



# How to Buy Sales Training





## HOW TO BUY SALES TRAINING

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"Sales Training" is a \$60 Billion Industry.

Type in "Sales Training" when conducting a Google search today and it will likely yield over 20 million results. Now this does not necessarily mean that there are that many companies to choose from, although it may feel like that at times, however what it does mean is that there is no shortage of options for you to choose from when consider engaging a 3<sup>rd</sup> party training company for their services.

So - what criteria should you consider when sourcing a sales training company for their services? There are several, 11 to be exact so let's get started:

### 1. THE CONTENT

"Sales Training" is very broad, so criteria # 1 has to be the content itself. Available content includes: Prospecting, Social Selling, Qualifying Skills, Business Acumen, Objection Handling, Communication Skills, Presentation Skills, Sales Management Process, Negotiating, Closing Skills and Keynote speeches to name a few.

Not every "Sales Training" company is a **subject matter expert** when it comes to every sales skill set required. Nor does every company have a passion to teach each topic either therefore they don't facilitate it that often.

I encourage you to engage with a company that specializes in your area of interest first and foremost.



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## 2. PROOF OF CONCEPT

As noted earlier, there are several sales training options at your disposal. While each has their value proposition, applying the theory effectively to your sales environment is a huge must.

Make sure that your sales participants are able to apply the theory from the training to actual real-world opportunities **during the actual training itself**. If the company that you are considering is unable to offer this, you may want to consider another option as a theory-based session isn't likely to translate into application post-training.

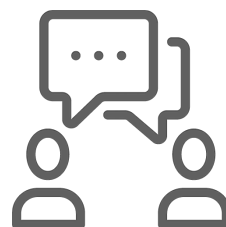
Given that we are creatures of habit, the training book will likely go in the desk and it will be back to business as usual within days. How do I know this? Because I've been guilty of doing that myself...



## 3. MANAGER COACHING

Whether your company has internal Sales Trainers or not, inquire with the company that you're considering as to how your Sales Managers will be trained on the content.

If your Managers and Team Leaders do not participate in the training with their teams and they are not coached in a way that will allow them to support and reinforce the training consistently post-facilitation, you may not be happy with the results over the long term. Your leaders cannot support and reinforce what they do not know.







#### 4. SUSTAINABILITY

We as humans are creatures of habit and for us to do anything different really takes a concerted effort; whether it is our diet, our relationships or simply our route home when we're done work for the day. We tend to do things the way we have always done them...

Does the Sales Training Company that you are considering offer a scope of work that will allow for and support sustainable change for you and your sales teams?

A 1 or 2-day workshop isn't likely to yield much change over the long term. An initial 6 to 12-month business partnership with a scope of work to align within that period is what I recommend.

This will allow you to measure the results as well as support any new personnel hired within that timeframe without having to negotiate a new agreement and find additional budget as training budgets are limited and scrutinized quite often.



#### 5. TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

Should your organization employ internal Sales Trainers, this is a must.

Training your Trainers will make it easier for the content to be implemented and supported on a consistent basis and this option will likely require a smaller investment from you and your company as well.

Whether you choose to certify your internal Sales Trainers is of course your choice, having the option to do so is the key to this one.





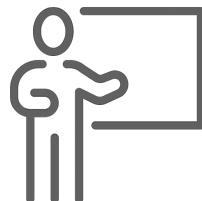
## 6. THE FACILITATOR

Does the facilitator of the training that you're considering actually sell as well?

There are many great facilitators out there that don't actually sell and this could be a negative for you. It is not uncommon for a sales rep to resist attending a training session and if during the training that rep discovers that the person coaching them doesn't apply the training themselves because they don't actually sell, credibility could dwindle.

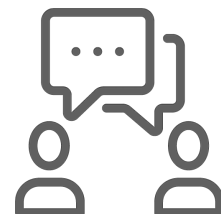
Some internal company Sales Trainers struggle with this unfortunately and it isn't any different when hiring an outside sales training company either.

You want to avoid a scenario where it is pretty clear that the Facilitator is simply speaking to what the book says to say. If the sales training company doesn't provide Facilitators that apply the training themselves as part of their job, you are vulnerable to losing the audience and receiving negative feedback from the them; and if you're the stakeholder of this training internally within your company, I know you want to receive positive feedback because your name is on it.



## 7. FACILITATION OPTIONS

As we experienced with the coronavirus outbreak in 2020, face-to-face and in-person, while the preferred choice for most of us, is not always available. Be sure that your training partner offers multiple facilitation options such as in-person, virtual, online and as previous mentioned via train-the-trainer.





## 8. RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Most companies do not have a pool of money allocated for sales training and for those that do have money allocated, a business case is typically required before approval is given to spend said money.

Return on Investment has never been more important to companies.

This should be crystal clear to you prior to moving forward. It's a very simple question to ask: "What % ROI can I expect from this training?"

If they respond with something like *"what is the cost to you if you don't do the training?"* that doesn't necessarily mean the training isn't for you, but it may be cause for concern.

Conversely, if the company that you are considering is able to calculate the expected ROI for you over a determined period of time and you're comfortable with their forecast, maybe you have found your partner.



## 9. A RESULTS-BASED PAYMENT OPTION

Investing in sales training can be a very expensive proposition for you. Most 1-day and 2-day sessions are \$10K+ and most facilitators command \$2K+ a day without a guarantee that their teachings will translate into you achieving your objectives.

Why not ask them if a payment based-on-results agreement is something they offer?

Their response will give you a very good indication of their mindset as it relates to their offering and you as a client.

**Note:** This is not the same as a money back guarantee offer.







## 10. MINDSET

This really should have been #1 on my list, but I digress...

Most sales training options focus on the "Mechanics" - the *"how to"* do a certain thing which is essential.

How to prospect, how to qualify, how to communicate, how to present, how to write an email, how to navigate a complex sales cycle, how to handle objections, how to negotiate and how to close. However what about "Mindset" - the *"why"* behind the how?

Mindset is a critical component to any sales training platform. I cannot stress this enough and should the company that you are considering not incorporate it as a big part of their proposed scope of work, you may want to continue looking.

## 11. MINDSET

Last but absolutely not least is **Your Mindset**. There are likely two thoughts going through your head when considering a sales training option for your company:

a.) *How much is this going to cost me/us?* or b.) *How much is this going to make me/us?*

If you enter into discussions looking at the training as an expense, that is perfectly fine as staying within an allocated budget is pretty much the norm in 2017; as long as your expectations are in line with the proposed services. You get what you pay for.

A 1-day session only will likely result in a positive experience for the participants, most will revert back to how they were doing it prior to the training almost immediately.

An agreement with monthly/quarterly support and Manager coaching will result in a cultural shift and result into application post-training. You're the stakeholder, so decide what works best for you while tempering expectations based on the quality and quantity of work that you move forward with.





Paul is the Managing Partner of Everest Performance Group Ltd. He works with a wide range of clients helping them increase their profitable revenue, gain new market share and develop their current and future sales leaders.

He lives in Toronto with his wife and their two children.

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