

SPIN[®] - a better way of understanding

RICOH Deutschland GmbH is the German arm of the RICOH Company Ltd, leading suppliers of office automation equipment.

Established in 1978, RICOH Deutschland Lars Wegner, now has three Ricoh Deutschland branches, one subsidiary and 200 dealers and holds a leading position in the German market for digital copiers and facsimilies. RICOH has been working with Huthwaite Germany since Autumn 1999, to develop its own internal SPIN[®] Selling Skills training programme.

Following increased technical advancement, the German office equipment market has changed considerably. RICOH's target is to provide the customer with a solution that enables an easy handling of printed information, an improvement in quality and more efficiency in work flow. A constantly growing range of products including software-solutions, enables the salesmen to create very specific, individual solutions for the customers.

This movement to being a solution provider as opposed to a product provider requires a change in training strategy. It is not enough to focus on creating product knowledge, it is vital to enable the salespeople to develop the

necessary skills to uncover and develop the customers' needs, and to offer solutions in the most persuasive way - as clear benefits for the customer.

To develop this technique, RICOH Deutschland decided to work with Huthwaite Germany to create its own internal SPIN[®] Selling Skills training capabilities. As a first step Lars Wegner, psychologist and trainer at RICOH Deutschland attended a Train-the-Trainer event. Since then RICOH has been running SPIN[®] Selling Skills programmes for its salespeople and dealers.

"Focusing on the clients' real needs enables us to differentiate ourselves from our competitors. Most people investing in office automation-equipment, are making their decisions based on very strong rational decision guidelines. As a result it becomes more important to be able to match these individual needs and to show them the benefits they get from working with us." Lars Wegner says. *"During the first programmes, I found out that many of our salespeople were*

thinking the same way. But I also recognised that it is not that easy to overcome the old, traditional ways of thinking. I often see salespeople offering solutions far too early in the sales cycle, based on weak Implied Needs, stated by the client. What follows are statements about product features and advantages and the clients' objections are lost as a result of this.

"SPIN[®] can help our salespeople, to move from a traditional style of selling copiers - focusing on technical features - to a provider of solutions. An additional effect of using the SPIN[®] technique is that it helps us to show our competence, in a more effective manner compared with the traditional way, which leads to objection and rejection. By asking strong focused questions of a high quality we can help the client to think about their actual situation, the problems and the linked implications and - as a result of this - about their needs.

"So to conclude, SPIN[®] enables our salespeople, to move towards a consultative approach and to provide real added value for the client," says Lars Wegner.



"So to conclude, SPIN[®] enables our salespeople, to move towards a consultative approach and to provide real added value for the client."

Lars Wegner, psychologist and trainer at RICOH Deutschland