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Ziglar Australia releases Sales training selection report

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**Summary:**

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Knowledge is power. This is an old adage that has been around for a long time. However, now more than ever it is true. As Eric Hoffer says, "In times of change the learner shall inherit the earth, while the learned finds themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." With technology advances, and the market becoming more and more competitive it is critical that an organization has a workforce that is not only skilled, but is constantly improving those skills. No business can expect growth tomorrow while it rests on the successes of yesterday. Management expects and even demands performance efficiency increases. This can only come from a culture where learning is valued and encouraged.

**Keywords:**

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**Article Body:**

Ensuring training makes the leap from education to performance and profits is essential in today's marketplace. What can companies do when evaluating the myriad of options available?

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The Challenge of Selecting Performance-Driven Training

You may have been given the task to create this environment and/or feed this environment of learning. No training department can be the answer to everyone's needs. A 2002 report by The Conference Board found that 55% of companies outsource part of the training function. There are many instances when you should go outside the expertise of your organization and look for learning providers. But one quick search on the internet is enough to send you running for cover! It is staggering how many vendors there are that want to teach your staff the art of just about anything. From sales to forklift safety from OSHA compliance to training in tropical diseases. You name it you can find someone who is willing and even eager to come to your organization and teach your staff about it.

Selecting an effective training program is a complex process that requires diligently matching an organization's needs to its employees' needs and aligning both of these to create desired outcomes usually improved performance and increased profits.

The process is complex because effective training utilizes a company's style, voice, mission and many other customized elements that are not available in off-the-shelf training options. What enterprises truly want is to equip their work force with information that works in the moment and provides a real time benefit to a specific product or service.

#### Benefits of Outsourcing your Training

Why should you outsource your training when you probably have many qualified Subject Matter Experts (SME) in your organization? Outsourcing parts of your training function can have many benefits for your organization. The potential of saving your organization money in the long run is probably the biggest factor that motivates most businesses to outsource. Sure you can take your SME's off their regular jobs to develop content for specific training your staff needs, but the cost of lost productivity plus the SME's lack of knowledge of sound education principles usually spells disaster for the final learning product. By outsourcing you save not only money in lost productivity, but you also cut back on expenditures of software, printing costs etc. You place the burden of those fixed costs on the vendor and only pay a per use charge. Many times this will save an organization thousands of dollars.

You also gain the benefit of having your staff focus on what they know best - your business. While some of the learning that takes place in your organization is very specific to your business, a large part of the training you need can be done by an outside vendor more efficiently and with greater expertise. Your staff is freed up to focus their valuable time and attention on improving your products and services to the benefit of your customers and your bottom line.

Just as you are focusing on your business, a good training vendor is focusing on their business learning. Many times an outside vendor will have cutting-edge technology or the latest development in a certain topic. Take advantage of their research.

The goal of all business is that employees within the framework and extended facets of the business are all constant students. The hope of this belief is that all functional teams in a businesses ecosystem are self-directed, self-motivated, and self-sufficient. This desire is the reasoning behind a majority of the training programs developed and offered in the soft-skill space.

In the early 90's Gerald O. Grow offered a self-directional model that adapted itself from the arguments put forward by Blanchard's situational self-leadership model. Grow's contention was that in order for training to be effective we have to move away from instructor-led platforms to participant-driven classrooms. Such self-direction only comes when the student buys into the concept of constant learning.

Grow suggested that in order for learning to become self-directed and training to have a chance, organizations interested in optimizing their training efforts needed to know which stage the individuals were in.

The goal is that in order for professionals in today's marketplace to stay competitive and effective, they have to move from being dependent on someone to coach them to becoming self-directed in a consultative atmosphere where adaptability and flexibility are the norm. It is also understood that successful training programs build each component into their activity arsenal so that regardless of where the participant is, the instructor can assume the role of a coach, motivator, facilitator or consultant.

#### Selecting the Right Program

So, how do organizations solve the challenge of selecting appropriate training that delivers measurable results and keeps the work force engaged and motivated? The easy approach to selecting training would be to charge on board with the current fad or the trend that seems to be popular. In Good to Great, Jim Collins alluded to the fact that great organizations are ones that maintain a status quo of core beliefs over a period of time. Almost every organization that looks at adding new external components to solidify existing processes needs to be cognizant of the amount of change being introduced into the enterprise.

People are aware of the need to change and hope that every new idea in some ways complements and supplements that which is already in place. Changing direction is okay as long as people understand that the company is not changing the destination with every new input. That's where frustration comes in. The

following steps will assist in the selection of a training program:

1. Verification from all departments that are directly or indirectly involved on what is needed to strengthen the process.
2. Being open to new inputs from everyone who touches the customer.
3. Input from personnel on what new skills they would like to have and what gaps need to be effectively addressed.
4. A measurement from the training provider that shows opportunity to gauge progress before, during and after implementation.
5. Additionally, if the training provider can quantify the approach and provide sophisticated dashboards for a snapshot view on where the improvements are taking place, this would make selection of the program easier.
6. Looking at training companies that can tailor the approach to include customization of the process to fit a specific industry.
7. Benchmarking the effectiveness internally but also benchmarking the broader industry that an enterprise works

within to see what training the competition is using to gain the same market share.

If you are now thinking about how using an outside vendor can be beneficial to your organization, then you need to consider how you will sift through all the options available to you. There are seven key questions you should ask any vendor before investing in their learning content and delivery.

Key Consideration: Measurable

Key Question #1: Is the training measurable?

This is, of course, the age-old question, how do I know I am getting an adequate return on my investment? There are many evaluation equations circulating that help you calculate your return on investment. Probably the most trusted model is Kirkpatrick's four-level model of evaluation. In this model you evaluate training on reaction (how the trainee feels about the training); learning (determine the amount of learning that takes place); behavior (on-the-job behavior changes due to the learning); and results (did the learning meet the desired results.) A reputable outside vendor should be able to show you how they (or you) will measure the effectiveness of the program on at least two of the levels mentioned above.

Training programs that showcase measurability and are built with reinforcement

in mind have greater success because they are built on the framework of taking guesswork out of the equation. If the training group is surveyed prior to implementation on their skill set, and the program implemented takes into account the specifics

of such a survey, then the program can be tailored to focus on the areas needing most improvement. This gives the learner the luxury of knowing that the goal of the training is to address the gaps that are preventing them from having true success. In addition, when reinforcement on learned skills comes every week in the form of difference-making information, the validation is complete.

By looking for and insisting on tracking mechanisms that allow you to prescribe solutions based on real data and diagnosis, you have a better shot at real improvement for the people you are training.

For the full sales training selection report contact Ziglar Australia.