



# 23 TIPS

FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT  
**CORPORATE SALES**  
**TRAINING PROVIDER**



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A WHITEPAPER BY THE BROOKS GROUP

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# Need Corporate Sales Training?

## 23 Tips for Choosing the Right Corporate Sales Training Provider

**Choosing a sales training provider could be one of the most important business decisions you'll ever make. The stakes are high because your sales revenue drives the success of your entire organization.**

Choose wisely and you'll discover how a sales training program that's both positive and effective can unlock the full potential of your sales team. If you find the right provider, your investment in sales training may open doors and help your organization tap into limitless revenue, opportunity and success.

Make the wrong choice and you run the risk of losing all the time and money you've invested in training. Worse yet, the wrong sales training program can result in irreparable damage to your organization's image and its' leadership's credibility (not to mention your sales team's morale).

In most cases, effective sales training involves a total cultural transformation. You'll need to make sure the firm you choose has enough depth of expertise and just the right "fit" to work with your organization.

With so many confusing choices, finding the right sales training firm can seem like a perilous venture. Before you proceed further in your search, take a careful look at the following 23 tips. This valuable information should help remove the uncertainty associated with such a significant decision.



**Here they are:**

## **1 Look for a firm that provides customized service.**

Find out how much experience each provider has in customizing a sales training program for your industry and for organizations of your size and type. Examine the firm's selling methodology and make sure it has a proven track record of success and that it can be successfully implemented in your industry and organization. Your best bet is to look for someone who knows sales and who's also willing to learn your business and your industry. The best sales training programs link theory and application by helping your sales team apply universal principles of buying and selling to the specific challenges they face. Don't settle for curriculum design or learning specialists who have had little, if any, sales experience. Street-smart sales training only comes from street-smart sales training providers.

## **2 Select a firm that provides more than a motivational speech or one-time training event.**

Instead, choose a firm that can help you focus on building lasting gains in performance. Those gains can only be driven by a training program that implements a solid selling methodology throughout your organization. An effective program begins with assessing current strengths and weaknesses and defining your organization's goals for the training program. You'll also want to make sure the firm can demonstrate that they'll provide practical, real-world training that's immediately usable for better sales results.

## **3 Pick a firm that offers ongoing coaching and reinforcement systems.**

Sales training that transforms your team's performance out in the field will require follow-up coaching tools as well as measurement and accountability systems. Look for a firm that can support your sales team and your sales managers as they implement what they've learned out in the field.



#### **4 Identify an organization that is flexible enough to deliver training in the format that is most conducive for your organization.**

Whether you need live training, video-based training, distance, online, or a train-the-trainer and licensing program that will allow your trainer(s) to master and deliver the material, this flexibility is essential. Look for one that doesn't have rigid, unbending curriculum or methods. Each organization and selling environment is unique and successful sales training will acknowledge, consider, and adapt to your situation. The right firm will also be able to work successfully with your training department, if you have one.

#### **5 Select a firm whose facilitators can demonstrate that they have hands-on sales experience and that they've successfully used the strategies that they teach.**

This is especially true in sales training because your sales force will size up their trainer's experience very quickly. Your team will derive the most benefit from training that is grounded in a real-world selling experience.

#### **6 Look for a firm that emphasizes value over cost.**

Sales training is not a purchase. It's an investment that should add significant growth to your top (and potentially bottom) line. Seek a firm that focuses more on delivering significant revenue growth to ensure your investment pays off, rather than on cutting corners to lower your up-front costs.

#### **7 Don't be too fast to limit yourself only to "industry specific" training firms.**

There is great value in cross-pollination, multi-industry experience, and exposure. It can bring fresh insights and ideas into an organization.



## 8 Be careful about a firm that is too small OR too big.

The former could have trouble servicing you and the latter could lose you in the shuffle. Larger firms can also prove to be inflexible and often end up costing you more than necessary due to their bigger overhead costs.

## 9 Select an organization that has demonstrated thought leadership.

Companies that recognize the importance of staying current with marketplace shifts and understand where the market is going are more aware of the challenges these situations present within the selling environment. Is the company you are considering well-published? Do they share thoughtful insights and fresh ideas? Organizations that are attentive to the ever-changing dynamics of the business world and actively promote forward thinking are in the best position to work with you and your team to achieve sustainable behavioral change.



## **10** Be sure to engage a firm that can also teach sales managers and executives how to manage and coach.

When training efforts fail, it's almost always because of a lack of management training and buy-in. A good sales training firm will have a strong training component that's specifically targeted to help sales managers support and implement the training program. You must ensure that sales managers are ready to lead the charge in your training effort.

## **11** Try to select a firm that will ask you the right questions.

It's important for you to ask questions of potential sales training firms, but it's equally important for them to question you. Some of the most critical questions are:

- **How strategic is this decision?**
- **Are you really committed for the long haul?**
- **Are you prepared to make a commitment that will have a dramatic impact through every level of the organization?**

## **12** Identify a firm that can create personalized learning and developmental plans for each individual participant.

Training is an intrinsic experience and it can't be effective if it's delivered from a one-size-fits-all perspective.

## **13** Training that is maximally effective will not focus solely on changing cognitive structure, but will instead change underlying skills, behaviors, and attitudes.

As a result of making positive changes to these three areas, the cognitive structure of your salespeople will subsequently change. Firms that attempt to change cognitive structure first and the underlying perceptions, behaviors and attitudes second will almost always produce sub-par results.



**14** Select a firm whose philosophy of selling is consistent with yours and that of your organization.

When the philosophies don't match, any sales training efforts provided will fail.

**15** Select a firm whose processes and systems are state-of-the-art, yet not too abstract or theoretical for street-smart use.

Remember, sales is an action-oriented science, not a reflective, theoretical field of study. When sales training becomes overly academic, training participants will lose interest and won't be able to realize the performance improvements that will allow you to recoup the cost of your investment.

**16** Select a firm that is constantly upgrading, retooling and revising its tools and systems.

Sales is a constantly evolving science (that, when practiced correctly, becomes an art). Don't make the mistake of hiring a firm whose system hasn't changed to reflect current sales realities. You need a sales force that can keep up with an increasingly sophisticated customer, and that means you need an agile sales training provider that can move you forward with changing trends and innovations.

**17** Work with a firm that eagerly offers extensive and significant references related to performance, timely delivery, high quality, measurable performance, and reinforcement tools.

Make sure that you receive references from organizations that are similar to yours in terms of size, type of sale, and (least importantly) industry.

**18** Select a firm that has had experience rolling out programs that are similar in size, scope, and breadth to the one you are seeking.

Many sales training firms focus on large programs, while others focus on smaller-scale ones. Select one with expertise that matches what you're trying to accomplish.







**19** Try to select a firm whose research has been borne out in published works, articles, trade journals, professional publications, and related documents.

Ask to see books, journals, and articles produced by the organizations. Third party validation of the system that any organization advocates goes a long way to supporting its potential in your organization.

**20** Consider visiting the organization's facility to determine staff size and capability, technical support systems, depth of services, ability to service your account, and level of professionalism.

Make sure they can provide the level of ongoing support you and your team will need in order to be effective. Successful sales training requires more than an entertaining facilitator. A full-scale sales training effort will require extensive back-office support on the part of the training firm. Be sure it exists before proceeding too far.





**21** Ensure that the firm has sufficient depth in their field training staff to guarantee you will have adequate coverage.

There's nothing worse than a sales training firm that can't deliver the training due to a shortage of staff. Ask about contingency plans in case the primary facilitator isn't available. Find out if there are additional facilitators available to cover your training in the event that you need them.

**22** Make arrangements to actually experience a training session.

Be weary of either too much role-play or too much theory. Sales training must provide real-world, hard-hitting information and insight. When a training program offers that, the trainees are much more likely to implement what they're trained to do. And that means more return for your training dollars.

**23** Select a firm that is not averse to allowing you to conduct a pilot program to determine the efficiency and receptivity of your sales force to their staff and delivery systems.

While such a program might be difficult to arrange, total cultural change needs to be handled carefully in order to be maximally effective. A pilot program may be the only way to ensure buy-in from the entire organization.



## Conclusion

If you're investing resources in a sales training initiative, give the project the best chance of success by selecting an outsourced provider that's the right fit for your organization. The Brooks Group understands that your sales organization is unique, and your sales enablement strategy should be as well. We partner with you to understand where you are today –and where you want to be in the future –to develop a path to sustained high sales performance.

Discover how the Maximum IMPACT Sales Enablement approach can help your organization achieve your short and long-term sales effectiveness goals with a plan that grows as you do.



## Maximum IMPACT Sales Enablement

DISCOVER THE POWER OF MISE

### Key Takeaways:

- **Look for a firm that provides customized service.**
- **Pick a firm that offers ongoing coaching and reinforcement systems.**
- **Select an organization that has demonstrated thought leadership.**
- **Try to select a firm that will ask you the right questions.**
- **Select a firm that is constantly upgrading, retooling and revising its Tools and systems.**





## About The Brooks Group

Founded in 1977, The Brooks Group is an award-winning B2B sales training company focused on bringing practical, straightforward solutions to your sales force selection and training challenges.

The Brooks Group provides a suite of proven sales and sales management development programs, industry-leading reinforcement tools, and best-in-class assessments.

### **For more information**

The Brooks Group can be reached by phone at (800) 633-7762, by email at [Contact@TheBrooksGroup.com](mailto:Contact@TheBrooksGroup.com) or online at [TheBrooksGroup.com](http://TheBrooksGroup.com).



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