

# Oracle uses SPIN® selling methodology for increased customer focus.

**W**hen the senior management of Oracle EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) set a new business objective – ‘to become the most admired software company in the region’ – they challenged their teams in each country to make it happen. A number of key drivers were identified that every country would need to address: customer success; partnering excellence; innovation; continuous learning; and corporate social leadership.

## The new vision demanded a high level of customer focus

Ludovit Majernik, business operations manager for Oracle Software (Schweiz) GmbH, was one of the managers responsible for meeting the challenge in Switzerland. He quickly recognised that, with 290 customer-facing employees spread across four locations, moving everyone in the right direction to match this new vision would be no easy task.

“Our new vision demands a high level of customer focus from all our people, not just those in direct sales, but in our sales support team, channel partners and telesales teams, too. To achieve this, we felt that continuous learning was indeed a key driver, requiring long-term development objectives for all customer-facing people.

“Our goal for this year is to improve the quality and efficiency of our sales calls and customer meetings. We decided to use Huthwaite’s SPIN® selling methodology to develop and refresh our team’s questioning skills, with the aim of ensuring better understanding of our customers’ needs, a prime requisite to being more customer-focused.

“To ensure we changed the approach of our whole organisation, we decided that all our people should develop their skills at the same time. Our aim was to adopt a common sales language and approach to our customers.”

## SPIN® skills for everyone in sales

As a result, SPIN® skills were delivered in French and German across all functions. To ensure the training was embedded into the organisation, the sales managers were equipped to coach SPIN® skills beyond the classroom events.

Asked about the impact of the training, Ludovit commented: “The quality of both the course content and training presentation was high, with all the participants giving very high ratings of 4 or more on a rating scale of 1-5. We were also very impressed by the language

capability of the trainers in both French and German. The ability to deliver in local languages, and the obvious passion of the trainers for the SPIN® methodology, helped to gain active involvement from all our people, who responded well to the combination of research inputs and practical exercises.

It’s too early yet to be able to talk about real examples of the success of the training, but delegate reactions have been very positive and we have their commitment to apply the skills in real calls. Our sales managers have also committed to coach their people in SPIN® skills over the weeks ahead, so we are very hopeful that our investment in this project will pay real dividends in improving our customer focus”.

Ian Newall, Huthwaite’s account manager for Oracle, commented: “Developing the whole team at the same time presented a number of challenges, but it was the right decision to help build a common sales approach and language quickly. Delivering the interventions in the local languages also speeds skill development because it is difficult to learn complex behavioural skills in a second language.”

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#### Practical coaching skills that anyone can apply

“We were also delighted to be able to include two managers from Oracle Turkey in the coaching programme to help them reinforce SPIN® skills there,” he continued. “We focused the coaching on practical, pragmatic activities that all the managers can apply and I think it was all the more successful for that.”

“We feel the ongoing reinforcement that coaching brings will help to ensure the success of the project. Oracle Switzerland is committed to achieving their new vision and we are behind them all the way.”

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