

Sales Performance Case Study

Public Relations

Sales Goals Exceeded by 18% through Skills Assessment and Targeted Sales Training

The Challenge: The client company is an international leader in the Public Relations industry. After experiencing years of consistent growth, pressures from an increasingly competitive marketplace resulted in several years of little to no growth. The agency contacted PI Worldwide to help them enhance the selling skills of their sales teams in order to achieve improved, sustainable results.

Customer-Focused Selling (CFS) Implementation

PI Worldwide provided a three-pronged approach to this project:

1. Research: The team from PI Worldwide conducted qualitative research via face-to-face and telephone interviews in order to understand the nature of the sales organization and its challenges within the agency. The qualitative data was then balanced with the results from the SSAT, a proven diagnostic instrument designed to quantify the sales and judgment skills of each member of the sales team. A benchmark SSAT was established with three key audiences:

- Executive Management- CEO and the Executive team
- Business Development- Vice President level
- Client Services - Teams of 3 people at the Director level managing the top 30 Client accounts

Selling Skills Assessment Tool (SSAT) Results:

Group	5 Core Areas of Consultative Selling					Total
	Open	Investigate	Present	Confirm	Position	
Executive Management	3.4	3.1	4.1	3.7	3.8	72.5%
Business Development	3.7	3.4	4.1	3.0	3.4	70.7%
Client Services	3.1	3.0	3.8	3.2	3.5	66.4%

(Scale 1-5: 5: Excellent (Role Model), 1: Need Broad Skill Development)

2. Identify Key Areas for Training: The results of the SSAT revealed that all three groups shared similar strengths as well as areas for improvement. It was apparent that while quite adept at presenting their agency effectively in relation to the client's situation, they needed targeted sales training to improve their ability to uncover and understand the needs of the client.

Executive management had particular strength in the core areas of "Position" – building long term relationships and "Confirm" – asking for the business. In contrast, both of these sales areas were weak within the Business Development and Client Services teams. This insight provided an opportunity for the Executive Management team to leverage their key selling skills by mentoring the two groups in these specific areas for improved consultative selling throughout the organization.

SSAT: Selling Skills

Assessment Tool:

Quantifies sales knowledge in 5 key areas

- **Open**—build trust and credibility
- **Investigate**—identify needs
- **Present**—introduce products and articulate value
- **Confirm**—gain agreement for the sale
- **Position**—create customers for life

CFS: Customer-Focused Selling:

Customized, targeted sales training that addresses all the core competencies identified in the SSAT for effective consultative selling.

3. Implement Training Process: The sales groups from North America, Europe and Asia participated in the 2-day Customer-Focused Selling (CFS) workshop which addressed each of the 5 key areas of a consultative selling approach. Additionally, the insight provided by the SSAT allowed each individual to focus on their identified selling areas of greatest need.

Customer-Focused Selling was also delivered to several members of the business development team in a train-the-trainer format. This knowledge transfer allowed the managers with day-to-day interaction with the entire agency to extend the value of CFS throughout the sales organization.

Results: The client was able to realize positive results within the first year following the training.

- Total revenues increased by 8.8%.
- Several of the agency's business groups achieved dollar growth between 28.5% and 36.8% — significant achievements after several years of no growth.
- The sales team surpassed their sales goal by 18%!

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