

Introduction

Every member of your team should possess some degree of product know-how and customer service experience. However, your sales staffers require a niche skillset to seal the deal and follow up with qualified leads. In other words, they need sales skills training to fill in the gaps and always bring their A-game. In this guide, we explore the many reasons to launch a sales skill-building program for your organization and how it impacts your profit margin. We'll also highlight the top soft skills to foster among your team in order to boost CX scores and retain top performers.



Christopher Pappas
Founder of eLearning Industry Inc.

Table Of Contents

Chapters		Page	Follow the bee
1	5 Reasons To Launch A Sales Skills Training Program For Your Team _____	04	
2	7 Sales Soft Skills That Every Team Should Cultivate TODAY _____	07	
3	6 Easy Steps To Launch A Sales Enablement Course To Improve Customer Relations _____	12	
4	6 Ways To Assess Sales Employees' Skills In Online Training _____	16	
5	6 Resources To Add To Your Sales Skills Training Program _____	20	
6	7 Tips To Find The Perfect Outsourcing Partner For Skills Development Training _____	25	
	Conclusion _____	30	

Chapter 1

5 Reasons To Launch A Sales Skills Training Program For Your Team

One of the most obvious reasons to deploy sales skills training is to improve the health of your bottom line. However, there are a variety of other perks that many organizations overlook. Namely, perks that you can use to make a strong business case and get internal stakeholders on board. Here are a few notable benefits of launching a skill-building program for your sales teams.



Chapter 1

Reduce Customer Churn

Building vital [sales skills](#) helps you retain loyal customers because they get a better return on their investment. Your employees know how to identify their needs and offer them the right products, which offers them more value for their money. They also know how to communicate the benefits of ownership, innovative applications, and proper upkeep. In contrast, employees who lack the necessary skills might focus solely on turning a profit versus nurturing a relationship with consumers and figuring out their respective pain points.

“The ultimate goal is to secure more sales but increasing per-ticket totals is a crucial part of that equation. You can seal a thousand deals and still barely break even if customers are making minimal purchases.”

Increase Per-Ticket Sales

The ultimate goal is to secure more sales but increasing per-ticket totals is a crucial part of that equation. You can seal a thousand deals and still barely break even if customers are making minimal purchases. A sales skills training program gives your team the leverage they need to boost those numbers. For instance, they can persuade customers to buy add-ons or upgrades. Of course, product know-how factors into your sales departments' profitability, as well.

Chapter 1

Hold On To Top Talent

Employees are more likely to stay with your company if they have ongoing skill development resources, namely continual support, reskilling and upskilling opportunities, and self-assessments. They're able to identify gaps discreetly and bridge them with targeted training resources. Retaining your top talent allows you to reduce new hire training recruitment and training costs. You can also focus on internal growth versus trying to have to find replacements who possess the right skills and experience.

Improve Team Dynamics

Sales skills training doesn't just pertain to customer service and boosting your bottom line directly. In fact, your program should also include team-building activities to strengthen the dynamic. As an example, staffers learn how to communicate effectively and resolve conflicts before they spill out onto the sales floor. Another thing to consider is competition. For instance, employees should work together to provide amazing CX instead of trying to "steal" commissions from coworkers.

Attract New Prospects

Ready to bring in new business and boost your brand image? Skill-building helps you attract new prospects because you edge out the competition and increase perceived value. In short, your employees know their stuff and can pass that information along to consumers, which gives them maximum return on their investments. Your staffers also understand how to pitch products tactfully and take the expectations, preferences, and buying behaviors of customers into consideration. Thus, new customers are more likely to choose you over other companies in your niche because you focus on CX rather than straightforward sales.

Chapter 2

7 Sales Soft Skills That Every Team Should Cultivate TODAY

Now that you know the profit-boosting perks of sales skills training, it's time to get down to brass tacks. Which skills should you foster in your [sales team](#) and why? You probably don't have enough time (or resources) to cover the entire competency spectrum. However, focusing on these 7 crucial soft skills can help you improve team dynamics, customer satisfaction, and employee retention.



Chapter 2

Communication

Virtually anyone can memorize the product specs and perks. However, effectively communicating them to customers is another story. Every member of your team should be adept communicators because it's the cornerstone of sales success. They need to gather relevant information and distill it down so that consumers understand the product/service and how it addresses their pain points. For example, a customer may be reluctant to purchase the product because they don't understand how the benefits tie into their personal challenges. A great salesperson can figure out which features and selling points to touch on and how.

Active Listening

While some employees might take the smile and nod approach, active listening is the ultimate skill-building goal. What are customers really looking for? What's their budget? Do they have negative preconceptions about the industry and/or your brand that staffers need to overcome, first? Your team must not just act like they're paying attention but assimilate the information and then determine the best sales approach.

What's the best way to identify employee gaps? Discover top tips to assess your team's strengths and weaknesses!

Follow the bee



Chapter 2

Empathy

The ability to step into someone else's shoes is a hot commodity in the corporate world. Staffers need to see things from the customer's perspective and empathize with them on a personal level. For instance, read non-verbal cues and facial expressions, as well as respect a customer's boundaries instead of trying to push them into a sale. Another perk of developing empathy skills is knowing how to navigate the emotional landscape of sales. Employees can gauge when to pause the pitch and take a different strategy based on the customer's comfort level.

“Sometimes it takes an anecdote or practical example to get the customer on board. This is when authentic storytelling comes into the skill-building picture.”

Negotiation

Of course, every sales employee needs to hone their [negotiation skills](#) to navigate customer apprehensions and increase profits. The catch is that company policy also factors into the equation. For example, they need to know how much they can reduce the price or what the rules are for bulk product sales. Thus, negotiation often goes hand-in-hand with financial literacy so that employees can monitor profit margins and company cash flow.

Chapter 2

Authentic Storytelling

Sometimes it takes an anecdote or practical example to get the customer on board. This is when authentic storytelling comes into the skill-building picture. Employees must be able to personalize pitches so that they resonate with customers instead of just reciting a list of perks or features. Storytelling also builds stronger relationships with your customer base, as they connect with staffers on a more personal level.

Problem-Solving

Figuring out which product or service a customer needs and how to shine the best light on its benefits is, at its core, a problem-solving activity. Employees need to listen to customers, understand their buying habits, then determine the ideal course of action. This might involve asking targeted questions to pinpoint their challenges or expectations. The goal is to improve customer satisfaction, reduce return rates, and bring in repeat business.

Chapter 2

Adaptability

Different customers call for different approaches. While one might be looking for an authoritative salesperson who knows the product inside-out, another may prefer a subtler staffer who chats with them and uses small doses of humor. Employees must be able to adapt based on the situation. This also helps create a healthier team dynamic, since staffers can step into different roles. For example, they might take the lead on a sale or act in a supporting role if it means higher per-ticket totals.



Chapter 3

6 Easy Steps To Launch A Sales Enablement Program To Improve Customer Relations

How do you deploy a sales enablement course that helps your team hit their targets and keep customers coming back for more? It all starts with a solid strategy that's backed by analytics and measurable goals. Here's a step-by-step guide to launching sales enablement training programs that increase customer satisfaction stats and foster brand loyalty.



Back to Page 05?

Follow the bee

12

© 2011-2020 eLearning Industry.

Back to Chapters?

Follow the bee



Chapter 3

1. Identify Existing Gaps

Start your process by assessing the current state of your business. Which, if any, [sales enablement techniques or tools](#) have you been using until now? Do they align with your overall revenue and development goals? What's the level of your staff's skills and knowledge? What could change in your customers' buying experience? These are some of the questions you must ask yourself to identify the gaps that a sales enablement course can help bridge.

“Selecting the right tools will take your project from paper to reality. Now, when it comes to sales enablement, there is truly no shortage of choices. So, it all comes down to your organization's budget and specific needs.”

2. Create Targeted Objectives

Once you have a complete picture of your company's current situation, you are ready to create the vision that will take you forward. For your sales enablement course to take form, it is crucial to lay out time-bound and measurable revenue goals, targets, and objectives. This way, you will be able to effectively evaluate, analyze, and report on the aspects that may or may not be working. For instance, you might want to increase your customer retention rate or reduce the onboarding time of a new hire.

Chapter 3

3. Choose The Right Tools

Selecting the right tools will take your project from paper to reality. Now, when it comes to sales enablement, there is truly no shortage of choices. So, it all comes down to your organization's budget and specific needs. For example, you could use video-coaching tools that expose employees to new products and highlight their key selling points. Another choice is sales management tools to improve sales forecast accuracy by collecting and managing raw data, while also tracking key performance indicators in real-time.

4. Weigh The Benefits Of Outsourcing Vs. In-House

Another important decision is whether you want to design a sales enablement course on your own or outsource. You might be tempted to think that doing everything in-house will save you money in the long run. However, it's possible that your team might lack the knowledge, time, and resources that are necessary to undertake such a project on their own. Therefore, hiring a third party who brings their own tools and expertise might make things a lot easier for you. Also, since this endeavor involves the collaboration of the sales and marketing teams, some outside guidance could help things run smoother. At the end of the day, it's up to you to decide what fits your business best.

Chapter 3

5. Develop A JIT Support Library

Whether you choose to outsource or not, now is the time to start thinking about the content development process. The most important weapon in your arsenal is your just-in-time support library. It contains all the tools that enable your employees to use a few clicks or taps to directly access any information they might need. For example, a customer wants to know [how a product works](#). Using their handy JIT support library, the employee can access a video demonstrating exactly that. This improves CX and the chances of a sale going through. Don't forget to make your content bite-sized, targeted, and, most importantly, easy to find.

6. Launch Certification Courses

The last step in deploying a successful sales enablement course is launching certification courses. Don't rule out certifications by thinking that their only use is to provide you with proof of competency in the event of an audit. There are so many benefits to certification courses, the first of which is upholding standards by effectively monitoring your employees' existing skills and their progress. At the same time, it helps you keep employee knowledge up to date, discover problem areas or even new talents, and offer a personalized training experience. You can also implement a reward system that will keep employees motivated and on a path of constant personal development. Ultimately, it is one of the best ways to assess and ensure the success of your sales enablement program in the long run.

Chapter 4

6 Ways To Assess Sales Employees' Skills In Online Training

Sales enablement training gives your team the skills, expertise, and real-world experience they need to not only pitch products but maximize CX. They have the opportunity to fill personal gaps and continually broaden their knowledge base. However, before you can roll out a successful sales enablement course, you need to identify gaps and emerging challenges. These 6 assessment techniques can help you disclose areas for improvement and create more personalized training resources for your remote workforce.



Back to Page 8?

Follow the bee

16

© 2011-2020 eLearning Industry.

Back to Chapters?

Follow the bee



Chapter 4

1. Simulations

When it comes to assessing your employees' training gaps and existing knowledge, it is vital to set up a controlled environment that doesn't involve the actual customers. Being performed in a virtual setup, simulations can offer your team just that! And as the employees tackle real-life situations, take risks, and learn from their mistakes, you are free to gauge their weak points and strengths without having to worry about your company's reputation. For example, you can assess an employee's ability to engage leads and turn them into customers using prospect simulations. This activity will let you know whether their approach is effective and which aspects require improvement.

“A branching scenario is a great way to assess your staffer's skills, as it places them in the position of the decision-maker.”

2. Peer-Based Feedback

No one knows the ins and outs of the sales process better than the people performing it. Therefore, it only makes sense that you would turn to your employees to find out what's working and what needs tweaking. Constructive criticism is key in the work environment if you want to identify weak points, but some planning has to go into it. Make sure that you give guidance to your employees on how to give—but also receive—effective and constructive criticism. This way, you can add value to your employees' opinions and quickly overcome any challenges.

Chapter 4

3. Branching Scenarios

A branching scenario is a great way to assess your staffer's skills, as it places them in the position of the decision-maker. Essentially, a [branching scenario](#) maps out a task and allows the employees to make their own choices and see where it takes them. For example, you can design a branching scenario that focuses on upselling a specific additional service. By the end of the process, any less than optimal choices highlight the issues that you will need to address in the sales enablement course.



Chapter 4

4. Knowledge Checks

Another way to identify areas for improvement is knowledge checks. This is not a formal assessment method, but it can be very helpful in providing you with immediate feedback regarding the learning progress from the perspective of the employee. Usually, knowledge checks are made up of a set of questions that are not graded in any way but can give you a clear idea of gaps in employees' training.

5. Serious Games

This online training tool has recently grown in popularity due to the many benefits it can offer. Serious games promote user engagement, interactivity, motivation, and direct feedback, while never veering from the training purpose. At the same time, they unobtrusively gather data that is crucial for the assessment of their skills. For example, time to complete tasks, numbers of attempts to complete tasks, and difficulty levels. Also, they're a discreet and fun way of giving feedback that prompts users to continuously strive to get better results, thus improving their skills.

6. Gamification

Although many times [serious games and gamification](#) are used in the same context, these two approaches are vastly different. While one is focused on completing the task, the second is a more holistic strategy centered around leaderboards and reward systems. You can use gamification prior to launching your sales enablement course—or even incorporate it—in order to give your employees the opportunity to explore real-world problems in a more engaging, fun, and rewarding way. Once they have developed an array of vital problem-solving skills in the context of the games, no challenge will be too hard to tackle in the actual work environment.

Chapter 5

6 Resources To Add To Your Sales Skills Training Program

What are the best resources to incorporate into your training program? When you try to answer this question, you might feel lost in a sea of choices. Even though there isn't a single solution for everyone, there certainly are some options that have undeniable benefits to offer to any business. Here is a list of resources to add to your sales skills training program that will boost its effectiveness and help your employees expand their knowledge and skills.



Chapter 5

1. Training Courses

The first—and in many cases the best—solution one would turn to is [sales training courses](#). They come in all shapes and sizes, can accommodate any budget, and are a great resource to work into your sales skills training program. As most courses are online, they are available 24/7 and are easy to fit around a busy schedule. Another benefit is the sense of accomplishment their completion provides. But most importantly, course content usually remains available to the learner forever (or at least for the foreseeable future), allowing them to brush up on their knowledge at any time. It has been shown that when employees can access course content after their initial training, businesses see a considerable increase in their sales.

“Honing your skills whenever a busy workday allows you to and at your own pace is great, but what about some hands-on collaborative learning? Webinars offer a dynamic and interactive environment where everyone can take part.”

Chapter 5

2. eBooks

eBooks, one of the most versatile eLearning tools, can become a truly valuable part of your training program. Store all of your training material as well as other information that might be important for your business, such as company policies, password safety guidelines, etc. This way, whenever your employees find themselves in a “moment of need,” they will have direct access to any piece of information they might need. Don't forget to diversify your eBooks with links to videos, audio clips, relevant websites, or social media pages. No one likes a dry eBook filled with nothing but blocks of text.

3. Webinars

Honing your skills whenever a busy workday allows you to and at your own pace is great, but what about some hands-on collaborative learning? Webinars offer a dynamic and interactive environment where everyone can take part in live Q&As with experienced professionals, discuss new ideas and approaches with other participants, as well as test their newly acquired skills. For example, many sales skills training webinars enrich their structure with training exercises and role-playing scenarios that allow learners to turn theory into practice.

Chapter 5

4. Videos

When choosing resources for your sales skills training program, you should absolutely consider utilizing video-based training. Videos can cover any part of training, such as product demonstrations, customer interaction, or even workplace safety. It is always easier to learn new things when the verbal aid is accompanied by a visual one. Now, how do you organize these videos so that they are easily accessible? You can either build a password-protected video library in your company's intranet or in a separate website dedicated to resources. If privacy is not that much of a concern for you, head to YouTube. This way, product presentation videos, for instance, will also be available to your customers for easier comparison.

5. Expert Knowledge

If you're worried that you can't cover all bases of your sales skills training program by yourself, experts have your back. There are countless blogs and podcasts available online that are specialized in sales (or any other subject for that matter). Most of the time, they're even free! Getting to read (or hear) personal experiences, advice, and anecdotes by a person who is accomplished in the sales industry adds a reality factor to your staffers' training. For example, they might recognize similarities between the speaker's story and a branching scenario they have been working on. How can they use this real-life advice to improve their performance and their sales skills in general?

Chapter 5

6. Virtual Sales

The pandemic has brought endless changes to most aspects of our lives. If you, like many others, have been forced to make your sales remotely due to the COVID crisis, you might want to consider a virtual sales training course. Take advantage of the available technology and make the best out of this new situation that could well become the new normal. With the right [virtual sales course](#), you can learn how to attract prospects, offer better remote customer service, and deliver engaging and informative virtual demos and presentations using videos and digital tools. This also gives you the opportunity to up your virtual selling game as a whole.

Chapter 6

7 Tips To Find The Perfect Outsourcing Partner For Skills Development Training

The right outsourcing partner could take a considerable weight off of your shoulders and allow you to focus on more important things. But for this collaboration to actually be beneficial to your business, you must have a clear set of criteria in mind. Here are some tricks to help you choose the perfect outsourcing partner for your sales skills training program.



Chapter 6

1. Use An Online Directory

If spending countless hours on Google trying to find a suitable vendor doesn't sound like a viable plan, a [specialized online directory](#) is the way to go. A directory will save you tons of time because all the basic information is in one location. But make sure you have a clear idea of your needs and objectives before you launch your search. You must also look for a reliable site with objective reviews, as well as experience in your subject matter. Preferably, look for a directory with built-in filters and distinct categorization. This way, finding a partner to outsource your sales skills training program will take no time at all!

2. Read Online Reviews

A reliable online directory is obligated to include user reviews and a comprehensive rating system. Take your time to read through them and see what worked best for other businesses and what didn't. For example, how was their overall experience? Did the vendor meet deadlines without trouble? How was their customer service? Get an overall feel of the vendor's efficiency, but also get specific. Search for reviews of clients who operate in the same niche as you and have similar requirements.

Chapter 6

3. Ask For Recommendations On Social Media

Social media is a great place to network and share opinions. Ask for recommendations for sales skills training vendors that people have collaborated with in the past. Or, share your top five choices and get their feedback. This way, you will get a clearer idea of who might be the best outsourcing partner for you without risking a blind hire.

“A reliable online directory is obligated to include user reviews and a comprehensive rating system. Take your time to read through them and see what worked best for other businesses and what didn’t.”

4. Explore The Vendor’s Website

This is a step that many might neglect, thinking that a vendor’s website will only highlight their positives. While that is most definitely true, you can still gather a lot of useful information from their landing page. First of all, you’re able to explore their portfolio of past projects and see if they fit your objectives. You can also get a feel for their aesthetics by the layout and navigation structure of their website. If they haven’t done a good job for their personal platform, there is little chance they will meet your business’s expectations.

Chapter 6

5. Determine An Outsourcing Budget

Preferably before you even start looking for an outsourcing partner, you need to figure out what your outsourcing budget will be. This step is crucial for your selection process, as it will help you filter out any option that exceeds your price range. So, before you get into detailed talks with any vendor, make sure you know their rates and, if possible, any hidden costs. This way, you can compare and contrast different candidates and make a financially correct choice for your business.

6. Consider Subject Matter Expertise

It is definitely vital to make sure that your sales skills training outsourcing partner has niche expertise in [sales skills development](#). You need someone with as much experience as possible. However, you might want to consider hiring a vendor who can offer a variety of solutions. This will make your collaboration last longer, as you won't have to hire different vendors for every new project. Then again, be wary of claims that they can offer every training solution available, as these claims could very well be unfounded.

Chapter 6

7. Ensure Data Security

Privacy and data security have become great concerns in our time, especially for businesses. When you outsource a project, you find yourself sharing sensitive company information with your partner. Therefore, it is vital that this information is handled with care and discretion. Consider signing a non-disclosure agreement before starting your collaboration. Also, make sure your outsourcing partner uses specific tools that protect sensitive data and prevent any data leaks.



Conclusion

The fine art of persuasion and product knowledge are often the cornerstones of [sales training programs](#), but you can't forget the building blocks. Skills help your sales employees connect with customers and coworkers, as well as build their self-confidence. They're better equipped to handle on-the-job challenges and overcome customer apprehensions. It all starts with a sound sales skills training strategy that's backed by team leaders.

Find, choose and compare eLearning Content Providers for Sales & Services Training in the Top Content Providers directory of eLearning Industry.

[Learn More](#)

[Christopher Pappas](#)
[Founder of eLearning Industry Inc.](#)



Back to Chapters?

Follow the bee