

Sales Messaging—the Key to Selling Excellence

Organizations who want to create a culture of selling excellence know that to drive sales and to excel, an emphasis needs to be placed on the sales representatives—and what they do when they are in front of the customer. Delta Point, Inc. (DPI) is a consulting firm that is uniquely qualified to help organizations align across the entire commercial organization to obtain optimum brand performance.

Sales excellence in front of the customer is built upon the foundation of three components that are interdependent and interrelated: Knowledge, Messaging and Relationships (KMR). Knowledge refers to product knowledge but it is much more than that—it involves what the sales specialists know about their customers, the competition, the disease state, the marketplace and themselves. Messaging is not only how you say what you say but how you bring to life the brand messages that are represented in your marketing assets. Developing valuable business relationships are essential because success in business is based primarily on people skills (85%) and less so on technical knowledge (15%).

Historically, marketing focuses their efforts and most of their resources on helping the sales organization understand what are the messages that resonate with practitioners by conducting an extensive analysis of findings obtained from focus groups, marketing research, ad boards, and feedback from the field. The role of marketing is to develop promotional assets to use as tools to aid the sales representatives' communication in the field and to reinforce those messages that will resonate with the customers. The challenge exists after the marketing assets have been delivered to the field. Often there is not incredible clarity as to what excellence looks like in communicating these individual assets with words- words that resonate and change behavior.

It is unrealistic to expect an entire field organization (no matter how small or large) to understand excellence organizationally unless they have seen what it looks like. Therefore a focus on sales messaging makes sense because in any marketplace dynamic what the sales representative says in front of the customer has a huge impact on sales results.

Delta Point can clearly add value by improving sales messaging when a company finds itself in the following situations:

- △ When launching a product and can't afford to fail
- △ In a highly competitive marketplace where the customer's perception of your brand is that it is not dramatically different from other options

- △ When the promotion of your brand involves complex message(s)
- △ When you are experiencing competitive intensity that your sales force is having difficulty dealing with

The simple truth is that regardless of the sales model, only five things happen during a sales call:

1. You open the call
2. You ask questions to engender thinking
3. You communicate your brand's story using your marketing assets and resources
4. You handle objections or deal with customer feedback
5. You ask for commitments

When Delta Point works with a client on sales messaging, our focus is how to optimize the brand performance by concentrating on what will bring the desired results—what words or combination of words will most likely resonate with the customer during any parts of the sales conversation and bring your marketing message and your marketing resources to life.

Our experience is that words matter. For example, there is a huge difference between “Is safety important?” and “How important is safety?”. The first question requires a simple “yes” or “no” response and can be answered by a passive listener. The second question evokes some thought and requires the listener to be actively contributing to the conversation.

How Delta Point can make a Difference

Delta Point customizes all of our deliverables with each client. Therefore, we begin our partnership with a new client by engaging in what we call the discovery phase, during which we truly learn the product, the competitive landscape, and learn the messaging challenges either current or anticipated. We attend market research meetings as well as physician and representative based advisory board meetings to understand the language of the customer. To understand at a deep level the challenges that exist, we interview key stakeholders in the commercial organization: sales, marketing, and training. We look for and explore new ways to use words to improve the effectiveness of the sale associates.

We then build upon our learnings and the knowledge obtained in the discovery phase, analyze the data, and develop ideas about how best to message the brand using the marketing assets. Upon receiving approval and buy-in of the major concepts from

leadership, Delta Point creates customized training workshops and communication plans. Based on adult learning principles, each training session is experiential in nature. Pre-work is assigned to introduce the ideas and concepts so that the attendees come to the live training sessions with some level of understanding. This pre-work builds a foundation of knowledge which propels the acceleration of learnings and quicker internalization of this new way of engaging customers. Delta Point typically trains the sales managers first—exposing them to the ideas and concepts so they can develop a higher level of understanding before their sales representatives receive their training. Because one of the best ways to learn is to teach to someone else, we engage these managers in training their sales representatives. Delta Point consultants attend each training session, either to conduct the actual training or to aid in facilitation and be a resource for any questions.

Some clients actually want a script for the call—a separate script for each of the call components which includes multiple options that the sales representatives can choose from. Other clients want us to present our ideas along with recommended verbiage and let their sales associates customize them. In circumstances such as this, we provide several alternative ways to open the call, ask questions, ask for commitments, etc. Delta Point's deliverables are different for each client because our work is always customized.

Learning does not end with the Delta Point conducted training workshops. When sales representatives begin to apply these new learnings and concepts in the field, questions will arise. Therefore, Delta Point includes a roll-out plan to ensure successful implementation which includes follow-up activities for a minimum of six months. The pull-through and follow-up will vary depending upon the needs of field sales. To maximize the time that the sales representatives have in the field, distance learning options will most likely be utilized. These may include, but are not limited to:

- △ eLearning content
- △ Conference calls with first line managers involving Delta Point consultants to provide guidance concerning the adoption of the new learnings and recommendations on the best way to implement
- △ Webex Web Conferencing which allows the sharing of documents and presentations
- △ Brainshark on-demand courses which allows for the quick launch and management of training sessions and the ability to track the progress of participants

Delta Point's success in obtaining demonstrated brand sales results and sales effectiveness is demonstrated by the duration of our partnership with our clients.

Because the marketplace is dynamic and constantly changing, our average brand engagement is five years. There is the continuous introduction of new assets that require messaging and new insights that need to be shared with the field on an ongoing basis. Quite frequently, specific new challenges or threats arise that need to be dealt with in real time. All of these factors explain why a partnership with Delta Point results in a better approach for sales messaging, attained through uniting the (at times disparate) teams of sales, marketing and training in the objective of creating a culture of sales excellence.

Delta Point provides the optimum support and impact for our customers when we work in close partnership with our clients, particularly in the area of sales management, training, operations, and marketing. We offer advice on how sales, marketing and training can coordinate communications as a single voice to accomplish the best results. Delta Point consistently communicates with senior leadership to share insights that we learn during the discovery, implementation, and follow through phases. We have learned from experience the criticality of communicating effectively to involve all stakeholders and how to build anticipation among the sales force of this new selling approach. Part of our success is due to our attention to detail—including change management with recommendations on how to roll-out and communicate the changes that will bring the optimum results.

Pharma companies that have partnered with Delta Point have reported their success using metrics to measure the difference that Delta Point makes:

- △ One brand in an organization had an annual target sales objective of \$46 million.
 - After partnering with Delta Point, sales for the first year were \$71 million
 - Sales results in year 2 were \$110 million

- △ One organization engaged Delta Point because brand sales had been flat for 90 days.
 - Brand sales before working with Delta Point were \$250 million
 - After partnering with Delta Point, brand sales ultimately increased to \$2.5 billion
 - Sales representatives' time with their customers increased 33% within the first 90 days

The success of Delta Point's engagement in working with our clients is supported by testimonials provided by some of our customers. (More testimonial and references are available upon request.)

Testimonials

“Without hesitation one of the best one-day (expand our possibilities) training sessions I have experienced in the Pharma industry.”

--Patrick Critchdon, Regional Sales Manager AstraZeneca

“It is with a great deal of passion and gratitude that I write to you a personal note of thanks. The session ‘Selling [brand]’ which you very energetically conducted at our launch was the single most effective and significant presentation I have ever attended. I learned more in one hour on how to differentiate [brand] and how to approach difficult customers than I did during my entire training. Thank you for making a difference.”

--Jon Bauer, Roche Laboratories, Inc, Hepatology Specialist, Virology

“I just wanted to send you a quick thank you note. I had the pleasure to work with [sales representative] this week and he gained an incredible amount of insight into the [product] selling model. He had attended Phase 4 training and was fortunate enough to be in your class.

During my ride along I realized that it was one of those moments where I was actually learning from one of my representatives. Soft words... Why in the world... If you had to guess... Immediate follow up with the physician...

Just a quick story... We ended off a day where a physician gave a price objection even though he is 90% MC. He said someone has to pay for it...The next morning we went to 5 pharmacies to get the actual prices. You should have seen the look on the physicians face when both of us came into his office the next morning... it was priceless...

--Armando, District Manager, Long Island

Many thanks for the very inspirational and highly effective presentation that you did for the [brand] team. Your insight into the selling process is unrivaled. I believe that you provided us with a defining moment that will spark a cultural change in our sales force.”

--Leonard Mazur, COO

“Just wanted to thank you for a very dynamic and inspirational meeting yesterday. Your style and philosophy are very refreshing and truly motivating! I especially appreciate your ability to craft the most brilliantly structured questions — you’ve raised it to an art form.”

--Agnieszka Buller, Roche Pharmaceuticals, Sales Representative

"Our partnership with Delta Point has contributed greatly to our success. The Delta Team has done a fantastic job of working with us to train our organization on this new selling philosophy and helping us create compelling sales messages which our sales organization has embraced. Since our work with Delta Point began, our sales have consistently increased - despite significant competitive activity."

--National Sales Director

References

Jesus Leal, VP, Respiratory and Infectious Disease, Novartis

Laura Barton, Brand Director for Crestor, AstraZeneca

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