SANDLER®

6 Pitfalls To Avoid When Starting A New Global Sales Training Program

Is your global company implementing a new sales training program?
Here are 6 stumbling blocks that could be costing you millions?

When it comes to implementing sales training programs, large international companies with global sales forces face a unique set of problems. Here are six situations guaranteed to make introducing a new program difficult (if not impossible) and cost your company millions in inefficiencies, personnel turnover and lost sales opportunities.

01

Your sales force lacks consistency in language and process.

The prevailing belief today is that sales people aren't just born; they can also be made. That means your company is likely hiring sales people from your competitors without giving them a consistent platform to work from. The result? They're going about their jobs in the same way they did before they joined your company.

Everyone in an accounting department, for example, usually speaks the same language and follows the same processes. The same goes for most marketing, purchasing and HR departments. However, if you ask your sales people to list the steps they take to generate business, they're likely to list different things. That kind of inconsistency can't be managed.

THE SOLUTION

Consistency, consistency, consistency. Your people are what set your company apart so differentiate your firm and maximize efficiencies by giving your sales force a common language and sales process. It will become part of their common DNA and elevate your sales efforts dramatically.

02

You don't have the buy-in of middle management.

Middle management in any company will make or break the rollout of a training program, including sales training. Senior management creates new initiatives, expecting middle management to propel them forward. The problem is, these middle managers have seen too many programs come and go. They've learned to operate from the "this too shall pass" principle.

THE SOLUTION

Give your middle managers a playbook for coaching their people and reinforcing what they've learned. At Sandler, for example, we get the buy-in of middle managers by asking them to help shape our sales curriculum from day one. We bring managers into training *before* their sales force to help them learn our language and process. Later, when their sales people go through training, middle managers co-facilitate by helping to run exercises. We spend *majority* of our training time with managers rather than sales people because the managers will be directing the process and need to be comofrtable with it.

03

Your sales platform doesn't meet the needs of the variety of businesses within your organization.

In a large company, there are often four or five selling organizations, with each of them going to market differently. When you roll out a system-wide sales program, it should meet the needs of a vertical unit that deals in transactional sales as well as one that deals in consultative sales, for example.

THE SOLUTION

Customization. In order to ensure a system-wide language and process, you need to use flexibility in matching the platform to your individual business units. At Sandler, we offer our "universal" Sandler Selling System but that doesn't mean we create a single workbook for everybody. Instead, we counter-balance the 'one size fits all' approach by building flexibility into how we transfer the knowledge behind our strategies and tactics so that they are learned and then applied in a real world selling environment. For example, we personalize our discussion of Sandler® principles such as Up-Front Contracts and individualize case studies so that every business within a company will say, "Great. Here's how this works in our world."
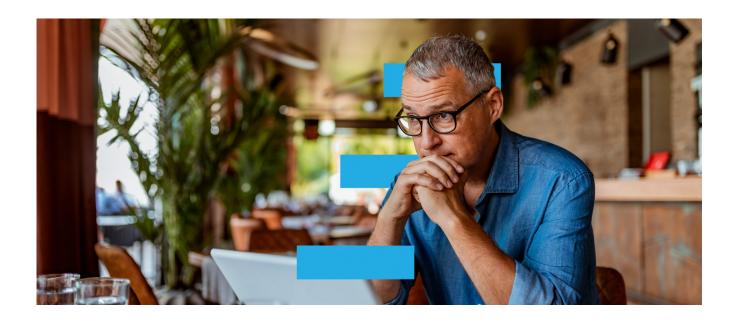
04

ROI isn't happening fast enough.

Speed of adoption is always a speed bump with any sales training program. After your sales force has undergone training, you may feel like ROI isn't happening quickly enough. Often, the problem is that management doesn't have its eyes on the pipeline and ears to the ground to recognize where the impact of the new training program and development of the team is seen manifested through the sales organization's activities, language changes and results.

THE SOLUTION

You need to create ways to measure implementation. For example, Sandler often creates "Sandler Success Stories" blog posts on a client company's website and asks for submissions from its sales force. We also have contests asking for the best 30-second commercial on sales success, with the winner receiving a prize. (The great news is that we usually receive *hundreds* of submissions.) We have "Good News Fridays," too, where sales people share by email a Sandler strategy or tactic that helped them during the week, with the "winner" receiving free dinner from their company.

It's all about creating momentum, which picks up when (1) sales people see their peers putting the system into action, (2) witness the results of putting that system into action and (3) managers see their people engaged. This engagement creates a groundswell that shows that your company is committed to the program over the long term, which encourages greater adoption.

05

Your bench isn't ready to step up when your veterans leave.

Let's say that you are moving through a cycle of experienced sales people who are moving out or retiring, and your next generation sales force is just beginning. You need to transfer knowledge from your veterans to the new hires, or else your company will experience great pain when they leave. How do you replicate what makes your experienced staff so excellent and give your new people the skills they need to operate like 25-year veterans?

THE SOLUTION

Leverage your best practices. Create sales templates as a vehicle for knowledge capture and knowledge transfer and embed existing best practices into on-boarding programs for the up and coming sales teams. Also be sure to educate and empower sales management with the toolkits and coaching/mentoring strategies necessary to drive success.

06

You're not using technology to minimize costs.

Does your company have the ability to reinforce what your sales people learned in training without flying everybody to the corporate office once a quarter? If not, how do you enable your team to quickly use what they've learned day to day, on their own?

THE SOLUTION

Introduce them to tools and technologies prior to beginning sales training and even as a part of their on-boarding. Assign pre-work so that the sales team is equipped with the tools and content that will expedite their success.
As a requirement, prescribe short form learning modules immediately after they go through training. These may include podcasts, self-paced programs for learning sales methodologies outside of the classroom and streaming seminars that can be watched online in real time. The result is that ongoing training significantly reduces costs by supplementing face-to-face training with highly effective online learning.

Large, international companies have specialized challenges when it comes to implementing sales training programs across their organizations.

A systemized approach like the Sandler Selling System can meet their unique needs with an effective, proven, flexible and measurable way to increase sales performance on a global scale. The system creates sustainable success over time with real-world tactics for prospecting, qualifying, making the deal, closing the sale and generating referrals.

! **Learn more about increasing sales and success with a proven, systematic approach to selling.**

About Sandler

Sandler is the worldwide leader in sales, management, and customer service training. We partner with organizations of all sizes, across all industries, to help them improve their revenue performance. Sandler not only provides the initial and advanced strategies and tactics needed to excel, but we also empower your team to develop the attitudes and implement the behavior necessary to reach the highest levels of success.

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