

## Consultative sales programme lifts IMS

Even for a market leader used to an automatic presence at the highest levels of its industry, top firms must continually innovate, expand and explore. Competition is constant and, to stay ahead of the game, every organisation must keep its essential functions sharp and well prepared.

This is vitally true for the sales function which must equal, or better, the best of the competition. That is why IMS, the large global market leader in integrated data provision for the international health sector, turned to Huthwaite International when it identified a need to upscale rapidly its sales capability.

For the last forty years IMS has existed within an integrated environment satisfying a growing business need in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries: headquartered in Connecticut, USA, it is active in over 100 countries with regional centres in London, Tokyo and Quebec. Services include market critical information, global intelligence and knowledge-based solutions, services which key into and inform essential business functions such as strategic planning, portfolio management and sales and

marketing strategies. IMS also provides end-to-end services to research, plan, implement and assess global programmes.

Today, IMS has identified a vast new market – data analysis and manipulation – which will double its global business. This is a keystone opportunity for the salesforce which must reposition itself as a harmonised, consultative, client-focused team spanning the globe with a single, quality-assured, top-level offer which will deeply penetrate the market.

To meet this challenge, IMS has been running a global key account management training syllabus at leadership level for some time. The Huthwaite training, – *Fundamental sales techniques for professional salesteams* – is aimed at the global salesforce and is to be delivered first

in English and then in national languages around Europe.

The training will be part of an overall training syllabus constructed by IMS, with Huthwaite operating in parallel with two other training organisations, Franklin Covey and Siebel/MCS.

The challenge for Huthwaite is twofold: to raise the aim of the salesteams, incorporating the greatly enhanced consultancy and solutions offer, and to establish a global superstandard across all 100 territories to ensure that every salesteam is equal to the best. A range of training is proposed, SPIN<sup>®</sup>, Account Strategy for Major Sales, Negotiation Skills and elements of Management skills,

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**Greg Parrish, Group Director for Sales Development, IMS**

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initially for the salesforce, but intended for other internal departments, such as customer service, in due course.

Consultative selling skills were a key focus at the IMS sales conference held recently in Nice, where Huthwaite offered three breakout sessions; The Psychology of Decision Making, Obtaining Commitment and Recruitment and Selection.

Greg Parrish is Group Director for Sales Development at IMS and is in no doubt about the quality of service: "Our expansion into data analysis and the construction of executable strategies is a great opportunity for our salesforce; the move demands an ever-higher degree of customer focus. This requires new skill levels for the salesteams that must now embrace, understand and sell a whole new solution-based philosophy and will

demand consultative skills of the highest order. Also, as a global company, we cannot tolerate a variable product; all offers must equal our best. The Huthwaite training will help to reposition us in the consultative quadrant and create a common global sales approach. Huthwaite's key contribution will be its unique knowledge and experience in teaching sales fundamentals."