



Transforming Your Product Sales Training

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## GET MORE INFO

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## Transforming Your Product Sales Training

Manufacturer representatives and re-seller sales representatives (SR's) typically sell numerous products, in many different categories, often from several manufacturers. To be successful they need to stay current on product updates, new product introductions and technology advances that are important to their accounts. All of these learning requirements take away from their selling time and their primary motivators – sales goals and commission checks.

Far too often, the only product-specific sales “training” (Product Sales Training) these SR's get is a stack of marketing collateral (sell sheets, brochures, product spec sheets, technical support papers) and a link to the manufacturer’s website.

The volume of information can be overwhelming, and the material itself often lacks key information the SRs need. It's not presented using their vocabulary. It can raise more questions than it answers.

### Who wrote this sell sheet?

Did the marketing department get solid input from a knowledgeable product manager? Companies manage the collateral development process in different ways, and it can be hard for the SR to know

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which ones can be trusted.

### **How current is this information?**

Collateral rarely includes a “publication date”. When SR’s receive a series of marketing pieces from one product line without this kind of dating, they spend unproductive time trying to determine (sometimes unsuccessfully) which is the foundational information and what subsequent collateral is the most current and accurate.

### **How do all these products relate?**

When there are multiple products in a product line, trying to assemble an integrated picture of that line from the collateral for each of the individual products can feel like putting together a jigsaw puzzle without a guiding image. What is the overall value proposition for the line? Why should the customer buy this product vs. the competitor’s product?

### **How can I guide the customer when I can’t put the picture together myself?**

Sometimes several collateral pieces supporting a single product line or category can have different voicing, emphasis, layout or design. This can lead to selling confusion for SRs, making it difficult for them to clearly explain product choices to their customers.

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## **Are these just new words describing the same features, or is this a new or different feature?**

When terminology for what appear to be similar features differs between collateral pieces, does that reflect real product differences, or just the preferred vocabularies of different writers?

## **Is the company deliberately changing its message?**

One piece of collateral may have subtly different messaging from the others. What is the most important message? Was a change really intended? Or was a new writer just trying to add their own touch?

At the same time they are swimming in questions, SRs can also feel buried under a mass of specification details. Like a computer with a fixed amount of RAM, human beings can only take in so much information before they lose the ability to retain it all.

Collateral, while readily available, is created for other audiences and objectives:

- Sell-Sheets are leave-behinds for sales calls
- Technical specs are for technical purchasers, installation and service staff.

None of this is prepared specifically for the key person in the distribution process – the sales rep.

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Even when there's a formally developed and consistently presented product training format and delivery platform, the material is frequently prepared by people who have in-depth product knowledge (sometimes too deep) but little understanding of specific product selling requirements, the Product Sales Training components, that front-line sales reps really need.

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### **Quality Sales Reps Deserve Better Training.**

Product sales training based solely on sell sheets and marketing collateral is simply no longer effective for SRs. It is time consuming, counterproductive, inadequate, and worst of all, boring.

The better solution is Product Sales Training that is laser-focused on what SRs most need and will respond to—the key selling propositions—with the additional details readily accessible as they need it.

### **Transforming Your Product Sales Training.**

The focus of specialized product sales training should be on helping sales reps be motivated and effective. For reps to be motivated, they

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need to know enough about how to sell (and earn) from the product to grasp the value of investing the time to learn about it.

A consistent and reliable Product Sales Training program delivers that level of confidence. Important information and training elements SRs need include:

- **Market background** (Brochures, sell sheets, and websites don't typically include information on market size and growth, and rarely identify market opportunities, even indirectly).
- **Category information** (size, growth trends, technology advances, relationship to other product categories and technology)
- **Product information** (value proposition, feature/benefits, technology advances)
- **Competitive set information** (comparative product information with an emphasis on superior characteristics)
- **Pricing and delivery** (volume discounts, promotions, production cycles)

That information often requires timely distribution and updating, characteristics that are difficult to execute with printed material.

With a true Product Sales Training program manufacturers demonstrate their commitment to the front line sales reps, who in

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turn will be:

- More informed
- Better prepared
- More confident
- Better sales people!

When training material has been transformed, it is written for sales reps, and to their requirements and needs. It tells an integrated, cohesive story, addressing why the rep should be interested and why the customer should buy. It is based upon easy to absorb written “sound bites”, with quick access to additional details upon request, and it is consistent in information structure and presentation, voicing, and terminology. Lastly, next-level training is available when and where the sales reps want it, so that it doesn’t intrude on their valuable selling time.

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TechScholar, founded in 2009, provides professionally prepared, cloud-hosted Product Sales Training and technology training services to some of the most widely recognized tech companies in the world.



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