



Research shows business issues bring sales success

As you might notice, this issue of Huthwaite has a strong focus on the importance of measurement in determining the effectiveness of sales training and in informing future coaching programmes. Imation, a leading supplier of colour proofing products to the printing industry, is not alone in wanting to develop the skills of its sales force and measure the resulting improvement in sales success.

Imation, which is a relatively new company having been formed in July 1997 as a spin-off from 3M, needed to make the successful transition from a division within a large organisation to a company in a very competitive market where the development of technology is changing the whole industry from analogue to digital workflow with serious implications on the print process.

Huthwaite International delivered tailored SPIN® Selling Skills in a variety of languages to Imation's 60 sales people around Western Europe. To assist with reinforcing selling skills in the field the sales managers participated in SPIN® Coaching Skills training.

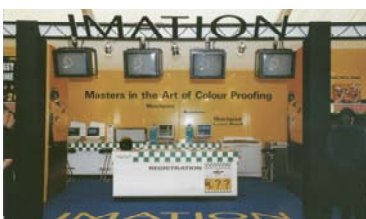
The training had already begun

when Imation decided to conduct a productivity project, so there was no benchmark against which to compare results. However, there were some useful findings as Huthwaite's Bernard Midgley explains: "We found that asking Problem, Implication and Need-payoff Questions and making Benefit Statements bear a relationship to the successful outcome of the call - which is what Huthwaite would expect."

"We also examined whether coaching had changed the use of behaviours and - in spite of the fact that it had not been possible to complete all the coaching cycles - Huthwaite found evidence that the four behaviours linked to success increased and the two behaviours that do not correlate with success

decreased following coaching."

Imation's European Business Manager Robert Pipe comments: "The research has not only been useful in terms of measuring the improvement in sales skills it has also informed our understanding of the market. For example, research showed that where the potential customer identified issues of cost, time, productivity and security then the sales call was most likely to be successful. Business issues correlate to successful outcomes not technical issues such as latest technology, more functions, etc. Therefore it is important for our sales people not only to know their products but also to understand the business issues facing the customer in the marketplace and how the products relate to those issues. "



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