

PROBLEM:

Distributed staff that lacked product knowledge, selling skills and buy-in to selling products, not services.

SOLUTION:

Targeted prerequisites, sales practice and a follow-up program that is required in order to get credit

RESULTS:

67% increase over the average weekly sales in only four days; Immediate evidence of a shift in attitudes

CASE STUDY: **Building Confident Product Experts**

BACKGROUND

A leading service provider with more than 300 locations approached Endurance Learning to help convert its salespeople from order takers to experts in the product.

PROBLEM

The company has a well-earned reputation for providing a service accurately and quickly. Through acquisition they had added a complementary product. Their commitment to excellence didn't lead to immediate results. Their employees were passionate about their service, but had very little experience selling products to complement their service. The CEO was looking to increase revenue and was committed to the strategy of product sales.

For many sales representatives, however, selling highly technical products went beyond their knowledge base and comfort zone. They did not know how to differentiate products from different manufacturers. Some were anxious that they may turn off their customers by talking about products instead of simply offering their core services.

Sales staff and leadership would not be able to be absent from their store locations for a long duration. While training would be necessary, it would need to be limited to one day.

SOLUTION

Representatives from the training department of the manufacturing company, the Vice President of Training and Development for the regional chain, and representatives from Endurance Learning spent a day discussing the problem and brainstorming solutions. It was clear that this initiative would not be successful unless:

- Specific point people were identified at every location of the regional chain to specialize in product knowledge, and
- Leadership from the regional chain bought into the initiative.

Building Confident Product Experts (Cont.)

Endurance Learning designed a multi-step training program that included:

1. Prerequisite elearning modules that included baseline product knowledge.
2. A one-day training program that built upon prerequisite information and included sales simulations and several opportunities for sales representatives to record their sales techniques on video and review the video similar to the way a professional athlete will watch game film to identify his own strengths or weaknesses.
3. Follow-up work, including key metrics that needed to be achieved, that were required to receive complete credit for the course.
4. A train-the-trainer program partnering the manufacturer with the service provider so that leadership from the regional chain could bring the learning back to their specific locations.

RESULT

At the end of the training program, one attendee wrote: "By far the best and most interactive training I have been to. Things that made it this way would be not just the content but how it was delivered . . . If possible, please make all future training events like this one." One manager took the knowledge and skills back to his store and realized a **67% increase over the average weekly sales** in only four days out of their normal six day week.

Following a training session, one of the trainers reported back: "I have had 10+ attendees reach out to me personally to thank us for everything we covered in the class. I don't think we could have done a better job of packing all of that information into a one day class and it NOT be overwhelming."

The training also shifted attitudes. A regional account manager recounted the following story: "There is a manager at one of the larger stores that is a HUGE advocate for a competing brand. Our company even has a plant in her store's town, yet she always tries to sell their employees on this competitor. This has been an ongoing issue over the last six months or so. I got a text from her the day after she attended our class. She said there was a customer waiting for the competitor's product to be delivered, but she **upsold them to our brand instead**. It is little wins like this that will add up across their stores in the long run."