



ISMM survey into sales training needs

Summary

Notes:

- In all the questions “formal training” was defined as training leading to a nationally-recognised qualification with the same status as an A level, an NVQ, a degree or an MBA.
- Percentages represent the percentage of all respondents who selected each option.

Which of the following best describes your role in your organisation?

Sales Director	31%
National / Regional Sales Manager	22%
Sales Manager / Area Sales Manager	14%
Sales Team Leader	1%
Sales Representative	6%
Telesales Team Leader / Supervisor	0%
Telesales Agent	1%
Other	25%

In which sector do you work?

Accountancy / Business Services	3%
Advertising, Marketing and PR	5%
Finance (including banking, investment and insurance)	7%
Construction	6%
Energy / Utilities	2%
Engineering	6%
Environment	2%
Health / Pharmaceuticals	4%
Hospitality / Catering	2%
Transport / Logistics (including vehicle sales)	3%
Human Resources / Recruitment	5%
Information Technology	8%
Manufacturing	13%
Retail	3%
Telecoms	5%
Training	10%
Tourism	1%
Other	15%

What types of sales training have you received in the last three years?

Training that lead to a nationally recognised qualification: Delivered in-company by an in-company trainer	2%
Training that lead to a nationally recognised qualification: Delivered in-company by an external trainer	5%
Training that lead to a nationally recognised qualification: Delivered offsite (e.g. at a college or university or by distance learning)	10%
Training that did not lead to a nationally recognised qualification: Delivered in-company by an in-company trainer	28%
Training that did not lead to a nationally recognised qualification: Delivered in-company by an external trainer	34%
Training that did not lead to a nationally recognised qualification: Delivered offsite	31%
I haven't received any sales training in the last three years	27%

People could select multiple statements, so the percentages add up to more than 100.

What value do you place on *formal* sales training?

Essential	45%
Desirable	45%
Not sure	8%
No value	2%

What value would you place on sales training not leading to a nationally recognised qualification, but delivered by a professional body, such as the ISMM?

Essential	24%
Desirable	60%
Not sure	14%
No value	2%

Who do you think should receive *formal* sales training?

Sales Directors	32%
National / Regional Sales Managers	41%
Sales Managers / Area Sales Managers	67%
Sales Team Leaders	43%
Sales Representatives	73%
Telesales Team Leaders / Supervisors	21%
Telesales Agents	18%
Trainee Sales Representatives / Trainee Telesales Agents	38%
Other	2%

People could select more than one group, so the percentages add up to more than 100.

In which areas of the sales process do you think *formal* sales training should be made available?

Building and retaining effective sales relationships	43%
Closing	42%
Sales techniques	42%
Best practice in selling	36%
Handling objections	34%
Sales process skills (including account / opportunity management)	33%
Building and delivering customer service and customer care	31%
Time management / prioritisation skills	30%
Developing and delivering professional sales presentations	29%
Managing and facilitating negotiations	26%
Coaching skills for line managers	25%
Strategy and planning	25%
Action planning	24%
Generating and following-up leads	23%
Commercial / business understanding	22%
People management skills	22%
Selling products / services face to face	19%
Ethical/responsible selling	16%
Developing proposals/quotations	15%
Marketing skills for sales people	15%
Motivation techniques	15%
Self-confidence and resilience	14%
Creativity, innovation and flexibility	13%
Analytical skills	12%
Financial planning (forecasting / budgeting)	12%
Selling products / services over the telephone	10%
Written communication skills (report writing)	10%
Change management	7%
Knowledge and use of relevant IT	7%
Selling products / services in international markets	7%

People could select up to six statements, so the percentages add up to more than 100.

Note:

Most of the areas listed here were taken from the MSSSB Sales Standards Manual, which contains the National Occupational Standards for Sales. You can find more information on the Standards on the MSSSB website: www.msssb.org

Are there others areas which should be covered by *formal* sales training?

- Inter team / company communication.
- Team ethics.
- Body language.
- Discounting strategies.
- Competitor and market information gathering.
- The basics of communication - listening, asking appropriate questions, and so on.
- Selling solutions.
- Opening the sales presentation.
- Territory planning and management.
- Seminar skills.
- Online communication skills.
- Direct sales working with partner organisations
- 1 Basic business economics.
- 2 Pricing management.
- 3 Negotiation training.
- 4 Risk management.
- Selling in a recession.
- Understanding post sale expectations of customers.
- The seven steps of selling - product knowledge, prospecting, establishing needs, presenting, (closing & objection handling) after sales.
- Transactional analysis and body language.
- CRM systems.
- Selling into the public sector.
- NLP-type personal development training.
- Value-based selling.
- Language patterns in successful selling.
- Investigation and questioning techniques - especially digging beyond the first response to get to the real issues behind cause and effect leading to improved understanding and added value solutions.
- Negotiation skills.
- 1 Managing tenders and RFQs.
- 2 Effective networking.
- 3 Identifying and working with Decision Making Units.
- Link- and related selling, looking for opportunities to sell within other areas of a customer's business.
- The role of sales professionals in government.
- "Train the trainer".
- Lead generation.
- Understanding the customer perspective - what creates value and why
- Role of sales in business.
- The whole commissioning and negotiation cycle from both sides, including in the public sector.
- Telephone skills for both making appointments and for the telesales team.
- Qualifying leads.
- Emotional intelligence.
- "Learning how to learn".

- 1 developing the right selling attitude.
- 2 team building.
- 3 the business thinking skills of a CEO.
- 4 breaking and developing new markets.
- Investigating distributor profitability.
- Investigating product gross profit.
- Planning a sales cycle.
- Networking; prospects / colleagues / vendors - knowing the limitations and boundaries, do's and don'ts and how effective networking can enhance business development.
- The importance of contractual terms; a focus on financial accounting and the impact bad debts can have on company sales and profitability.
- The importance of accurate pipelines and good sales targeting.
- Understanding value, what it is, how to identify it, how to build the value proposition and how to deliver it properly.
- How to set and negotiate price.
- Resilience – the ability to self motivate.
- Building and maintaining a positive attitude.
- Strategic planning and management.
- Advanced people management.
- Project management.
- Defining and managing the demographic and macro-environmental issues of the market within which one is operating.
- Researching the industry of the potential buyer.
- Cultural differences and their importance in selling and maintaining relationships both in the UK and abroad.
- Question-based selling.
- Types of questions for the different stages in the sales cycle.
- Raising of proposal and bidding for projects.
- Education about what actually works in selling - through valid research - not just interviewing people asking what they think works in selling. There is a lot of material that is just conjecture.

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