



## An EcSell Institute Case Study

# *Real-Life Impact of **Sales Coaching** on **Sales Results***



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### WHO WE ARE

EcSell Institute provides strategies for continuous improvement by showing our clients how to apply the latest research, technology, and best practices in leadership and sales coaching, and by involving them in a network of the top sales management minds. Why? Because we know that improving a sales manager's ability to coach and lead has the biggest impact on sales team results.

[Contact us](#) to learn more.

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### Introduction

In the sales industry, the pinnacle indicator to assess performance is sales goal attainment. Based on this number, success is pronounced, a gamut of decisions is made, and plans for the health of the business are devised. This single outcome has implications that stretch throughout an organization. This finish line assessment, or the quota that is achieved, is common across the sales industry.

**What is not common, however, is a quantifiable way to understand the factors working behind the scenes that drive these sales outcomes.** More specifically, as sales managers are the key driving force behind sales team performance, it would seem that a systematic way to measure the performance of these drivers would be fundamental when attempting to understand how sales goal attainment is (or is not) achieved.

In this case study, we use the sales goal attainment and sales manager quality and sales manager activity data for a typical EcSell Institute client. By doing so, we are able to take a closer look into the pivotal role the sale manager plays and the impact of organizational value and focus towards this role on sales outcomes.

### Data Sources

To start, this analysis uses an assessment of sales manager coaching quality. We use data gathered by the EcSell Institute as part of the Through the Eyes of the Sales Rep survey (TTEOTR) to empirically measure this construct. TTEOTR is a web-based survey administered to sales reps of EcSell client organizations. The purpose of this survey is to gather data about experiences and beliefs from the sales rep regarding coaching behaviors carried out by their sales manager. Over the years, we have surveyed thousands of sales rep on this instrument. The most recent of this survey is comprised of 67 total items with this analysis using the responses of over 600 sales reps across nine organizations. To



## An EcSell Institute Case Study

calculate sales coaching quality, 21 items from this survey are examined. The proportion of these items that receive a positive score using the responses from sales reps comprise the sales coaching quality score. Potential scores for this item range from 0%, or exhibiting no high performance coaching behaviors, to 100%, or displaying each behavior found to impact coaching performance based on previous EcSell Institute research. A mean coaching quality score for EcSell Institute clients across a variety of organizational sizes and industries is approximately 71%.

Additionally, data about completion of high performance sales coaching activities were collected through the One-Up Coaching Cloud, which is a web-based tool designed to provide sales teams a structured tool to organize, track and store information regarding activities of sales team leaders with the individuals on their sales team. Examples of the types of activities that can be facilitated by One-Up include one-to-one meetings between the sales manager and sales rep, team meetings, sales call evaluations, joint calls, etc.

This specific case study examines the outcomes of sales coaching quality and sales coaching quantity (frequency) against sales goal attainment for a large sales organization in the mutual insurance industry.

### **Two data points are compared:**

(1) January through June, 2015, which occurred during the first year of the

company's partnership with EcSell Institute ("Year One") and  
(2) January through June, 2016, which occurred during the second year of the company's partnership with EcSell Institute ("Year Two").

These time points are used as they allow us to take a closer look at the interactions of coaching quality, quantity and quota longitudinally. By examining these three variables at two different points in time within the same company, we are able to gain a better understanding of how these variables interact.

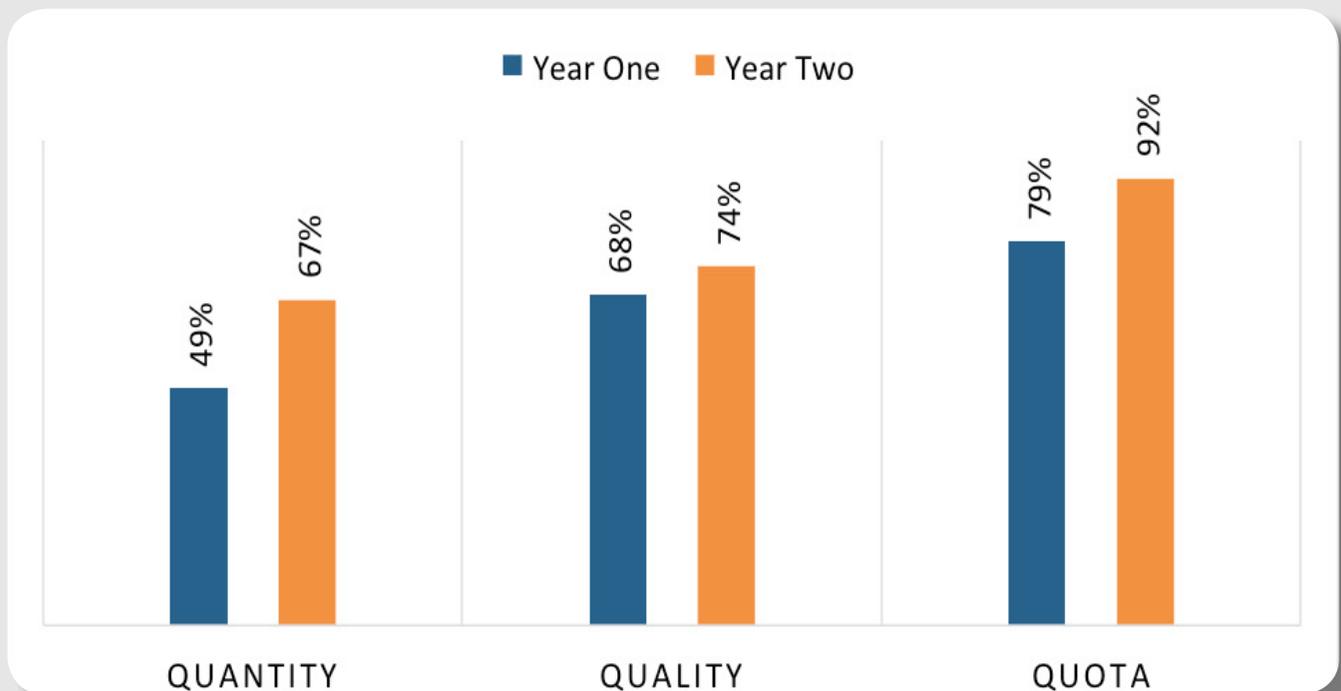
### **Findings**

The result of this case study are found in Table 1 on the following page. Here, we see that all three of our focal variables (sales coaching quality, sales coaching quantity, and sales goal attainment or quota) increased between Year One and Year Two.

- The sales coaching quality score, or the proportion of sales coaching best practices exhibited by the sales manager had a 9% increase between Year One (68%) and Year Two (74%).
- An even larger increase, 37%, is seen in completion of sales coaching activities with only 49% of a higher performance coaching activities being completed during the Year One period compared to 67% during Year Two.

## An EcSell Institute Case Study

Table 1. Sales Coaching Quality and Quantity Compared to Sales Quota across Year One and Year Two.



- Finally, and most crucially, gains in quality and quantity correspond with increased sales for this organization. The percent to sales goal at Year One was 79% and moves to 92% at Year Two. **Stated differently, the improvements in how well sales leaders are coaching their sales teams and how often they are coaching corresponds with 16% increased sales for this EcSell Institute client.**

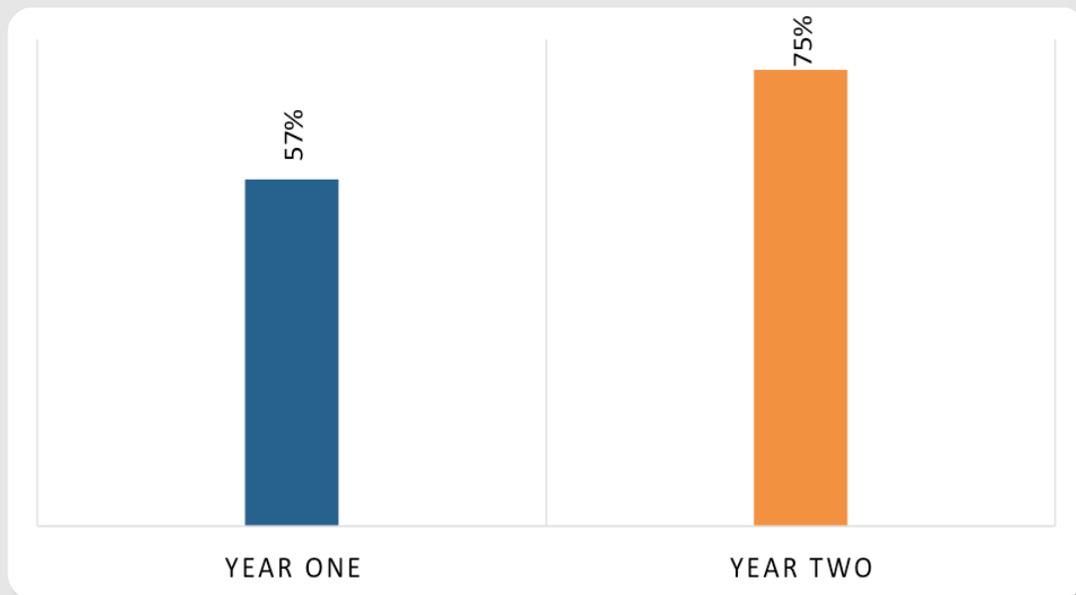
These findings are similar to outcomes found within other EcSell Institute client organizations.

The impact of these enhancements in sales coaching performance is highlighted even further when looking at a specific high performance coaching activity such as one-to-one meetings.

In Table 2 on the following page, we see that the number of one-to-one meetings that were scheduled to take place during Year One and that were indeed completed is 57%. In Year Two, 75% of one-to-one meetings were completed. **These findings translate into a 32% increase in one-to-one meetings within one year of engagement with the One-Up Coaching Cloud.**

As these figures indicate, numerically speaking, greater sales coaching impacts sales rep performance.

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*Table 2.  
One-to-One  
Meeting  
Frequency at  
Year One and  
Year Two.*

Qualitative data gathered through the TTEOTR survey support this importance of the sales manager role as well.

Figure 1 on the following page contains sampled quotations directly offered by sales reps as part of this survey asking about their sales manager's effectiveness. These examples show that not only is the simple volume of the coaching activities important, but that there is meaningful relationships being built and impactful guidance being created through these sales manager and sales rep interactions.

### Improvement Strategy

To achieve these marked increases in the improvement of their coaching quantity and coaching quality, the client organization

engaged in a two-year strategic effort to better train and equip their front-line sales managers to become high performance sales coaches. Beginning with a two-day on-site training, the sales managers were introduced to EcSell Institute's high performance coaching activities and behaviors. After the initial training, the organization took part in monthly best practice calls to continue to increase their understanding and effective implementation of these coaching activities. Two additional day-long, on-site trainings were completed at the six-month and 18-month mark in the partnership with EcSell Institute.

Throughout this process, sales managers used the One-Up Coaching Cloud to execute and track their execution of high performance coaching activities. Coaching quality was measured at three different time during the two-year time frame using the Through the

## An EcSell Institute Case Study

### Figure 1. Sales Coaching Quotations From Sales Reps

*"[My sales manager] has been there for me in good times and bad. We talk often and he cares about more than just the numbers, but our career is the number one priority that leads to other successes."*

*"My direct manager is the epitome of a servant leader and is always learning and growing."*

*"My manager is an excellent listener and always strives to address any issues or hurdles which may impede the sales process. She is a 100% vested in helping me to succeed."*

Eyes of the Rep survey. Most importantly, senior sales leadership received regular reports on the sales managers' execution of coaching – both from a quality and quantity standpoint – so they could offer ongoing support and guidance.

### Summary

In this case study, our research findings clearly demonstrate that an increase in the occurrence of high performance sales coaching activities (such as one-to-one meetings, sales call evaluations, etc.) and improved sales coaching quality produces higher sales team quota outcomes. Simply, when efforts are made within an organization to enhance how sales teams are led by their sales manager, sales increase. **In this specific instance, sales for the organization using the same metric during similar periods in the sales cycle increased 16% within one year.**

The behaviors and actions of sales team leaders within your organization impacts sales results. Readers of this case study should take away two points from this paper.

- First, when the importance of the interactions between a sales team leader and their reps is emphasized and developed within an organization, an increase in overall sales team performance can be expected.
- Second, a vehicle for measuring and tracking both how well each sales leader performs both in terms of how well they lead their teams along with how often they lead their teams is a crucial component to understanding sales performance.

With this type of information, C-suite level leaders are better able to make decisions and strategies that drive their team to even higher sales results.

## About the Author



### STACIA JORGENSEN Director of Research

Stacia Jorgensen brings an array of experiences in data collection and analysis to EcSell. She has over 13 years of experience running a non-profit academic research organization and has expertise in both qualitative and quantitative data collection methodologies.

Stacia specializes in collaborating with clients to meet the data needs of their specific sales team while providing information that is easy to use and understand.

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