

Case Study: Sales Training Boosts Early Education Center Enrollment Conversion Rates Increase 30%

Bright Horizons Family Solutions is a leading provider of employer-sponsored child care, early education, and work/life solutions. Operations in the United States, Europe, and Canada, serve more than 700 clients, including more than 90 of the Fortune 500. In addition, the company provides community child care, back-up care solutions for children and elders, and college counseling services.

The company's senior vice president of business operations, Dave Shaby, was charged with increasing enrollments at full-service, community child care centers in Massachusetts. The tough economy magnified the company's need for improved sales and marketing. To increase enrollments, Shaby would be relying on a staff that consisted primarily of educators and child care providers, along with enrollment-counselor parents. While this team delivered the high-quality care Bright Horizons was known for, they were not a traditional sales force.

In the past, Shaby and his marketing team had conducted staff sales training in-house. Given current circumstances, however, he knew he needed to expand beyond that approach. It was time to bring in an external training partner. "There's definitely an authenticity you get by bringing in a high-quality expert from the outside. You get engagement [from staff] that you don't get with an internal resource – no matter how good they are, and I think we're actually pretty good at it," says Shaby.

Beyond the business goal of increasing enrollments, the company knew it could also enhance the experience for potential customers and do it all in a way that was comfortable for and in keeping with the nurturing approach of its team of educators, caregivers, and enrollment counselors, says Shaby.

It was important that the training provider be a good fit. Shaby says the wrong sales trainers would "just bomb" if they were not tuned into the cultural needs of the organization.

Solution:

Bright Horizons brought in RAIN Group to take their sales training to the next level.

Tailor the Training to Individual Needs

RAIN Group conducted a pre-training analysis to assess the business development needs of 75 center directors, assistant directors, and enrollment counselors. The group was then separated into three cohorts,

Client: Bright Horizons

Industry: Child Care / Early Education

Services: Sales Training, Sales Coaching

Challenges:

- Increase enrollments at full-service, community child care centers during a tough economy while enhancing the experience for customers
- Improve the business development skills and marketing mind-set of a non-traditional sales force

Solutions:

- Analyze the current level of business development skills and assess individual and organizational needs
- Conduct RAIN SellingSM training to build the sales skills of center administrators and enrollment counselors with customized in-person training
- Reinforce sales training with small group coaching to make the sales methodology "stick"

Results:

- Increased conversion rates by 30% with improved customer service
- Staff has internalized the sales methodology so that not only does the training "stick," but sales performance continually improves



based on level of experience, and received [RAIN SellingSM training](#) tailored to improve the business development skills of each participant.

Two in-person training programs were complemented by monthly coaching sessions.

Coach the Team to Put Training into Practice

The small [group coaching](#) sessions offered role-playing opportunities, allowed participants to share their business development challenges, and provided them with specific advice and approaches to help put their training into practice in real-life.

Since Bright Horizons' enrollment counselors played a particularly important role in the sales process, the coaching would be especially valuable for them. Every enrollment counselor was either a current or former parent in a Bright Horizons child care center. Improving the business development skills of these "passionate parents" could have a substantial impact on conversion rates.

Results:

The sales training program has been a successful one for Bright Horizons.

"John Doerr is skilled at drawing out the elements in people that allow them to grow," says Shaby. "And RAIN Group's program helps them to improve on their own – so that each time they have an experience with a potential customer, they are using that to inform their next experience."

Now, by applying the skills learned during the training and coaching, the enrollment counselors are able to use their own stories effectively in conversations with prospective families, says Shaby. They've internalized the training. As one counselor shared, "When a person tells me it's too much money, I think about why they said that and what I might do differently, and whether or not it was really a straight objection over price."

Moreover, since the training began Bright Horizons has seen real improvement. Conversion rates at the centers with enrollment counselors are about 30% higher than at the centers without enrollment counselors. "It's substantial and it's growing," says Shaby, "and, while it's just one variable, the growth aligns with the timing of the training."

RAIN Group Can Help You Improve Sales Results

Give us a call at 508-405-0438, send us an email at info@raingroup.com, or [fill out our contact form](#) to learn how we can help you improve the sales results of your team.