



Breakthrough Ideas

“Old Dogs” Can Learn New Tricks

I recently worked with a client organization on negotiation skills. The group I worked with sells a service that is very complex. Their agreements have many moving parts, making it a very challenging sale. Everyone was reasonably senior in their sales or operating positions with lots of experience negotiating complex deals.

After spending a few hours going over what the most successful negotiators do- with input from the group, we did a case study. It was designed with senior management's help to be very representative of their negotiations. One of the teams did not do as well as they or I would have expected. They had one of the organization's most successful sales people leading the team. Nonetheless they had quite a learning experience, realizing that they needed to listen better, stay on plan (they bounced around between topics), clarify roles more clearly. Interestingly, all of these topics were covered in the session prior to the case study and the team members “knew” that these were important elements of effective negotiation.

How can you forestall this kind of problem?

1. Provide opportunities for new skill building on a regular basis
2. Give people a chance to practice using the skills in a realistic situation in which there is no real business on the line.
3. Coach people- especially in low risk live deal situations- so they can do the selling, you can provide feedback and no major deals are in jeopardy.
4. Provide opportunities for your top people to be role models- in training sessions, meeting or mentoring up-and-coming colleagues.

The point is that even senior people can learn from training- if it engages and challenges them. Combining interactive content delivery with exercises that test the ability to use the ideas provides powerful opportunities to really learn... and bring new insights into ones daily job.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

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Accelerating Revenue Generation!