

Automotive Sales Training That Gets Results

by Jerry Rosen

Automotive sales training is the collection of things done to help sales consultants or other retail sales team members gain mastery in the skills, concepts, behaviors, and attitudes that enhance their expertise in influencing prospects to make positive vehicle purchase decisions. The fundamental purpose of automotive sales training is to improve an individual's sales performance, create value for the customer, and increase profitability at the dealership.

Automotive sales training concentrates on how salespeople and potential customers interact. It's a process which provides information, tools, resources, and techniques that help sales team members learn what they must know to persuasively present the dealership's products (vehicles, accessories, financial services, etc.) in terms that customers will understand and respond to.

Making Automotive Sales Training Effective

Automotive sales executives and top sales trainers agree that to be highly successful automotive sales training programs must be linked with the dealership's key business goals. To establish that connection, each member of the dealership sales team should be able to answer this question, "How should we sell to best meet the conditions of today's automotive marketplace?"

As we all know, today's complex and highly competitive automotive retail environment is undergoing rapid and dramatic change. For example:

- New technologies/growth of the Internet.
- Proliferation of non-traditional retailers.
- Consumers are more knowledgeable, sophisticated, and demanding.
- Changing customer profiles/demographics.

Some dealerships have been able to provide sales training to address the question posed above in a way that is easily understood and communicated throughout the dealership. Others, to their misfortune, have not. Creating this unity of purpose and message through sales training isn't easy. But doing so provides a dealership with a tremendous competitive edge.

Four Types of Automotive Sales Training

There are four types of automotive sales training, each with advantages. Using the right blend increases your overall sales training effectiveness, which translates into higher sales success rates, profitability, and improved customer loyalty.

1. Team-based sales meetings. These typically are led by Sales Managers. Use sales meetings to provide:

- A forum for information transfer, problem solving, and motivation.
- Alignment between dealer principal/management expectations and what's happening on the showroom floor.

2. Interactive group workshops. These typically are led by professional sales trainers or other qualified facilitators. Use group workshops to provide:

- Opportunities to learn new selling skills.
- Opportunities to role play (practice) new selling skills in a supportive and controlled environment.
- Constructive feedback from peers and session leaders.

3. One-on-one coaching/mentoring. This is where a senior salesperson takes a less experienced or less successful colleague under his/her wing on a formal or informal basis. Use coaching/mentoring to provide:

- Maintenance and reinforcement of selling skills learned in workshops or sales meetings.

4. Joint sales sessions with customers on the showroom floor. Use joint sales sessions to provide:

- A highly effective way for top performers to model successful selling techniques.
- Real-time feedback in real-world sales situations with customers.

For More Information On Sales Training

For a broader/deeper perspective on these and related topics check out my books:

- Using Sales Training Best Practices To Increase Sales
- Developing Performance-Based Sales Training To Increase Sales

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