

Le Couviour the French division of Hill-Rom benefits from researched effectiveness

Le Couviour - Group Hill Rom is one of the major producers of hospital beds and related equipment in Europe. It is market leader in France with more than 75% market share. However, with increasing competition from within France and the opening of borders for trade within Europe, Le Couviour had to make some changes.

Le Couviour was not alone. All suppliers to hospitals and health companies in Europe had to cope with stringent controls on budgets. Le Couviour's sales figures were suffering in its traditional market. At the same time, more elderly people than ever before were moving to specially equipped nursing homes or going into hospital, rather than staying in their homes or with families, which presented a new market opportunity.

The recent integration of two sister companies within the Hill-Rom Group had brought together two salesforces — from Le Couviour and Support Systems International (SSI). SSI already had market presence in France with its leasing service for specialist beds. The new company offered a range of services but needed a united sales team.

Huthwaite's first involvement with Le Couviour came when Paul Bagley, Hill-Rom Group's Training and Development Manager for Europe, contacted Roland Jonkers, Huthwaite's licensee in France. An outline sales training programme was designed, and included management training in coaching skills to provide on-going support in the classroom.

Paul describes his choice of Huthwaite, by saying: "I spend lots of time looking at the training programmes available. There are plenty of 'me-too' programmes, but when I'm looking for a programme I want evidence that it actually works. Huthwaite was able to give me the proof - a research base, and the chance to speak with other customers."

One month after the initial training programmes, it was obvious that Le Couviour's sales people were not conceding as much discount and already the savings were well on the way to paying for the investment in training.

Paul concludes: "My job is to recommend suitable training to all the operating companies in Hill-Rom Europe. My decision to recommend Huthwaite to Le Couviour was partly because Huthwaite does what it teaches, but mostly because we were able to have coaching and follow-up training that could show the impact of the training on margins and turnover. Huthwaite has the capability to deliver a European solution to training problems, and it may be that Le Couviour will only be the first of Hill-Rom's European companies to use Huthwaite."



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