



Sales Academy

The first of six monthly installments from Pro-train4Results' Paul Rowland on how to become a 'Wayne Rooney' of the sales world.



This month sees the start of several articles over the next six months written by Paul Rowland, founder director of Pro-Train4Results, whose company offers specialist tailor made OP channel courses on sales, management, marketing, Microsoft Office, EOS and Hardware product training.

Throughout this period of time, Rowland will be concentrating on confirming all the basic component parts needed to be successful in the highly competitive and results driven environment of sales.

By way of an introduction (although many of you may already know him) Rowland has spent more than 20 years in the office product industry, over ten years of which were as sales director of the IT distributor, XMA. It was here, over a six year period, that Rowland led the development of generic and new business growth increasing annualised revenues for the sector of the business he was responsible for from £9m to over £100m.

Prior to this Rowland worked in the Government, advertising and insurance sectors where his previous job roles include tele-sales, field sales and sales management.

In total, Rowland has amassed over 25 years of B2B and B2C direct selling and management experience resulting in the acquisition and retention of accounts in the OP channel with annual revenues ranging from £25,000 to over £30m and will be looking to share with you in the forthcoming articles, his knowledge of what does and what does not work in the mechanics of sales.

Enough said – over to Paul.

Before I get into the nitty gritty of the whys and wherefores of sales I would like to concentrate firstly on why companies should bother to train their >>



TRAINING

staff and why people should look to develop themselves?

To answer the first question and to summarise, I would like to refer back to an article written in the December issue of *Dealer Support* where I pointed out that with an industry as mature and competitive as the OP sector, training is vital for survival and, secondly, to ensure the development of a business as people are the most important asset.

Businesses always talk about having a competitive advantage and differentiating themselves from the rest. If staff are fully trained to not only manage but exploit market opportunities, by default, this objective will become a reality.

A further point to consider and one that reiterates the latter, is the amount of focus and investment given by the big contract stationers on training their staff to become a differentiator with existing customers and new prospects. When dealers go 'head to head' with these companies, which is inevitable, they need to ensure that at the very least they match the skill set of the competition and are not handicapped before the race begins.

The answer to the second question lies with the individual and is driven totally by themselves. Some of the reasons already stated should be enough to confirm why people should increase their skill set, if not, what about increasing profits for the company, enhance career options and accelerating personal earnings to name a few.

However, what happens if the company does not support you in training? What should you do then? Give up and hope that miraculously, the skills required to be a 'Wayne Rooney' of the sales world will come to you overnight? Of course not, get out to your local library or look on the internet (Amazon) for books relative to your experience, buy them, read them, practice and personalise what they suggest and then implement/review your learning experiences and results.

Another suggestion (which can be used in unison with the last idea or on



its own) was discovered by Socrates in roughly 350 BC but is still relevant in today's environment!

Here, Socrates uncovered a theory – 'the law of cause and effect'. Underpinning this rational is that whatever happens, happens for a reason and not by chance, the result being the consequence of the activity. So in real life, what is behind this theory jargon and what is it saying?

If the result of the activity is positive, copy it and do more of it, so in the case of sales, work closely with or find out someone who is/has been successful in sales, establish what has worked for them and copy it! Simple, eh!

This initiative of self development leads nicely on to the subject of – what is the right DNA profile needed to be successful in sales?

There are three areas that govern

the success and results of all people which are knowledge, skill and attitude. Knowledge being what to do, skill being how to do and attitude being will do, want to do and can do.

Lets us first examine the areas of knowledge and skill both these topics have one thing in common... got it yet? They both can be trained into an individual, where as attitude, well that's something they've got or they haven't.

Without this instinct and personal gene the person will not have the drive, passion, enthusiasm, call it what you will, to initiate any proceedings or carry out any actions relating to increasing their knowledge or skill set. They will be just happy with the 'norm' or alarmingly not mind going backwards; but for the people with the right PMA (Positive Mental Attitude) they will consistently run the extra mile, commit to self development and

always look for the next mountain to climb. No surprise then that attitude is a prerequisite and the main component part in the DNA profile of a sales person.

Other constituents include listening and questioning skills, adaptability, knowledge of the company's products and services, honesty, reliability, organised, caring, ethical, good communicator, articulate, persistence the list goes on and on all of which and more will be focused on as we embark on the journey of the sales process and its associated techniques in the months ahead. ■

For further information on sales, management, marketing, Microsoft Office EOS and hardware product training contact Paul Rowland at paul@pro-train4results.com or on 0115 9827730.