

Telephone selling skills for Telenor

With the approach of deregulation, Telenor, the Norwegian telecommunications company, has recognised the importance of developing its skills to retain and build on its existing customer base, by implementing a series of initiatives including the launch of Telenor Direkte.

Telenor Direkte offers products such as phones, switchboards, cordless phones and data equipment to small businesses. Traditional field sales is not the most effective way of selling to this number of customers, hence, the new direct marketing telephone sales unit. Although 30% of the staff are experienced salespeople, the majority have not had any previous experience of sales but were drawn from marketing graduates. The intention was to put together a team of people who were not too set in their beliefs about how telephone selling should be carried out.

Research-based telephone selling skills training

To help this new team, Huthwaite Norway was asked to deliver Huthwaite Telephone Selling Skills training, which like SPIN® Selling

Skills, is also based on extensive research to uncover the skills used by successful salespeople. At the same time, the sales managers were trained to analyse individual sales calls and to provide coaching to improve performance.

Telenor Direkte also wanted to ensure that telephone calls could quickly focus on issues of importance to its customers. By sending out questionnaires, Telenor Direkte obtained information which helped them to understand the business of their customers as well as their future needs.

Armed with this information, the telephone sales team is able to make well focused calls, which quickly identify issues of importance to the customer.

Visible results

Telenor Direkte is part of the company's defensive strategy to build up customer relationships and loyalty prior to deregulation in 1998. Nina Sundby, Sales Director at Telenor Direkte, has no doubts about the effectiveness of the training. As she puts it: *"I have seen, quite quickly, the results of the initiative. The salespeople are able to recognise and note what they are doing well and not so well. Huthwaite Telephone Selling Skills training provides practical processes to help in building up a dialogue — which is important in getting closer to the needs of each customer."*



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