



Bethliving : Training Needs Analysis

A report with recommendations

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Bethliving Team's Training Needs

The founding team at Bethliving wants to ensure that their customer-facing teams at their various stores across the country present a clear, concise and consistent picture about their products, processes and brand to their customers. These stores are managed in different formats - company owned and company operated [COCO], franchisee invested company operated [FICO] and franchise owned and franchisee operated [FOFO]. At present, there are 44 stores across India.

The objective of this project is to discover the current levels of understanding of the customer-facing/sales teams at the stores, identify the gaps and create a training plan along with the curriculum and roll-out the same. The plan was to do this in 2 phases:

- **Phase 1- Exploratory phase:** Interview the founding team, understand the brand ethos, the product USP and how they envision customer communication. Discover the current pitch and process understanding at the various stores by way of visits, interviews and mystery shopping. Identify product and process understanding gaps and structure the training plan.
- **Phase 2: Definition phase:** Create the training content, pilot it for a cohort, incorporate feedback and plan for detailed training content and curriculum development and delivery.

This report is for Phase 1 – Exploratory phase of the project.

1. Background

Bethliving aspires to be the interior designers and implementers of choice for families that prefer eco-friendly, sustainable and durable solutions for their home interiors. Their audience are families that are planning to buy a new home or renovate their existing one. Bethliving adopts a consultative approach while designing interiors for their customers, including customised production. This results in bespoke solutions that are both cost-effective and innovative.

Currently, its target market is India but the company plans to expand in the overseas market as well. Bethliving's management wants to create a robust foundation of systems and processes across sales, marketing and operations etc. to enable the company reach its growth targets.

Given the rapid expansion plans, the company wants to create training programs to enable new employees and franchisees to come to speed with the product details, customer interaction and the processes. The training should focus on (a) soft skills - understanding the customer requirements, sharing success stories with them, gaining their confidence before moving on to close a sale (b) product and process knowledge, including specifics about the products, sales process, CRM used and SOPs at the stores.

A senior Business Development Executive (BDE) will transition as the training head. Along with this individual, other BDEs, sales heads also will be trained etc. The training curriculum should be structured such that a few master trainers within the company can use it going forward.

2. The Process

We set out to understand the current processes along with products through discussions with the key team members. The current sales process and product understanding was done as calls and visits to a few stores. The summary of these discussions is included in the Appendices.

Discussions with the founding team - George Thomas, Arvinder Kaur and Toby Thomas gave valuable insights about how they want their products to be showcased and the process that has to be followed. They also specified the different measures (and hence metrics) that should be tracked to maintain quality, brand consistency and increase sales.

Krishnamurthy who is a senior BDE shared different success stories along with the training needs of the team as he envisages them.

Visits to the stores at Kammanahalli [Nehru Road], Thubarahalli and J P Nagar and discussions with the stores-in-charge gave insights about the experience of a walk-in customer, how products are showcased and a sale made. **Calls to Salem and Coimbatore stores** gave an understanding of the current process of answering incoming customer enquiries. These numbers were obtained through the current website.

3. Main Objective and Goals

The main objective of Phase 1 – Exploratory phase is to understand the gaps in the product knowledge, pitch and processes of the customer-facing / sales team and address these by designing a training plan for implementation.

The training should ensure that the customer-facing teams are able to

- understand the products, pitch and solutioning
- be able to pitch the products with the same conviction as the founding team
- present the solutions, products and processes consistently, clearly and concisely across all stores
- understand the success stories and how to use them based on context
- get better at communicating the brand ethos
- be able to close more deals based on the above

4. Observations and Inferences

Based on the interactions with the teams at the different stores, here are the main observations and inferences. These form the input to the training plan design.

4.1 Commendable

- Based on the interactions with the team members, it is evident that the customer-facing team members are convinced that the solution they offer and the products are the best.

- The overall recommendation about steel being eco-friendly, pest-free, ease of maintenance and long life came through quite well.
- The CRM process flow was explained quite consistently across the stores.

4.2 Gaps

4.2.1 Use of existing collaterals

- None of the team members used the company's brochure to explain the different types of products.
- The 9 benefits / USPs display in the store was not used to explain the benefits.

4.2.2 Product explanation

- The product pitch and the solutioning were not uniform across the stores. Two out of five team members were unclear about the solutioning.
- The explanation about the product, the type of steel [SS304, SS202], paint, installation to be more thorough. Currently, these sound as more technical jargon rather than helping the customer to make his/her decision.
- Explain the different types of material used in the show units displayed in the store. For a customer, a mere walk-through the store does not give any information.

4.2.3 Product positioning

- Brand wood vs brand steel : Brand value and ethos should come through.
- The team should know their competition [viz local carpenter to other steel interior manufacturers] and be prepared to handle objections and questions.
- The economy range of products, living and bedroom furniture did not come through consistently. The focus appeared to be more on kitchen units.

4.2.4 Sales process

- Two stores did not follow through with the call/visit. The teams should own the customer interaction. The desire to sell and thereby help the customer should be ingrained so that they do their best to meet their revenue targets.
- The team member should be more of a design consultant rather a sales person. Educate the customer about the choices. The sales call closed abruptly in 3 of the 5 stores.
- The teams should refrain from promises that they are not sure about – one store offered to give an extra can of paint to touch-up whenever the surface had scratches.
- The stores should have adequate personnel to attend to walk-ins and phone calls. Walk-in clients may not like to wait while the team member attends to phone calls.

4.2.5 Customer engagement and interaction

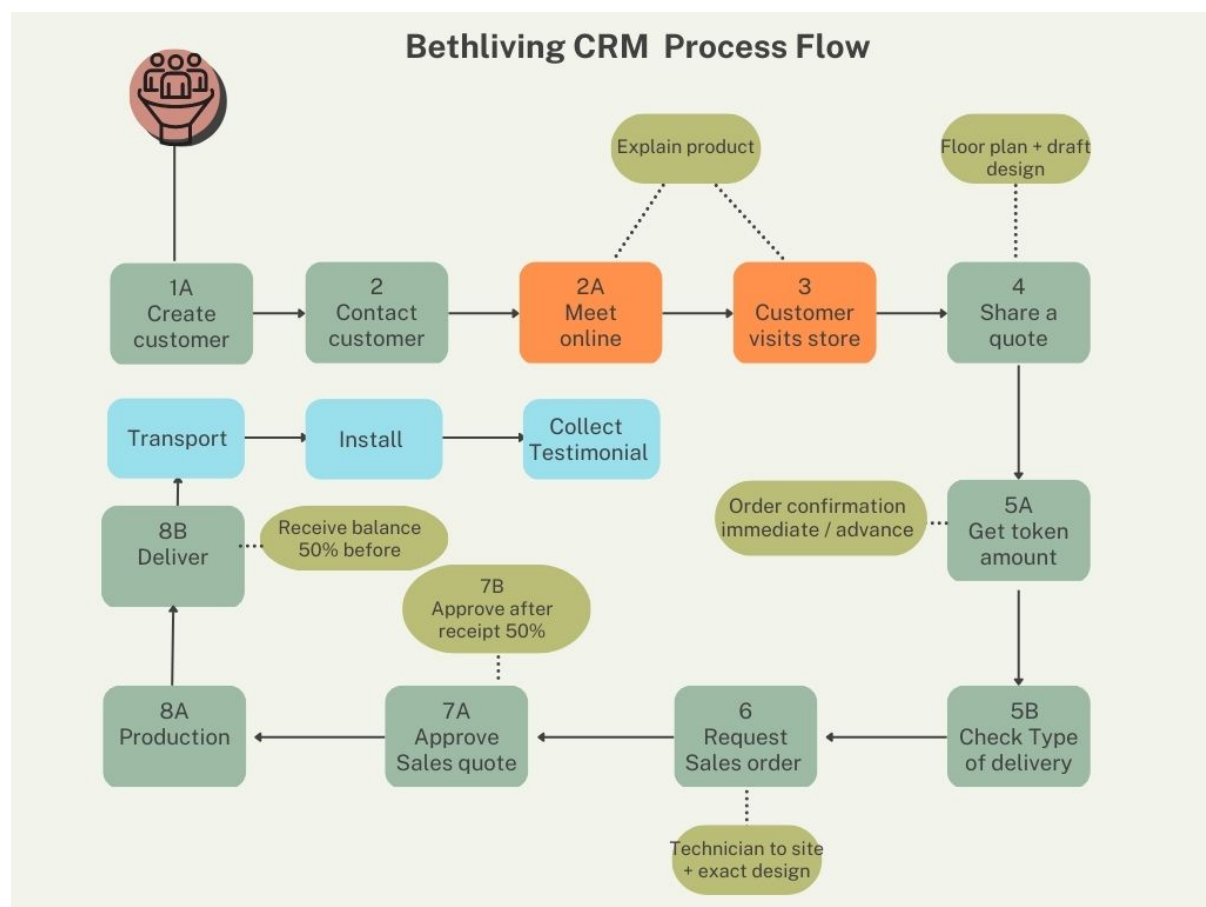
- All the interactions felt transactional. The team did not seek to probe the need behind the enquiry. Given that buying interiors is a huge investment and a hard decision for the customer, the team should be empathetic to the concerns of the customer.
- Greeting the customer, collecting details about the customer and their current need were not experienced in a manner to understand the customer.
- Need to exhibit more enthusiasm in showcasing the product – engaging the customer in small talk [e.g. asking about the family size, kitchen / room size, urgency of the request etc]

- In two of the five interactions, language was a barrier. A simple check on where the customer is (during a tele-call) or the language comfort (in store visit) should be done.

5. CRM process

The teams were quite consistent in explaining the flow from purchase to installation. They were also consistent in their belief that if the customer agrees to an online meeting and/or visits the store(s), they would sign up. The current receivables process works well, as per the discussions.

The management feels that rescinding the order post the token payment needs to be reduced through educating the customer and setting the expectations right.



6. Personas

Based on the founders' vision and the business needs, the following personas have been identified for training. Both the store-in-charge and the sales manager roles must evolve into master trainers, given the plans for expansion and revenue targets.

The installation team also interacts directly with the customer and given the stage they come in, they must also understand the nuances of customer interaction.

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