



Sales Training That Works

Developing, Implementing, Managing and Leading Strategic Selling Initiatives

Who Are We and Why Should You Read This?

We're PROFIT*consulting* a PROFIT*systems*, Inc. company specializing in business development solutions for the home furnishings industry. PROFIT*systems* has been in the home furnishings business as the Stark family business since 1897 and operated stores for more than 90 years before devoting all efforts to the operating systems side of the business over 20 years ago. PROFIT*systems* is the most widely used operating system in the retail furniture industry with over 700 users companies.

Now, we've gathered the most experienced and forward-thinking people in our industry to bring our performance improvement efforts to the selling floor where everything begins and where our clients tell us they need the most help. As you read on, you'll come to understand why we believe we've got the best possible sales management and sales training programs available anywhere. We'll start off with an idea you probably know, but perhaps haven't seen expressed so simply – Why sales training doesn't work.

Why Sales Training Doesn't Work

After having worked with many dozens of companies in the retail furniture industry over the last ten years, including some of the biggest successes and failures, I've learned no more pervasive truth than that sales training efforts simply aren't effective most of the time. As a person who makes his living developing, selling and delivering training to both salespeople and managers, I've had to understand the reasons for this failure or face an ever-diminishing market for my products.

Let me modify the above statements slightly; sometimes, for some individuals, training does work. It does strike a responsive chord and causes important changes in the way some salespeople interact with customers and in how some managers lead their teams. There are always clear-thinking, open-minded people who seek new, sensible ideas about how to think about and perform their jobs more effectively. However, these people represent a small percentage of the total number who need to learn and to change in order for sales and management training to be deemed successful.



Sales training doesn't work because there is almost never a well documented selling or management strategy that explains how things should be done in *this* company. There are no documented procedures detailing what salespeople and managers are supposed to do *in this company* to achieve the company's goals. Trainees will consider training to do certain things to be merely *suggestions* without compelling reasons to do them and without a strong connection to a thoughtful company strategy. Next, without a management structure and systems that support the strategy and the training *on the floor*, no training that requires behavioral changes will stick.

This is why, when you send your salespeople to outside training or bring in a famous trainer, not much changes in the long run. There's simply no connection between what the trainer tells them and "the way we do things around here." Soon after training ends, the gravity of institutional prejudices brings things back to the way they've always been.

When you hear someone say "We use the ABCD system" or the "XYZA method" you know that nothing will be permanent. It's someone else's system – not ours, we just use it for now (and, oh yeah, we've "fixed" it to better suit our needs). But, it is important to have a system.

What is Strategy and Who Needs It?

Strategy is defined in my dictionary as "The art of devising or employing plans or stratagems toward a goal". The term "stratagem" is defined as a "cleverly devised scheme for gaining an end." Strategy is the long-range view of how a goal will be achieved, a broad plan applied to an entire initiative. Strategy, in our context of sales and sales management, defines how we'll deal with our customers and our employees to achieve our long-range corporate goals.

Tactics, on the other hand, deal with the short-term, immediate methods salespeople use to deal with any specific customer within the overall strategy.

So, we're saying you need a plan for dealing with customers. Every business does, but most small businesses in our industry don't bother to go through the process of clearly defining this plan, or strategy, thereby leaving their most important strategy – dealing with customers – up to the individual salespeople to determine for themselves.

PROFIT*consulting* will help you build workable selling and sales management strategies based on deep, first-hand, on-the-floor experience and a large existing body of knowledge (SMART*selling*) around how to deal with today's home furnishings customers. Our aim will be to improve the two primary factors of the selling equation over which your salespeople have the most control – close ratio and average sale.



In your stores, where personal selling is the backbone of the business, it is imperative that you, the owner, and your managers have a high degree of influence on what happens in the relationship between your salespeople and your customers.

Training to Your Strategy – Developing Alignment

Once you develop your selling strategy, you can communicate your plan to everyone in your company. Use strategic definitions to let everyone know what kind of company you want to have and how you, the owner, want your employees to deal with your customers and how you want your managers to deal with your employees.

Next, you can develop specialized training to ensure that salespeople do the right things for your customers and that your managers do the right things for your employees. From strategy to training to deployment, everything will be in alignment.

We'll use our SMART*selling* steps to provide the basis for your strategy and together we'll build a powerful selling system to deliver your strategy to each and every customer.

Implementing Your Strategy – Leading Change

When business owners and managers think strategically and develop new strategies for dealing with customers and achieving goals, it always means that there will be required changes, sometimes large, in the way people work. Owners must become change leaders while managers must manage what salespeople actually do on the floor with their customers. Both have to work together to make the things taught in strategy-based training actually happen.

Understanding Why Efforts to Change Fail

Even after all of the above has been done it is still likely that your efforts to change your company's culture will fail if you don't understand the reasons why business owners fail more often than they succeed at changing organizations. Among the primary reasons why such initiatives fail are: Allowing too much complacency, failing to create a powerful guiding coalition among managers, not communicating the vision constantly and powerfully, failing to remove obstacles, failure to create short-term wins, declaring victory too soon – and, all of these have to be dealt with if you are to be successful.

PROFIT*consulting* will help you take all the right steps to ensure that change is properly introduced, communicated, driven and institutionalized in your company. We won't let you slide back into the old ways and will provide you with ways to keep everyone clearly focused on the future and new initiatives for profitability. Mostly, we'll coach you, the owner, of how to become, and remain, your company's change champion.



Principles of Selling Home Furnishings – Strategic Foundations

Home furnishings selling is unlike most other retail selling in its dealing with complex consumer motivations and lack of consumer knowledge about our products and how they can be used to enhance the beauty and comfort of people's homes. Customers in retail furniture stores are not looking for any specific thing, they're looking for things that will help them create beautiful, comfortable, functional rooms where their families can live and be happy.

Our business is not about furniture - it's about rooms

This simple principle, when adopted by retailers as the basis for developing their customer engagement strategy will lead to different ideas about how to deal with customers. All furniture retailers know that while many people shop their stores, only a small percentage of them actually make a purchase. Our extensive experience in measuring traffic and close rates indicates that the average level of performance is that fewer than 20% of a furniture store's shoppers actually make a purchase – sometimes far fewer.

Something is wrong in many furniture stores and, in general, it has nothing to do with the products they carry, but everything to do with the sales processes they use.

If your customers are interested in their rooms and your salespeople talk only about your products, there will be a disconnection between your salespeople and your customers. If the customer cannot envision how any specific product will fit into her specific room, you will not make a sale – the customer will not buy. Our numbers show that this happens 80% of the time.

At **PROFITconsulting** we'll help you and your staff understand what's wrong or missing from your selling approach and we'll offer powerful, time-proven solutions and methods to be used by all salespeople with all customers to provide significant improvements in sales revenue generation.

We'll provide written training materials and deliver 8 hours of sales training for all salespeople that is specifically targeted toward critical skills they will be able to use immediately that will produce higher close rates and average sale values.



Your Biggest Opportunity – Customers Who Don't Buy

In any month, hundreds of customers visit your store, review your lineup, interact with salespeople, and leave without buying anything. Some of them go to competitive stores and buy there, but in fact, those competitive stores also close only 20% or fewer of their shoppers, so many of your customers don't buy anywhere – for now.

If you could bring back only 10% of the customers who don't buy who *would not otherwise have returned* (remember, some percentage of each month's normal traffic is already be-back customers), you can increase your sales dramatically. Don't let customers with whom you've worked become your competitor's customers.

PROFITconsulting and TRAX have joined forces to provide you with a way to ensure that your salespeople follow up with each of these customers in one way or another and, for the first time in our industry, we've automated the process in an affordable, well-designed system that allows for simple, easy use and management. TRAX records all customer contact information, provides an action-scheduling tool and automatically reminds salespeople and managers of every follow up action opportunity.

Managing for High Performance

Your management system and daily actions must be perfectly aligned with the things you expect your salespeople to do and the results you wish to achieve. In developing your selling strategy we developed your sales management strategy concurrently, ensuring this alignment of purpose and structure.

In our extensive experience we've learned that success is not as much a function of what the salespeople do, as it is a function of what the sales *manager* does. For this reason we place a lot of importance on sales management training and development. The things we're asking sales managers to do are simple and possible for them to do. The TRAX system will be invaluable in helping them perform at top effectiveness, providing them with information and tools never before available anywhere in our industry.

We've got to make management systems-driven rather than just personality-driven if we expect consistent, high levels of performance from the manager and her team. Let the system run the department and the people run the system and you'll take all of the uncertainty out of the sales performance improvement equation. You and your managers will know what's wrong and you'll have a toolbox filled with intelligent tools to fix it.

We'll provide you with clearly written job descriptions for both managers and salespeople that allow for expectations to be clearly spelled out and, if necessary, changed as often as new goals or expectations are developed.



How PROFIT consulting and TRAX Will Help You Through All This

- We'll guide you through the development of your strategy providing input from our extensive body of knowledge around retail home furnishings sales and document it for you based on solid strategy development principles
- We'll show you how to capture the power of TRAX metrics to understand current performance by salesperson, review past trends and establish your operating baseline
- We'll help you set new performance goals to improve your sales revenue by as much as 20% with no additional traffic
- We'll design and develop your sales management system and the training that is required based on principles specific to home furnishings
- We'll develop your salesperson training using the most time-tested, customer-centered principles specifically related to how customers shop for and buy home furnishings
- We'll perform all required training for salespeople and managers at your location and coach on the floor to get you started
- We'll help you to ensure that the new ways of thinking and working become part of your culture – "The way we do things here"
- We'll ensure that you avoid the pitfalls and costly mistakes that cause most new initiatives to fail and ...
- We'll **GUARANTEE** your results – we'll get you the results you want or we'll refund the price of our programs. No other consulting company in our industry even comes close to this guarantee.

Call us today at (800) 888-5565 for more information regarding how you can get started on building a new company culture and strategy and sell more than ever before with no increase in advertising.