
Sales Professional



Chapter 6:

Sales Professional

Sales Professional Job Description

- A. Responsible for the selling of lifelong learning program's client contracts
- B. Reports to CEO/director
- C. Member of program's management team (CEO/director, operations professional, promotions professional, sales professional, and programming professional)
- D. Specific job responsibilities:
 - Make contact with potential clients
 - Opening doors for future sales
 - Service present clients with information and support
 - Develop final contracts
 - Price contracts by determining a price and negotiating with the client
 - Work with programming professional and staff to develop products and with operations professional and staff to produce products
 - Analyze information supplied by operations professional, as well as doing environmental scanning of community
 - Be visible in the community by speaking to groups and managing open houses
 - Manage sales managers
- E. Evaluation:
 - Meeting income goals and operating margin goals
 - Client satisfaction
 - Relationship of sales contacts to contracts
 - Accomplishment of personal quarterly objectives set with CEO/director.
 - Success of quarterly objectives set with sales managers
 - Peer evaluations done by other members of management team

F. Skills:

- Organized and capable of following up with clients
- Fearless and able to overcome rejection
- Able to work as part of a team
- An understanding of the lifelong learning business
- Ability to develop contracts
- Negotiation skills

Sales Professional

Contract training has become an important component of many lifelong learning programs. Selling services and training to businesses and organizations is both profitable and a great way of generating additional visibility.

Most lifelong learning programs make selling contracts the responsibility of all professional staff and, in particular, programmers. This strategy has not been successful for two reasons.

1. Most programmers do not have the selling skills needed to develop relationships with prospective clients and close contracts.
2. Selling contracts is not a programmer's priority and thus the time needed to research leads and develop contracts is never available.

Lifelong learning programs that have succeeded in selling contracts are the ones that have hired people solely dedicated to prospecting and selling. In many cases, a program can generate all the contracts it can handle with just one full-time salesperson.

The Right Person

Finding the right person to be your salesperson can make the difference in having an average or an outstanding contract programs division. A good salesperson should have the following make-up:

1. Your salesperson must have an adequate ego. Salespeople feed on their successes and they need to exude confidence. Clients like people who are positive. The ego cannot be the only component of the salesperson's personality but without a strong ego, a salesperson will not be willing to take the necessary risks to contact new clients or follow up with past clients.
2. The lifelong learning business is different from selling widgets. Your salesperson needs to understand the business of training adults, as well as the products. Selling services and training requires a salesperson to be up on the terminology and trends. Your salesperson does not need to be an expert, but

she needs to be able to understand enough to open the door to get your client talking to your experts or product developers (programmers and/or instructors).

3. Your salesperson must be fearless. You cannot have thin skin and be a salesperson. There are lots of rejections, as well as repeated follow up with busy clients. Nothing is more frustrating than developing a client for six months only to have them back out because “there is not enough money in the budget.” A good salesperson can bounce back.
4. At the same time, a salesperson needs to be a good team player. He cannot succeed without the support of others on staff. The programmers and instructors develop the products and the operations team supplies the materials and, many times, administers the contract.

Compensation

Most salespeople sell because they are motivated by the possibility of making a good income. Outside the world of lifelong learning, many salespeople earn more than the people they report to. They are a very important asset to the company and are worth the money they are being paid.

Most lifelong learning salespeople receive a flat salary. Although the salary may be good, it is normally not enough to motivate extraordinary results. Thus some salespeople receive a bonus for reaching certain income levels. Many times this bonus is shared with others on staff. A few programs are paying salespeople commissions. A salesperson might get a base salary and then receive a percentage on all the income they generate. The greater the percentage (not normally exceeding 10%), the lower the base salary.

Accountability

Offering incentives and commissions is certainly a good way of increasing sales, but the total sales generated should not be the only measuring tool.

A salesperson can go out and sell many contracts, but

what good are the contracts if the operating margin is not adequate? The standard operating margin for life-long learning contracts ranges between 50 percent and 70 percent. When setting bonuses and incentives with a salesperson, the payout must be dependent both on income and operating margin. These totals/percentages would be agreed on ahead of time.

Another measurement is the amount of income a salesperson should be able to generate. The benchmark being used is 12 times their salary. If a salesperson is being paid \$50,000, the expectation is that they will generate a minimum of \$600,000 in sales. It is not until that income goal is reached that the bonus or incentive kicks in.

Product Development

Many times contracts that are sold are “off the shelf” — they have been developed for another client or are a generic product that was developed and promoted to numerous potential clients.

The increase in contract training is not coming from the standard products, but instead from customized products. Customization requires development time and dollars. Salespeople should not be the ones doing the development.

This is when team selling happens. The salesperson needs to work with the programmers to do the development. A programmer or an instructor would be the one who works with the client to develop the product.

Once the scope of the product is outlined, the salesperson is given the costing information from the developer and a price is developed. Developers do not negotiate a price. This is done by the salesperson.

Organized

A good salesperson is organized and focused. Keeping track of discussions with clients; following-up with useful information; and following trends critical to clients are examples of ways a salesperson stays in tune with present and potential customers.

To be effective, the salesperson must be able to spend most of her time out making contacts and developing relationships. This cannot be done effectively if the salesperson has poor record keeping skills and does not consistently stay in contact with people she has been communicating with.

Make the Commitment

A good salesperson can develop very profitable business for your program. The money generated can support other, lower-operating-margin programs, as well as providing surplus dollars to support future growth.

To be successful in the business of contract training, a salesperson must be given quality products and time to sell.