

The People Companyaz **SPECIAL REPORT: No. 1**

TRAINING **THE MISSING** yet **CRITICAL** element?

“Train, train, train! Who has time for training? It’s expensive and I have a business to run.”

If you have ever said these words or at least felt like saying them, the following information may be helpful to you.



Several years ago I was presenting a class to a large group of sales managers and made the statement that, “You must never stop investing time and money in training everyone in your company, including yourself.”

A gentleman from the audience raised his hand and asked this question, “What if you spend all that time and money training someone and they leave?” My immediate response was, “**What if you don’t, and they stay?**” Many of the failures in business every day is attributed to unskilled or incompetent personnel.

Owners and managers invest money every business day in marketing, products or equipment hoping for a return on the investment. If the return comes, they are very happy. If the return is small or nothing, many simply say, well that didn’t work. These results, however, never stopped most of them from continuing to invest again and again in the same things hoping for a better result. Most of these same businesses when it comes to investing money in training people, dig in their feet and say, “We did training once and it didn’t work,” or, “Most of the people I spent time and money training are gone, so why bother?”

I have spent the best part of 40 years in the selling business in some capacity. As a salesperson I was trained by the best in the world. As a trainer, I have been fortunate to train some of the best in their industry. Over the years I have learned some things about training that I want to share with you:

There are FOUR SIMPLE STEPS that you can follow that can produce more successful and effective training classes.

How long you train or how often are not as important as, “How,” when conducting a training meeting.

The following steps can help anyone who is serious about training...

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Step 1. Create emotional involvement.

If you have been in sales for any period of time, one of the first things you learned is that people make buying decisions based on emotion. If people are not emotionally connected to you, they are seldom going to say *yes* to your offering. It's no different in training. Whoever you want to train must, "Buy in," to what the training will do for them (or, what is the benefit for them to learn what you are teaching?). Don't get confused like so many leaders and think that they should do it because you say so or that they will make more money.

Companies spend millions of dollars every year to send people to training seminars. Many of the people who attend are only there because the company sent them so it becomes the trainer's responsibility to sell them on the value of being trained. If you are going to be the trainer, the same rules apply.

Here are some simple things that you can do to create emotional involvement:

1. Start talking well in advance in a positive and exciting way about the upcoming training.
2. Share success stories of other people who have taken advantage of the training.
3. Develop simple contest that will encourage participation.
4. Create awards based on learning not on closed sales.

Step 2. Get a commitment to the training.

Working with uncommitted people is frustrating and a waste of every ones time. Trying to train them can be even more so. If the participants are emotionally involved they are usually willing to commit and be supportive of training. **A commitment can sometimes be verbal but usually are more effective when in writing.**

Example (Trainer): I, Bill Green will provide a training program that has proven to help sales professionals close more sales and increase their personal income. I will be consistent and timely with the sessions, thorough with the content and supportive to all participants. Signed _____ Date _____

Example (Trainee): I, Robert Simms will participate in all training sessions by being alert, involved and will bring a positive attitude to every session. I will to the best of my ability, learn the concepts being taught and apply them to my sales efforts every day for the benefit of myself and the company.
Signed _____ Date _____

You, of course, can create a commitment specific to your needs or your business; some commitments can also be customized to each participant based on what their strengths or weaknesses may be.

Amazing results are possible when people are committed to each other's success.

Step 3. Conduct the training.

When people are excited about, or emotionally involved, and are committed to learn how they can improve their sales and income, training is not only more effective but can be fun. There are a variety of training methods that can be very effective for any company. You may find it helpful to offer certain materials or information to new recruits and present another more advanced session for the veterans. However, it never hurts for sales

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people at any stage of their career to be reminded of the basics.

There are dozens of sales training systems on the market made especially for in-house training. With a little research, you can find the right message presented by the personality or style that best suits your company and sales team. *Most of these training systems come with a leader or trainers guide. This choice (of a trainer) is one of the most important training decisions you will make. If people don't like the messenger, it won't matter how good the message is.* Training programs that have workbooks that go along with each session are much more effective.



Depending on your particular needs, training can be in groups, one to one, or other divisions appropriate to your business. You may want to assign a session to one of your salespeople to present to the group. Whoever is doing the training should always preview the session being presented to be prepared to properly instruct the lesson material. When I knew a salesperson was weak in a particular area, I would ask them to teach that session. That helped them learn while they prepared to teach the class.

A must for any training program is **consistency**. No skipping training days. Create a training calendar and stick with it.

Training can be the glue that holds everything together in good or not so good business markets. You can never overtrain.

Step 4. Test for results.

This is a step in the training process that usually gets left out. Some owners or managers doing the training believe, we did the training; so they must be doing what we taught them. ***Not always the case!***

Some training systems come with a written exam to measure what has been learned. They can sometimes be effective and sometimes can be intimidating. Usually that will be determined by how they are introduced and how you use them.

Another testing method is verbal questions with small rewards for correct responses. This also allows you to see who is learning and who needs additional help. I can recall on many occasions passing a salesperson in the hall or in the break room and simply asking a question about something we had gone over in a training class. That may be considered a surprise test. Another very effective method, but sometimes intimidating for the sales person, are appointment 'ride-alongs.' This is also referred to as **field training**. This type of testing can produce good results if the salesperson knows that you are there to observe not to take charge of the appointment. The person observing should be polite to the prospect but not interfere with the sales call. I will discuss sales 'ride-alongs' in a future Special Report.

Training is usually the one area of any business that will determine its long term success.

Find a system that works for you, **follow the four steps** presented here and **everyone will enjoy more success. Call us if we can be of any further help.**

