your team?

I build an emotional relationship that they know I am here to help them succeed, with one on one coaching, follow up and personal awareness.

10. What advice would you give a new sales trainer?

Focus on an industry, know how your training can impact the salesperson's life, but also the industry they sell into.



Cian McLoughlin

Bio: With a sales career spanning almost 20 years, including senior management roles in a number of the world's largest software companies, **Cian McLoughlin** is the founder and CEO of [Trinity Perspectives](#). A sales training and consultancy firm, Trinity is committed to helping businesses unlock the latent potential of their customer's insights and evolve to meet the changing needs of their Audience.



Cian has trained and advised sales professionals from Brisbane to Bangkok, Christchurch to Cape Town and everywhere in between.

Author of the Amazon #1 bestseller '[Rebirth of the Salesman](#)', Cian is a regular sales and marketing commentator in the mainstream media. In 2015 and again in 2016, Cian's blog was voted as one of the Top 50 Sales Blogs in the world by Top Sales World magazine and he a Sales columnist in the small business website www.smallville.com.au. Cian is a passionate proponent of an ethical, honest and authentic approach to sales.

1. How long have you been in sales? What industry?

Sales pedigree: I've spent almost 20 years in the business to business sales industry. In that time I fulfilled a variety of sales functions at both the individual contributor and sales manager levels including: Inside Sales | Direct Sales | Channel Sales and CEO

Industry: IT Software



2. What do you incorporate in your sales training? Can you describe the process?

The element which my company Trinity incorporates into our Sales training which is unique, is direct and unfiltered feedback from customers and prospects. This takes the guesswork out of the training process and ensures we're focusing on precisely those areas most in need of additional support.

The key failing with so much sales training is it tends to be generic and isn't tailored to the specific needs of the sales reps or sales teams who are undertaking it. At Trinity, we spend a considerable amount of time talking directly to end customers and key decision makers, asking them specific questions about their interactions with your sales team and then we use these insights to guide the focus of your sales training activities.

3. How does technology shape your sales process? What tools do you use/recommend to use?

I believe that technology has some significant advantages and also some major disadvantages.

- It allows you to reach a broader or more geographically diverse group of people
- It makes it easier to conduct embedding activities at the conclusion of a training process
- It can allow students to consume content at their own pace or convenience
- The downside is that it often lacks immediacy, where students don't get to interact in the same way with each other or the presenter
- It can make it harder to share relevant stories and anecdotes and answer questions which crop up along the way
- It's not representative of the sales process and therefore often doesn't allow people to practice real world skills (active listening, presenting, discovery & needs analysis) which they require in a day to day selling environment

I tend to use tools like Go-To Meeting & Go-To Webinar for one to many training



activities. Skype is a useful tool for remote coaching and advisory meetings. Tools like Survey Monkey can be useful for conducting research or surveys and tools like Mail Chimp for communicating regularly with students, after a course has concluded.

4. What is the key component of your sales training?

Real world sales lessons:

In many experience, way too much sales training is theoretical in its approach. It doesn't reflect the commercial or interpersonal situations which salespeople find themselves in on a daily basis. All of our Sales Training is based in the real world of B2B sales and we don't shirk the difficult topics or the tough conversations.

Ultimately I see my role as preparing our students for any sales eventuality that may occur and giving them the tools and knowledge to confidently overcome the challenges that are thrown at them. By harnessing the power of real Customer feedback, in some ways our students gain an 'unfair advantage' over their competitors.

5. What are the best results you've seen from your sales training process?

I always look at 2 key sets of metrics, to determine success:

1. Hard metrics such as increase deal conversion rates and deal values. Improved competitive win rates, earlier decisions to qualify out of opportunities, reducing the cost of sale and opportunity costs.
2. Softer metrics include lower sales rep turnover, a higher number of reps attaining quota, higher levels of customer satisfaction, greater numbers of referrals and customer case studies.

6. What are the most important skills you can have as a sales trainer?

I think first and foremost you need to have spent time in the trenches. If you haven't carried a sales quota, conducted forecast calls, managed sales people, interacted with customers on a daily basis, then what you are presenting is only theory to you and that doesn't fill most sales training groups with much



confidence.

In addition to time in the trenches, I think it's important to be a strong communicator, a great listener, humble enough to learn and be challenged along the way. A sense of humour and a thick skin are two quite important traits to have also!

7. Why should companies invest in sales training?

The key word in this question is 'invest'. So often sales training is seen either as a necessary evil or as something to do because we have some sales enablement budget. The reality is the best sales training is an investment, not just in the growth of your team, but in the likelihood that they will continue to meet or exceed the targets which you have set for them.

The world of B2B sales is rapidly evolving, as the balance of power shifts from vendors to customers. Those vendors who invest wisely in the right type of training and development for their sales teams, will ensure they remain relevant and value adding to the customers they serve.

8. What was your most important learning experience?

Learning the expression "I don't know, but I'll find out for you". As a young sales professional, I didn't want to display my ignorance, so instead I would try to come up with an answer to any and every question. Eventually I learned that no-one expects you to know everything, they are just as happy if you go away and find the right answer and then come back to them.

Also learning the importance of strong qualification and discovery conversations early in my interactions with any new customer/prospect was an important lesson.

9. How do you connect with your team?

Our team is made up of full time employees, contractors and freelancers, so we use a variety of mechanisms to stay in regular contact, including phone, email, skype, dropbox and face to face catch-ups. Over communicating with people is



important early on, until both parties develop a comfortable working rhythm.

10. What advice would you give a new sales trainer?

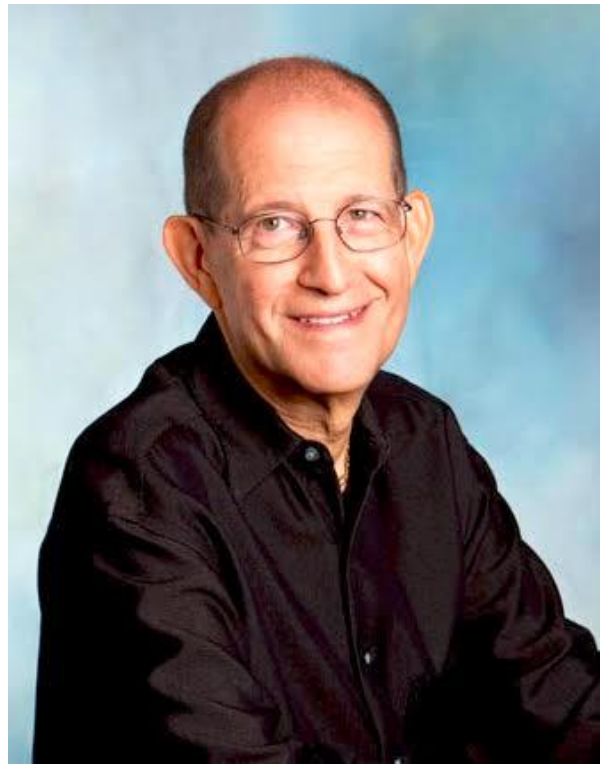
Don't feel the need to know everything. There is usually a huge amount of knowledge, experience and war stories within any group you are training, so tap into that.

Don't leave your personality in the chair when you stand up to present. People will respond to you much more, if you are authentic, honest and engaging.



Robert Terson

Bio: Robert Terson has been a sales professional and entrepreneur his entire adult life. He retired from his advertising company in 2010, after close to 40 years in business. Today, Bob writes, speaks, does some LIMITED coaching and training, and generously shares his time with others. He lives in suburban Chicago with his wonderful wife Nicki. He blogs regularly at SellingFearlessly.com and you can follow Bob on twitter [@RobertTerson](https://twitter.com/RobertTerson) and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/robertterson). His



book "*Selling Fearlessly*", released in October 2012, has received rave reviews and is available at Amazon.com. You can reach Bob at Robert@sellingfearlessly.com or 847-577-1504.

1. How long have you been in sales? What industry?

I had my own company for close to 40 years selling advertising to small businesses. I retired almost 7 years ago and wrote a book called *Selling Fearlessly*, which has done very well. The book led to a website, www.sellingfearlessly.com, which led to people calling me from all over the world seeking help. I've done some professional coaching as well, although I didn't want to do it at first. But it turned out I actually enjoy it, so I continued to train people in sales and try to help as many as I can.



2. What do you incorporate in your sales training? Can you describe the process?

It's so individual that it's hard to describe a general process. It really depends on who the person is and what he or she is seeking. For example, I was working with a client who was sending out Emails to get business and he was giving too much information in those Emails. So I advised him to use the telephone, as well as limit the amount of information he was giving. He needed to interest them instead of trying to give a presentation in an Email. His mind just opened up to this and he realized what he'd been doing was wrong. So he changed it and started to get business left and right. It really depends on the individual and what he or she needs.

3. What is the key component in your sales training?

In the book, I wrote about the sales triangle, which is also the key component of every sales training. I teach salespeople the 3 sides of the triangle, which they need to internalize, in order to be successful.

The first side of the sales triangle is mental attitude. As a salesperson, you have to have a strong mental attitude and can't approach people from a position of subservience. You need to believe in what you're doing and you have to know that you're bringing value to the people.

The second side of the triangle is work habits. You just need to do the work and work hard. Give 8 to 12 presentations a week instead of just 4. You can't get away from not doing the work if you want to be successful.

The third side of the triangle is knowledge/salesmanship. You have to know sales backwards, forwards and sideways. You must know your own business and every aspect of it. You also have to know your competition, so you can outsell them and bring more value than they can.

4. What are the best results you've seen from your sales training process?

One client I was working with was running into the same objection 8 times out of



10 calls. So, I told him that the best way to overcome this objection is by making it part of the presentation and in this way neutralize it. Bring it up instead of waiting for the client to bring it up. Once he implemented this, he created an enormous sale from it and became much more successful. It's wonderful to get feedback like this.

5. What are the most important skills you can have as a sales trainer?

You also need to internalize the three sides of the triangle I mentioned earlier: have a strong mental attitude, work hard and be knowledgeable so you can bring value to your clients.

Besides, you have to be able to approach people from a position of equality because this is what gets people to respect you and do business with you. You must demand that respect by being knowledgeable, by putting them first and by making it your mission to bring them value.

6. Why should companies invest in sales training?

I was working with a woman who had been hired by a company that just sent her out there without any training. So she wasn't successful and got frustrated. It's obvious to me that you need to train your salespeople in order to be successful. If a company isn't smart enough to provide sales training, sales people should get training on their own. It's worth it for a company to pay for it because sales trainers can perform miracles. Sometimes companies are already very successful and don't think they need the training, but they don't realize how much more successful they could be if they invested in it.

7. What was your most important learning experience?

The most important learning experience is the sales triangle I mentioned above, the 3 attributes you need to be successful. But also, you need to believe in the product you're selling because your job isn't to sell people, it's to bring value to them. If you bring them great value, the selling will come naturally.

8. What advice would you give to salespeople as a Trainer?



Sell value and care about the customer instead of focusing on your numbers. Put the customer first, understand their problems and help them find the best solution to it. Also, be knowledgeable, educate yourself with all the content and books that are out there, so you can educate your customers. Never stop learning.

Frank Cespedes



Bio: Frank Cespedes teaches at Harvard Business School. His book, [Aligning Strategy and Sales: The Choices, Systems, and Behaviors that Drive Effective Selling](#) (Harvard Business Review Press) has been called “the best sales book of the year” (Strategy + Business), “a must read” (Gartner Group), and “perhaps the best sales book ever” (Forbes).

1. How did you get interested in the topic of sales?

My academic research always focused on go-to-market elements of business, including channels and sales management. Then, when I left academia

and ran a business for 12 years, I had to meet payroll and sell. Then, after getting lucky in business and returning to academia, I taught Strategy and found there is remarkably little research about how to link strategy with field execution and especially with sales efforts. Yet, U.S. companies alone spend about \$900 billion annually on sales efforts. That’s 3x what they spend on ALL ad media, more than 10x what they spend on all digital media, and more than 20x what they spend on social media. Selling is, by far, the most expensive part of strategy execution for most companies.

2. As you see it, why should

companies invest in sales training?



Someone once told me that many companies maintain their equipment better than their people. If so, they ultimately get what they don't maintain. This is especially risky and short-sighted in sales. Research indicates that, across industries, turnover in sales averages about 25-30% annually. This means that, at many firms, the equivalent of the entire sales force must be replaced and trained every four years or so. Any talk about "talent management" which ignores a talent requirement of that magnitude is just talk.

Despite what you often read in many blogs these days, selling is not a science reducible to a few timeless rules. Many variables affect market performance and selling effectiveness besides the sales person. But as the phrase implies, "sales reps" represent the organization and its capabilities to the market. They need reinforcement, periodic upgrading and adaptation of skills to new market circumstances, and the positive motivation that is a by-product of any good developmental process. Stated more bluntly, you must invest in training salespeople (and other professionals who deal with a range of changing situations) because of what the U.S. Air Force calls the "8 P's" in its training of pilots: "Proper Prior Planning and Preparation Prevents Piss-Poor Performance."

3. What are the key components of effective sales training?

Build Your Team, Not another Firm's Team. There is no such thing as effective selling if it's not linked to your firm's strategy and business objectives. So first focus on identifying the selling behaviors required by that strategy and the target customers inherent in those strategic choices.

Develop the Fundamentals. Train and develop salespeople in a consistent and measurable way with attention to actual behaviors (not only attitudes) that can be practiced and taught, not just preached.

Do Experiential Learning. Selling is a performance art. Acquiring behavioral skills (versus concepts) requires repetition. People must try a new behavior multiple times before it becomes comfortable and effective. This means that on-the-job learning is crucial. But in many organizations, "on-the-job" training is a euphemism for no real training at all. It's a random process dependent on a particular sales manager's calendar, temperament, and ability. That's a mistake.



Given the amount of money spent on sales by companies (an average of 10% of revenue across industries, and often more in B2B companies), senior executives have a responsibility to manage and measure that investment more rigorously.

Follow-Up. The greatest impact from training, according to many studies, is what happens after training sessions: follow-up aimed at ensuring that people apply the relevant behaviors. Too often, however, nothing happens after training initiatives. Effective sales training must be linked to subsequent performance reviews, ride-alongs, win-loss analyses, and other core performance management practices.

4. How is technology shaping sales processes and training requirements and goals?

First, let's be clear about what technology is NOT doing: it's not disintermediating, or replacing, sales people with ecommerce. According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of people in sales occupations in 2015 was the same as in 1992—before the commercialization of the internet. And this almost certainly understates the real numbers: in an increasingly service economy, business developers in more firms are called Associates, Partners, Managing Directors, or Vice Presidents, not listed in a “sales” category for reporting purposes.

But technology is realigning sales tasks as buyers conduct online research about products and prices before meeting with a salesperson. As a result, there is more pressure for salespeople to add value during the customer encounter and, due to online technologies, customers can more easily interact with other customers and with others at the selling company besides the sales person. Sales training must focus more precisely on key tasks so that reps are more than walking-and-talking direct-mail vehicles and, in many companies, sales training needs more emphasis on how other functions in the firm affect, and are affected by, selling behaviors.

Also, digital technologies are available to sellers, with positive training implications if companies use the tools properly. Badger, Showpad, and many other sales enablement providers are just the tip of what is increasingly available to firms for better, more customized, and real-time training and performance



improvement in sales.

5. What advice would you give to a new sales trainer?

Focus on Buying Behavior. Selling is always more about the buyer than the seller. What's important in sales training should be determined by up-to-date knowledge about who buys, why, and how. Training should reflect how buying, and therefore required sales tasks, work today and tomorrow, not yesterday.

Beware of One-Size-Fits-All Methodologies. Selling is the most contextually determined set of skills in a firm: what works at that company does not necessarily work here, because sales effectiveness is a function of a company's strategy, target customers, and the relevant sales tasks for those buyers. Sometimes an off-the-shelf training tool can address the desired outcome. But more often, customization is required.

Get Out There, Regularly. It's not the market's responsibility to be nice to your company's strategy and sales process. It's your responsibility to understand the changing market and adapt. You must stay in on-going touch with actual customers. As Sam Walton repeatedly told his leadership team, "There ain't many customers at headquarters."



Nicke Wahlen

Bio: Nicke Wahlen is a Top-performing Account executive and Premier Club Trainer for [American Home Patient](#), currently residing in Milwaukee, WI and speaks 3 languages. She graduated from The Art Institute with a BA in Interior Design. In her free time, she is the treasurer of The Milwaukee Bulldog Club, a member of the Bulldog Club of America, and a director of Adoptabull English Bulldog Rescue. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nicke-wahlen>



1. How long have you been in sales? What industry?

I have been in sales ever since I was a little girl, helping my grandmother with rummage sales and craft shows throughout my whole life since I could talk really. As for corporate America, I have 23 years of sales experience under my belt. I have been in many industries throughout the years ranging from my first job as a cashier at McDonald's "would you like fries with that", to selling commercial office furniture, window treatments, and landing myself into the medical equipment field currently.

2. What do you incorporate in your sales training? Can you describe the process?

All sales positions I have held have always included sales training developed and presented by that entity. Typically speaking classroom style lecturing and a small



amount of group activities. However, as a sales trainer myself for my company, I believe a more hands on approach is more desired. I will have the new employee job shadow me for 2 days in the field showing them “how” the job is truly done. Then, I will spend 2 days in their area watching how they interact and speak and critique as needed. After my training with my new employees I stay closely connected to them reaching out periodically, asking how things are going, telling them tips and tricks I have picked up in the field and so forth.

3. How does technology shape your sales process? What tools do you use?

Technology has made MY approach in my sales process key. I typically rely solely on my mobile device. I use it mostly by making phone calls, texting, and sometimes have certain apps I lean on for support if I am uncertain of an answer. I also do carry a laptop with me at all times, but find I typically do not use it as I am unable to connect to wifi.

4. How do you separate managing and training?

Luckily for me I am an Account Executive as well as trainer, so I am only responsible for managing myself.

5. What are the best results you’ve seen from your sales training process?

When able to say, show, and help guide that will always show the best results.

6. What are the most important skills you can have as a sales trainer?

Listening, Self Confidence, great at motivating others, giving beneficial feedback, coaching, superior customer service, selling customer needs, presentation and speaking skills, natural leader, works great under pressure, self-starter, sense of ownership, excellent creative and conceptual thinking abilities, incredible work ethic, and I am not afraid of rejection.

7. Why should companies invest in sales training?

Any company can have a sellable product, but at the end of the day it is who is selling the product that typically decides whether or not the prospect becomes a customer. If companies see value and make the investment into properly and effectively training their sales team, everyone wins.

8. What was your most important learning experience?



This is a difficult question to answer, my most important learning experience probably has been realizing that I have to rely on myself and no one else. I can have all the training manuals at my fingertips but if I do not push myself no one can.

9. How do you connect with your team?

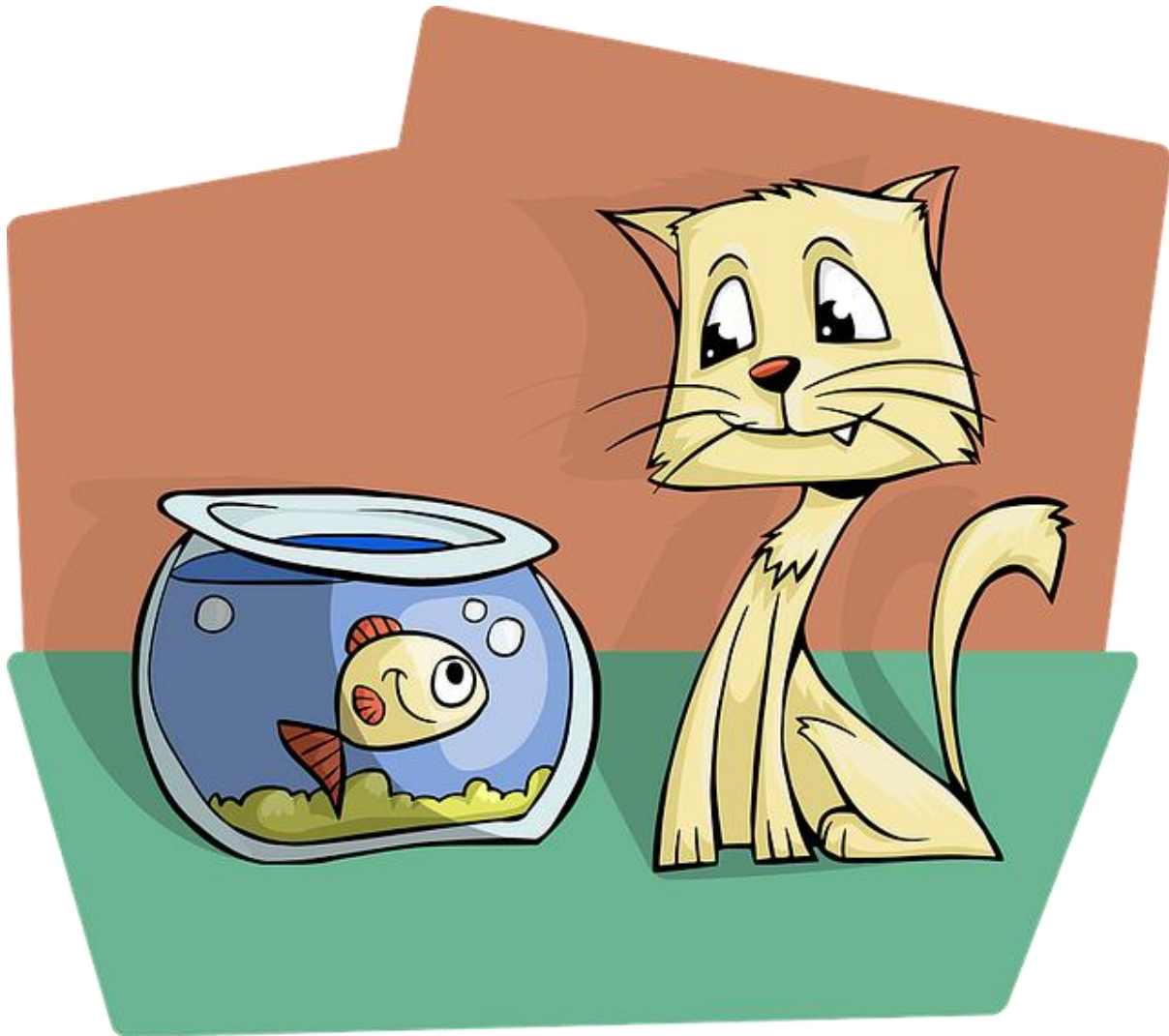
When meeting with my team I will make it interactive, making everyone feel and become part of my team. I tend to talk through challenges with my team to create solutions together instead of deciding to run with my sole idea on my own.

10. What advice would you give a new sales trainer?

The biggest advice I would recommend is knowing that, you the trainer, know more than your students. Preparation is key, however, you will probably forget something along the way and instead of noting the mistake continue with your presentation and include the missing information at a different time. The students do not know how you plan to present or in what order.



Overall



Sales automation training is very dependent on the needs of the company. The size, industry, and budget of the company are all factors when deciding which software to use for the business. Any sales automation software will pay for itself if used correctly.

