



# **Methodological Agnosticism**

***Stop Piling On!***

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It sounds atrocious, we know, but in today's "high-strung, mega-productive environment," being tied to any one training methodology simply isn't productive.

Since it is impossible to know whether or not there is a "perfect training methodology" – including those focused on selling, managing, marketing and coaching - let's get back to what such initiatives should be about - **Advancing Competence to Advance Sales**. Complex sales organizations need methodological coherence not "*consistency for its own sake*".

Additionally, people have been trained a lot in their lives. It seems obvious that we should also give them credit for the concepts, processes, and skills they have already learned. Adding methodologies (no matter how good they are) risks creating indifference. We know indifference does not change behaviors!

Conversely, building commitment relies on giving your people **credit for what they already know**, while at the same time changing behaviors that do not work. So . . .

- *How about working with what your people have?*
- *How about delivering specific learning at the time of greatest need?*
- *How about focusing on advancing sales rather than installing a methodology?*
- *How about treating learners as adults and help them solve real problems?*
- *How about using any necessary forms to advance sales and competence, not to "clarify the process?"*

PDS Group's Clinic designs aim to incorporate your existing training methodologies and "sacred cows." For instance, one of our clients was committed to one training vendor's "Blue Sheets." The sheets were producing useful information; but, that information was not being used to leverage value discussions at different management levels in the client account. This behavioral deficiency was targeted as a "coaching item" in our training program, and the blue sheets instantly became more useful! We've had similar opportunities to increase the value of the another vendor's Fox Guides™ by helping users wade through the complexity and find the relative sections that drive the power questioning behavior in client situations. We don't need a gaggle of complex planning tools . . . . . we simply need to "make hay" with planning tools people already call their own!

This makes good economic sense, and it certainly makes good "learning sense!"

## Strategic Alignment

Any training design needs to integrate your organization's sales and marketing strategy. For example, in one of our accounts, the coaching training reflected a strong tie to "Customer Value Creation Strategy." Coaching was a central issue in reaching their sales goals. A common integration theme was how well coaching outcomes aligned with the business goals – their "Dashboard."

## **“Feeding the Bear”**

Your senior sales executives **WANT** sales data. You **WANT** statistical data. We call this “Feeding the Bear.” Management wants sales progress reporting through defined sales processes, including, in many cases, a CRM protocol. Ensuring that the training language used is consistent with sales reporting and any incumbent CRM is a real integration challenge, and often overlooked. Likewise, tools used in the training need to be aligned so that they “Feed the Bear.”

## **Human Resources Alignment**

As with many of our clients, you may experience cloudy or inconsistent links between sales, sales coaching and management competencies. Other common links to consider, especially for sales manager coaching training, are alignment issues, such as:

- Performance Management processes for both sales managers and their people - e.g. ensuring that one training outcome for managers is to create related performance objectives with their direct reports
- How managers’ training will be reinforced so that their coaching produces measurable results
- Using existing baseline data against which the impact of the training can be measured.

## **Develop Evaluation Strategy**

PDS Group understands the need to link “coaching skills training” events to:

- How sales people and sales manager’s competencies are measured by the organization
- How existing sales processes and protocols require measurable tactical behaviors
- How the training reflects customer value and satisfaction measures in specific sales manager coaching behaviors
- How current outcome metrics relate to the behaviors being trained
- How specific coaching develops better product clustering or improved new product introduction strategies

Suffice it to say that PDS is “methodologically agnostic,” which means we take your methodologies and help you recapture your investment in them, fix them if they are not working, or add to them if needed. This way, we reduce training costs while improving sales results.