

Linking Sales Training to Revenue Growth



Improve Performance.
Drive Revenue.

About The Naro Group

The Naro Group specializes in helping technology companies capitalize on their investment in sales process and sales training. Contact Jim Naro, President, by email at: jnaro@TheNaroGroup.com.

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By Jim Naro, President of The Naro Group

I recently read an [interesting article](#) about a CareerBuilder.com report linking stalled revenue growth to the lack of formal sales training. The report indicated that over a third of companies surveyed missed their revenue goals last year, with one out of six sales managers from these companies citing a lack of sales training as a cause. Not surprisingly, 64% of these companies reported that training at their firms is only “somewhat effective.”

Brent Rasmussen, president of CareerBuilder North America, summarized this problem in the article by noting that funding for sales training is not at the level it should be. He also stated that there is a disconnect between the demand for sales skills in corporate America and the formal training available through either academic institutions or within companies themselves.

While I agree that companies need to invest more in sales training, my experience has been that companies also need to remove several misconceptions they have around leveraging any investment they’ve made in training. Some of the common ones I’ve seen include:

- **Sales training is not strategic.** Because of this misconception, companies do not manage their business consistently to the sales training they have invested in to date.
- **Selling skills are not part of an overall sales process.** If selling skills aren’t considered integral to the selling process, there is no continuity between the skills needed at one stage of the process to the next.
- **There is no need for field-ready support for the skills learned in training.** When sales people get back to the office after a dynamic training session, most companies have nothing in place to reinforce what the sales force learned in training. This diminishes the skills learned, and they are forgotten over time without any reinforcement.

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- **Training is a form of behavior modification.** The reality is that training can only go so far. When someone is a poor fit, training is not the panacea that is going to improve performance.

When Training Supports Revenue Generation

The most successful sales training programs are not a one-off event – they are an integral, strategic part of a company’s overall path to success. The companies that have figured this out know how to include training through the sales year.

Here are a few tactics that I have seen companies use for sales training integration:

- **Find ways to reinforce what was learned in sales training.** “To keep our sales training alive and integrated, we continually have the instructor come back and role play,” notes a customer of CustomerCentric Selling®, with whom I’m affiliated with. “This also gives us an opportunity to talk about success stories and customer wins throughout the year.”
- **Align critical selling skills with specific steps in the sales process.** Customers of CustomerCentric Selling integrate sales skills and sales cycle steps right into the sales training. By doing so, the management team has visibility – and action steps with metrics – built into the whole process from beginning to end. As this technique is introduced during training sessions, it provides the sales people with a clearer understanding of what sales skills they need to hone to achieve better results.
- **Find selling styles that match your strategy.** As to behavior modification, successful companies know that the better aligned a person’s specific selling style is with the company’s strategy, the more successful the person will be – and more revenue will be generated. Therefore, before hiring new sales people, it’s useful to analyze their selling styles to make sure it aligns with your company’s.

The bottom line is that training alone is not the key to driving revenue – but it’s a highly valuable and integral part of it. Companies that make long-term commitments to training as part of their overall strategy see revenue growth year over year, with increases up to 300%. To learn how CustomerCentric Selling customers have achieved such successes, see their stories [here](#).

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Or if you are wondering how successful your sales training is, try doing a [self-assessment](#) to identify what might be amiss. You can also contact me at 603-881-7712 or jnaro@thenarogroup.com and I can give you some pointers on how to identify areas that need sales training improvements in your organization.



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