

ORIGINAL SITUATION

To meet the needs of a changing environment and demanding customers, Omron wanted to capture the future through their sales force.

Omron was looking to increase the performance and consistency of their sales force to not only include the technical sales people but marketing and their distribution partners too.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENTS

Together, Omron and Strategic Enhancement Group developed a sophisticated, consultative sales force that is equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century – today and into the future.

By integrating *Counselor Salesperson* with their whole customer facing team, Omron has increased sales through a consistent customer experience.

This is Our Future – Omron

An uncertain business environment makes it hard to predict the future. Omron itself says so. Yet the company, a global company in the field of automation products and services, has had a strategic vision already in place for seven years.

In fact, Omron believes that the unpredictability of the economy and the global marketplace makes it more important than ever to have a clear-cut vision. They believe that “without a clear vision of what the end results should look like, any corporate transformation – even an aggressive one – can lose its moorings and drift.

Instead, Omron is firmly set on strong, visionary fundamentals. Omron’s founder, Kazuma Tateisi, developed a predication process – entitled the SINIC Theory – to lead the company’s growth and transformation. Omron’s management strategy has consistently reflected future trends based on the theory, and Omron’s DNA is hardwired with the ability to accurately anticipate and quickly assess potential customer needs. Since its inception over 80 years ago, Omron has produced a steady stream of innovative products that have consistently led the marketplace.

To meet the needs of a changing environment and demanding customers, Omron brought in Strategic Enhancement Group – another forward-thinking company – to capture the future through their sales force.

Joane Ramsey, an account executive with Strategic Enhancement Group, built a progressive relationship with Omron Electronics in Schaumburg, Illinois. Together, they developed a sophisticated, consultative sales force that is equipped to meet the challenges of today and into the future.

“The program itself has given the sales force tools that they need to be successful in their role,” said Peter McEneaney, an executive training manager at Omron.

RESULTS ACHIEVED



sales people trained in CSP



people at the distributor level trained in CSP



common language



increased communication



commitment to reinforcement

"I think the key there is *The Counselor Salesperson* gives individual salespeople tools that they can use within the organization to make sure that it's a mutual win/win situation, that there's a benefit for the customer and a benefit also for Omron."

Sales Engineers

The complexity of Omron's automation products and services required salespeople with a high level of technical skills, often at the expense of the selling and relationship skills it takes to provide more value to the customer. In fact, Omron refers to its salespeople as "sales engineers" because of how intricate and high-tech the company's offerings are.

Omron quickly recognized the need for a sales force that could consult with clients, and created a tag line calling sales engineers "the problem solvers." To prove this commitment to their customers, Omron developed their entire sales force, application engineers, and marketing personnel with Wilson Learning's *Counselor Salesperson (CSP)* program. Regional Sales Managers were further certified to teach the course, enhancing the use of the common language and ensuring reinforcement of the skills and tools on the job.



"Our biggest concern going into the program was that we might not get buy-in from the seasoned sales engineers. And in fact we found that they were the ones that really grasped the concepts very quickly and went from that unconscious competent to a conscious competent stage remarkably quick. For the newer salespeople without somewhat of a point of reference, it's a little bit more of a long-term investment in getting them the skill set to actually work with the tools," said McEneaney.

Consciously Competent

Indeed, *The Counselor Salesperson* quickly turned Omron's high-performing sales engineers, who were mostly

unconsciously competent and therefore not really able to teach what they knew, into consciously competent sales engineers who could replicate their performance and teach it to others.

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PAUL BABOIAN
Regional Sales Manager, Omron

"I think it's really allowed them to increase their skill set. I would say there isn't one person on staff who didn't learn something more. We learned something that we could be doing differently, or should be doing differently within the sales process," remarked Paul Baboian, a Regional Sales Manager at Omron.

Baboian believes that one of the biggest benefits of the program has been the common language and the continual reinforcement.

Managers and their salespeople are now able to discuss accounts and the processes, allowing managers to hold the engineers more accountable for their success. "Strategic Enhancement Group has taken us to that level. We continue to reinforce; *Counselor Salesperson* is in our lifeblood now. And it's what we live for," said Baboian.

But for Omron, successful sales and successful customer service requires a team effort. A lot of business involves team selling, with teams consisting of internal people and also their large distribution network. Because Omron had the foresight to extend the program to include its distributors, every customer now receives consistent, high-quality service at all levels.

"The program makes them more aware of what they are doing. When we get an order at the end of the day, it's typically a team of people that are involved: there are the sales engineers from Omron, there are application engineers from Omron, there can also be marketing people involved, and then there's our distribution channel. The typical project can involve a lot of people on the team. "One of the keys for even the expert level people is to be able to communicate our purpose, process, and payoff," agreed Baboian.

COMPANY PROFILE

Omron Corporation is an electronics company based in Kyoto, Japan. Omron was established by Kazuma Tateisi in 1933 and incorporated in 1948. The company originated in an area of Kyoto called “Omuro”, from which the name “OMRON” was derived.

Today Omron is global leader with 36,842 employees and \$7.89 billion in sales focused on automotive electronics, social systems, environmental solutions, electronic and mechanical components, healthcare and industrial automation.

Getting Distributors Up to Speed

It was important to get Omron’s distributors on board with *CSP* because so many people are involved in each sale and “communication is not something you can take for granted,” according to McEaney. “There is a portion of the distributors’ business where we work very closely and partner with them, and then there’s the portion of the business where we really expect them to maintain the relationships and maintain and support the business.”

In fact, the majority of Omron’s sales, up to 80 or 90 percent in Baboian’s estimation, are through distributors, “So we are heavily aligned with our distribution channels. We invest a lot of time and effort into our distributors. Therefore, we’re not in the game of rotating distributor partners. With most of our distributors, we’ve had a history with them of 10, 20, 30 years,” said Baboian.

Building Relationships on all Fronts

McEaney noted that Omron has sent more than 170 salespeople through *The Counselor Salesperson* program and more than 100 people at the distributor level had participated. Ramsey believes that Omron is thriving because they are improving their relationships with customers on all fronts.

“Anybody who reaches out to a customer, whether it’s customer service, the training department, marketing, communications, sales and sales management, just about

everybody at Omron who touches the customer in some way, through paper, through phone, or through shaking hands, has been through *CSP*,” said Baboian.

Though Strategic Enhancement Group’s sales solution was focused on the future of Omron, it was also critical for Ramsey to understand their past. Omron was well known and respected for a high quality product that was, for many years, very price competitive. In fact, price was not an issue that the sales engineers regularly dealt with. “We were never the guys who had to ‘sell’ our products. We just had to tell the story about Omron and about our products, and usually our price was less than the other guy’s. We didn’t even have to give any pricing concessions, or we had to give only minimal price concessions. We were a ‘value’ leader, you know, from a price standpoint,” according to Baboian.



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As the economy slowed down, Omron noticed that some customers were really focused on price instead of value. *Counselor Salesperson* equipped Omron’s salespeople to penetrate accounts and discover what was really going on. The sales engineers learned how to get higher and wider within the customer organization, so that they were talking to the right people and offering a value proposition that did not rely solely on price.

“You Actually Listened”

“I’ve heard from our sales force that customers are making comments such as, “You actually listened. You understand my needs,” said McEaney. “The discovery process that’s used and the resulting discovery agreement shows the customer that we are listening, we are concerned about their needs and we’re not just pushing product with a catalog, not knowing if there’s a need for that product or that solution.”

"We have a lot of projects that we're working on that are a direct result of *CSP*, and of our company reinforcing *CSP*. That's key. It's one thing to go through the classes and it's another thing to follow up and reinforce. We've definitely picked it up a notch in communicating our new value proposition to the market," echoed Baboian. "And when I speak to my salespeople on the phone, I really speak in *CSP* terms, so that everybody understands that this isn't just a short-term thing. It's not just a flavor of the month. This is our future."

And although the volatile economy has presented new challenges for Omron, they're still looking to the future. "What we're preaching right now to our people is that we need to get out there and continue to improve our position in the market so that when things turn around, because they will turn around, we'll be that much bigger and better than our competition," said Baboian.

To learn more about these concepts and how Strategic Enhancement Group, Inc. can help you in addressing these issues, contact us at (630) 377-4300, (888) 668-9382 outside of IL or StrategicEnhancement.com.