

Developing Your Sales Leadership Capability

Description

Sales Leaders Wanted

Kaplan worked with a leading Financial Services Corporation to develop its global sales function as part of a Learning Academy.

The company was looking to achieve growth in their sales performance. To reach this goal, they needed their sales managers to become better at coaching their people and enabling success in their teams. Individual sales contributors needed to be less transactional and more consultative, and able to adopt a partnership mindset when dealing with clients.

The key factors behind Kaplan being selected were the ability to deliver global learning programmes at scale, the innovative nature of the solution, and the professionalism and experience in Account Management and Faculty.

The programme was more than just instilling sales skills – it was about changing behaviours that resulted in better performance. Kaplan’s learning philosophy is centred on developing technical and behavioural skills to empower people to make better decisions and drive commercial performance.

Awakening Leadership Skills

Only developmental interventions that are aligned to the organisation’s culture can build long-lasting skills and facilitate a change in mindset and behaviour.

After reaching the agreement, a collaborative design process took place to align Kaplan’s solution with the business requirements. A blended solution, combining face-to-face and online learning, was the most effective in creating impact and embedding learning back to the workplace.

The solution emphasised the need for selfreflection and ownership amongst sales leaders. They had to become inspiring leaders to shift the skills of their teams. Part of the solution involved a “train the trainer” element and a set of exercises that sales managers could practice with their teams.

Over 2 months, the “face-to-face” element of the programme was implemented for a population of over 90 sales leaders, in 6 cohorts, across a range of global locations: UK, France, Italy, Singapore, Australia and Canada. Kaplan facilitators managed each region to ensure the programme was localised. At the same time, the client had access to extensive briefing sessions to ensure uniformity and consistency in the learning objectives.

The learning at the face-to-face sessions was reinforced with a series of 5 webinars over a 10-week period that further equipped sales leaders with the tools and techniques to guide and develop their teams. Kaplan designed a series of exercises to sharpen sales skills and refresh the thinking of the

sales teams. These exercises took the form of face-to-face sessions and online practice sessions in an interactive online sales platform.

At the final stage, Kaplan's market-leading technology platform was used to enable salespeople to practice their pitching skills and receive on-demand feedback from their managers. This tool helps salespeople to hone their skills in a flexible way that fits around their commitments.

Driving Teams to Success

The programme helped sales managers to meet the following 6 learning objectives through the face-to-face sessions:

1. Develop a successful sales strategy and engage their people while ensuring its success.

Teams worked closely to instil a sense of ownership of the sales strategy and ran a series of practical events to develop the skills managers needed to engage with their teams.

2. Lead their teams with confidence, courage and consideration.

Managers were challenged to define what good leadership looks like and how to display rolemodel behaviour in line with organisational values.

3. Effectively drive change and transition towards new attitudes, skills and knowledge for themselves and others.

Teams explored different attitudes and mechanisms to face changes. They looked at the importance of it in an industry that highly depends on technology, and how to diminish the fear of change as the organisation evolves.

4. Build a personalised development plan.

Team members were empowered to create development programmes that were aligned to their personal interests. In this way, they would become owners of their learning journeys.

5. Coach salespeople to succeed.

Kaplan equipped participants to become capable to have coaching conversations with their teams and to promote multi-level communication, rather than a top-down, autocratic environment.

6. Establish a learning culture.

Embedding the learning and ensuring that the programme had continuing momentum, was the long-term objective. By developing these skills, teams created a learning culture and extended the longevity of the programme beyond the classroom.

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