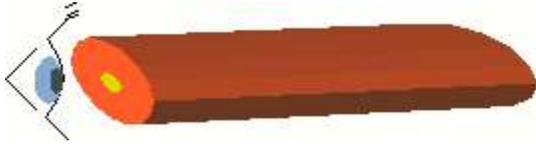


Fiber Optic Services And Products



EYE ON FIBER

Four Part Salesperson Training Increases Sales

INTRODUCTION

The twenty year, nearly continuous growth in sales of fiber optic communication components has created a shortage of competent sales personnel. This shortage has, in turn, created a need for training of sales personnel. In the past, this need has been met by training of sales personnel by company marketing or sales managers.

While this approach to training has met many needs, this approach creates distractions for managers. Development and presentation of precisely focused training programs is time consuming and distracting. While engaged in these training activities, managers are not focused on their main objectives of meeting marketing and sales goals.

Because of this distraction, companies are increasingly receiving training from fiber consulting firms. Such training provides generic and neutral training. Such generic and neutral training provides sales personnel with a broader perspective than that limited by the company view. Such a broader perspective prepares the sales person for competitive issues.

FOUR PART TRAINING

This sales training includes at least four activities:

Training in the basics of fiber optic communications

Training in demonstration skills

Training in strategic selling

And role playing

TRAINING IN BASICS

The first activity is training in basics. This training enables sales personnel to knowledgeably answer questions on the basics of the technology. Even though a sales person may sell cable, he/she needs to know how the connectors and optoelectronics interact with the cable. The benefit of having a well developed, basic knowledge is confidence. Such confidence enables the sales person to make improved, credible presentations. In addition, such confidence results in increased reliance by the customer on the sales person for answers to technical questions.

Finally, a well developed knowledge of basics enables the sales person to address significance. Sales personnel need to know which characteristics of their products are more significant and which are less significant. With knowledge of significance, sales personnel can respond to questions related to differences between their products and competing products.

TRAINING IN DEMONSTRATION SKILLS

The second activity is training in demonstration skills. This training enables sales personnel to present the advantages of the company products. For example, a connector sales person will demonstrate the reduced installation time or reduced installation difficulty of his product. The demonstration will work against the sales person if he/she makes a mistake and has to apologize. Statements as I am not really good at this or I have not done this very often do not build comfort in potential customers. If the advantage cannot be demonstrated clearly on the first try, the potential customer will remain just that, a potential. If the advantage can be demonstrated clearly, the potential customer is more likely to become a customer. In summary, the sales person needs to develop good demonstration skills with his/her products.

TRAINING IN STRATEGIC SELLING

The third activity is training in strategic selling. This training enables sales personnel to present the benefits of the company products in a manner that maximizes the probability of a sale. In strategic selling training, sales personnel learn four essential subjects: a realistic view of the relative advantages and disadvantages of his/her company products; a realistic view of the situations in which his/her company products can be successfully sold; how to present a favorable comparison of his/her company products to specific competitive products; and how to ask questions, the answers to which favor his/her products.

The sales person needs to develop a realistic view of the advantages and disadvantages of his/her company products to avoid appearing blind or arrogant. While a company product may be the best, the term best needs to be defined. In fiber optics, there is no universal best. However, there are relative best products in specific applications. For example, singlemode fiber is best for telephone and CATV applications, but multimode fiber is best for LAN and CCTV applications.

The sales person needs to develop a realistic view of the different types of selling situations to assess probability of success. With this assessment, the sales person will be able to spend most of his/her time on high probability opportunities.

The sales person needs to develop a comprehensive knowledge of his/her company products and competitive products in order to focus the customer on the advantages of his/her products that are relevant to the customer.

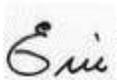
The sales person needs to develop a list of strategic questions in order to maximize sales. Strategic questions are specific questions that the customer will answer. The answers to these strategic questions favor his/her company products.

ROLE PLAYING

The fourth training, role playing, is the most important activity. This activity occurs throughout the first three activities. In role playing, sales personnel use the information he/she receives to make presentations to other sales personnel. The other sales personnel rate and provide feedback to the presenter. Such role playing, when repeated, increases the confidence, accuracy, and credibility of the sales personnel. With such increases, sales personnel cannot help achieving increased sales!

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Respectfully submitted for your consideration,



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