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The Value-Added from Participating in a Formal Training Program

As a sales consultant specializing in the automotive aftermarket, I have had the pleasure of conducting sales training as well as customer service training for all levels of distribution from the Manufacturers, Warehouse Distributors, Jobbers and Service Providers. It is impressive to witness the evolution of industry standards over time; I contend that they continue to change for the better.

From all levels, people's service expectations are greater than ever. A warning to all of you, who have a strong successful business today, be aware that your customers are watching you. What they have come to expect from you may no longer be the status quo. They want their next experience with you to be better than in previous business transactions.

Competition within the automotive industry is increasingly fierce. Your best customers have become your competitors' best prospects. This consequence suggests you need to continue creating a distinctively competitive advantage in order to maintain and increase your sales. A serious training initiative would & could target the attitude and morale of the front-line service associates, inspiring the sales representatives to reach new heights by grasping the clarity of the sales process are sure ways to create a differentiated service resulting in securing and growing your client base.

Why is it important to continually be involved in training?

I can see three different levels impacted here:

1. For the individual, the opportunity to reaffirm personal growth and development. Most sales training initiatives are now starting with the individual before focusing in on the whole team.

2. The team is the next significant benefactor of any sales training initiatives. Is the team working together? Does the collective group have the same vision and goal? Does the work environment breed success? Is it contagious in a positive way?
3. Corporate success is the final benefactor of sales training. By inspiring staff to set new loftier goals, one has created a higher standard of employee that will return value-added returns back to the company.

Successfully inspiring the individual helps create a more cohesive team. Everyone sharing common goals surely spells success for the company. The end result is growth of your client base through multiple relationship-building expertise. Growth and retention of the client bases is not only good for the company, but desired by staff as well. Increased sales and great success stories are some of the benefits to the corporation.

The most common question I face is **how to squeeze a training initiative into an already tight schedule**. Here are ways I have found to be successful:

Make it a priority, make a commitment. Consider the consequences for not taking time.

Split up your staff for training events. The long-term gain will certainly outweigh the short-term pain of being short staffed.

Set up a series of continual short training sessions.

Consider weekend and evening options.

Combine it with a regularly-planned sales meeting.

Once the meeting is set, here are some ideas to make them a **success** rather than a chore.

- Ensure that you have Management's support
- Establish objectives
- Send the outline to participants prior to the meeting
- Get participants' input prior to the meeting
- Make it a team-building exercise

Finally, after having made this commitment, **remember to follow up**.

Following up is extremely important in this process:

- Measures your results
- Evaluate what works, and what can possibly be different
- Continues the learning process and presents new opportunities
- Improves morale and a sense of worth
- Ensures continued individual and company growth and success

Make learning fun; develop an ongoing thirst for knowledge through life. Promote learning, growing, and continuous positive change every day! **CASP**

Norman Rose is the President of Excel Sales Consulting. His company offers many sales training and customer service programs that are specialized for the automotive industry. Contact Norman today to discuss your training needs. He can be reached at 403-230-2330, or toll free at 1-877-231-2330, or by e-mail at nrose@excelsalesconsulting.com.