

Case Study

R. Stahl

A global sales change from a siloed sale with product **“push”** to business needs **“pull”** to sell the wider portfolio.



Background 2013

R.Stahl has outlets in most major countries around the world, with thousands of products and services that help clients to meet regulatory and legal requirements for industrial hazardous area protection.

Jonathan Peaurt had recently been promoted to the role of VP sale global sales & marketing and wanted to invest in his sales team to meet his growth goals and market penetration plans. He contacted Mark Jacobs of H2O Development to discuss the approach.

The Problem

Sales Management

A common problem with many managers is that they are very busy! The question is why? The answer is generally that managers seem swamped by daily maintenance tasks or firefighting problems rather than spending increasing time with things that improve their team's ability and the processes that they use. These forward-looking activities are called progress tasks and when managers can break the firefighting cycle, ultimately, they find it easier to hit their goals and targets.

In addition, organisations often find problems escalate upwards rather than being tackled at the right level which slows down decision making and detracts from more strategic focus.



Sales

The original discussion threw up many issues that organisations often would like to tackle: -

- A** Improving forecasting skills and reducing discounting as a major lever.
- B** To reach out to new customers and more senior contacts in general.
- C** To promote the wider portfolio of product and services.

Production and marketing depts had little faith in the data contained within the CRM whilst the sales team felt they were forced to update the system that was cumbersome and was not designed to help them. Often management asked for sales data outside of the CRM system.

The team were very enthusiastic about their products and services which is good but often the team were transmitting information about their products (push) which limits discussions down to narrow parts of the portfolio that they know best.

Jonathan was committed to sell a greater depth of the portfolio, so a fundamental change of approach was required.

The Solution

Sales Management

It was agreed that focusing on the sales team development in isolation would give limited results as Johnathan had already experienced this in the past so a top to bottom development and culture change was agreed.

The **18 months** program started with Jonathan himself to explore the culture he wanted to bring to the sales organisation and his vision for success. We agreed his role throughout the programme including the need to drive down responsibility to the right level in his management team through clear accountability. Agreeing accountabilities right down to detailed level is just the start, the biggest challenge is **living it!**

Part of the success of a change campaign is the regular touch points with senior managers to ensure that they resist the habit of fixing problems that others own. "It's quicker if I do it myself" is one of the 7 management "sins" that ends up reinforcing wrong behaviours within any management team.

The management team worked on the key priorities and skills required in their role to help their teams to develop and grow, building in continuous improvement for the long term. A by-product of this process naturally helps with succession planning.

Sales

The first stage for the sales team was to win hearts and minds to help them understand that each client derives different value from the same products and services, and they invest in these solutions to gain a greater return.

Once this is understood it changes the focus from product / pricing to investment / value but more importantly helps to identify opportunities that could help customers gain greater value with a wider portfolio.

The issue of the CRM had to be tackled and the board agreed that the tool would be "owned" by the sales team and it was then reconfigured to be easy to use by salespeople but also could be updated the moment they left the client premises. This increased ease of use, efficiency and sense of ownership for sales was pivotal in the change of attitude towards the CRM but it still would not have been adopted for the longer term had Jonathan not reinforced the importance of its use as the only portal for sales information.

H2O consultants developed the sales team by an on-going cycle of the following: -

- ✓ Observing sales personnel on customer visits then giving developmental feedback.
- ✓ Classroom based, experiential learning and development generating individual action plans.
- ✓ 1-2-1 sales coaching.
- ✓ Blending the themes into the management processes of coaching and performance review.

Mark and his team of multilanguage trainers have come from sales and management backgrounds which allowed the sessions to move from theory to be more relevant and practical.



Outcome of this development (Rol)?

Developing a new sales and management approach can help with motivational issues during tough economic times. Between 2013-2015, the oil price dopped from **\$120** to below **\$60** a barrel which had a major impact on the global investment in hazardous area products but despite this the sales team grew revenue by **2.5%** to **€313m**, bucking industry trends.

This was achieved by Jonathan's dedication and vision and causing the managers and the sales team to adopt the new approach.