



Training & Development

Who is responsible & what resources do dealers use?

Compiled by: Brent Hoskins, Office Technology Magazine

Following are several related questions submitted by a dealer member as part of BTA's Dealers Helping Dealers resource and some of the answers received. These answers and others can be found in the members-only section of the BTA website. Visit www.bta.org/DealersHelpingDealers. You will need your username and password to access this member resource.



One big question that continues to plague us is how other organizations are handling the responsibilities of training and development for reps. Specifically, what programs or platforms are in place to foster a culture of continuing education for reps?

We are finding just getting reps educated in standard business practices, and understanding the challenges and needs that organizations face in the new digital norm, is difficult. We see so many new reps who have no practical knowledge of business processes. It makes it difficult to get them on track to chase solutions, digital transformation and, now, the use of AI in business.

Who takes responsibility for that training? What resources do they use?

"Most of the time our sales manager trains and the rest of the sales team helps. We have done Larry Coco's training and have our manufacturer's help, too. It is more difficult when you get 'green' people to do this. We want to start using a better source. Derek Shebby's Sales Bootcamp is the program we are going to go through next with some of our less experienced reps."

*Tyler Best, president
Abadan, Richland, Washington*

"I recall the days when I was a rookie, always ambitious and hungry to learn from the pros — namely the ownership and C-level players in the company. I believe that the willingness of the 'big shots' to spend time mentoring is an investment in time to 'their' ownership. Newbies look up to the pros, and the pros should give back for the futures of those who make their companies. Teach business practices. A small example: Having my proposal submitted in the 'budget' is not an order, it is

a possibility. Teach about capital expenditure (CapEx) versus operating expenditure (OpEx). Teach how building a lease portfolio can guarantee income after three to four years of effort. Teach about C-level working hours; they tend to work longer hours than the employees, which means a smart

rep has access to them more readily in non-standard business hours. Get some of the successful sales reps who understand the digital space and artificial intelligence (AI) to teach.

"With rare exception, I would not use engineers; they are far too technical and cannot convert a capability into a selling advantage. Clients want problems solved. Most do not want an autopsy of the technology. Use as many illustrations, images and examples as possible. Most learn best with pictures and examples.

"Create an environment of mentoring, not belittling inexperience. I do not have specific sources I would recommend. I am big on the 'big shots' being accessible to their folks. Walk the office, talk with the reps, ask them if they have questions, show you care and view them as valuable."

*Hans Chaddick, vice president of strategic alliance
Infonality Partners, Allen, Texas*

"The responsibility and accountability is a function of sales leadership. However, in many organizations, training, onboarding and continuing education is neither a priority nor being held as an accountability standard. Sales staff members are the leading edge and second-most visible representation of your company (service is number one). How they are trained is a direct reflection of how they represent your company."

*Russell Kromminga, director of technical services
Century Business Technologies Inc., Topeka, Kansas*

"Our ownership or the sales manager are responsible for new and continuing sales training. Creating an in-house sales training program is recommended, as there are slight differences on how each company approaches training and sales. Kate Kingston from Kingston Training Group is an excellent resource."

*Doug Powell, operations manager
Copiers Plus Inc., Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey* ■

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