

Sales Development Strategy

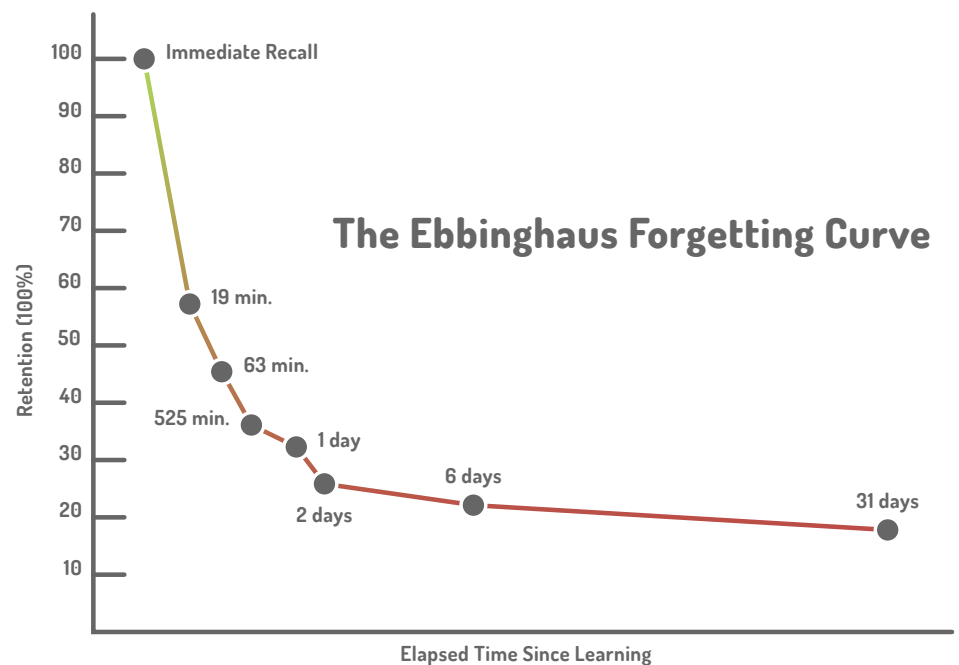


FourThirds

The Challenge of Team Development for Sales Leaders

Sales Leaders the world over operates within a maelstrom of continuous change. They must meet the needs of their customers and the needs of their individual companies. With a constantly moving target they must constantly re-assess the fitness of their teams to perform the tasks being set. But herein lays a significant challenge. How do they balance the development of the team with the achievement of their goals? Taking people out of the field means they lose selling time which leads to an immediate loss of productivity. Another challenge is figuring out what development is needed. The choices are myriad, the opportunity for wasted time and expense are many.

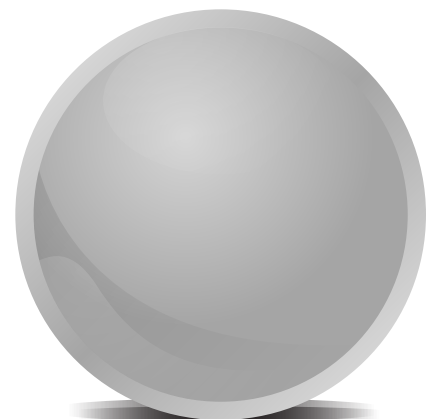
Sales remain the only major profession without any form of widespread certification or frequent performance skills refreshment requirement. Doctors, Pilots, Military Personnel, Lawyers and Accountants all must take periodic refresher education to maintain peak performance. But not sales. Why is this? Are sales people smarter? Do they retain their skills without fall-off? Do they all possess all of the skills and expertise they need in all sales situations? The answer to all of these questions of course is no.



Current training schemes take sales people away from their customers.

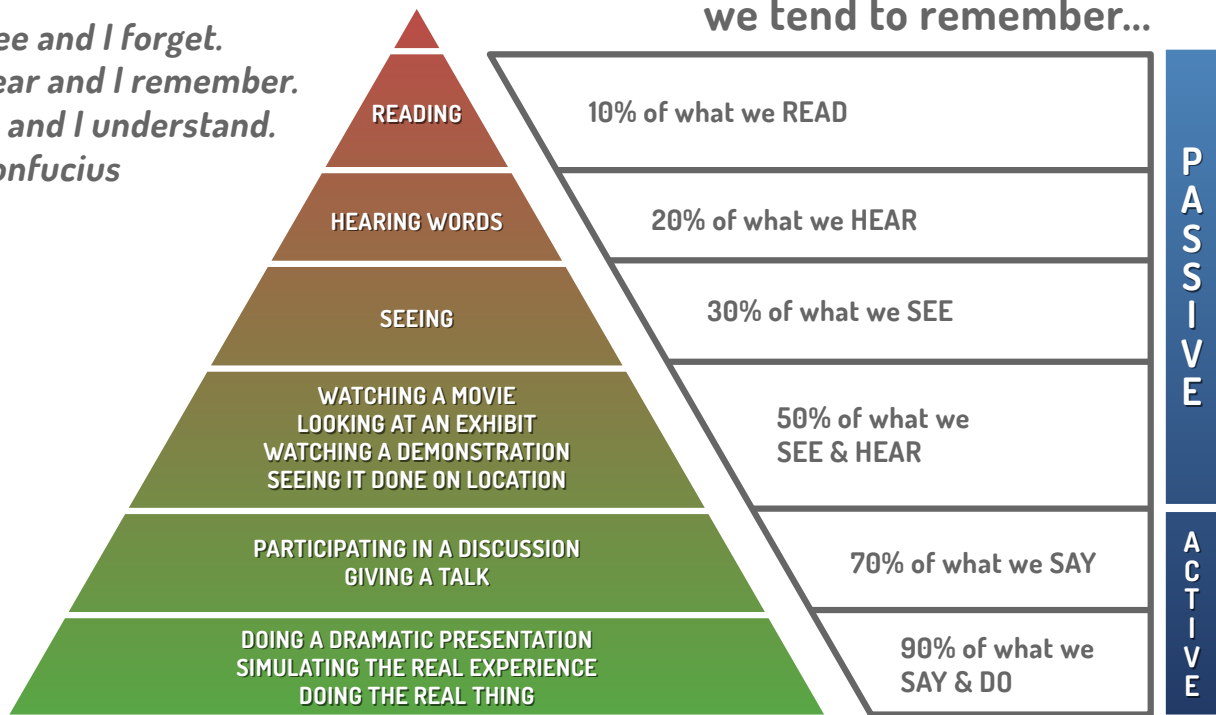
So why no regular refresh, why no plan of continuous improvement? The answer is time and cost. The sales leader has to make the judgment about how much he or she can afford for his or her team to be out of the field and in the classroom. This is typically a maximum of two days a year. This level costs 1-2% of available selling time and can have an impact on overall sales production. The net result is individual sales people suffer skills drop off and their process becomes inconsistent.

Eventually sales leaders recognize they need to bite the bullet and refresh their teams. But here's the next challenge. What to spend money and time on? There are many competing sales process's to choose from. Do they go with SPIN Selling? Do they choose PowerBase or Solution Selling or Strategic Selling? Do they opt for Value Selling or Challenger Selling? These products all have value to add but unfortunately they all have an Achilles heel. These programs are all shoehorned in to that two day window which is the limit of the sales leader's time tolerance. So the leader is forced to make a choice and in the choice there is significant compromise. For none of these programs addresses the complete sales process and none refreshes all of the sales skills a team needs to master to be effective. All the programs focus on one or two areas of the process and all have value to bring. But all are incomplete.



The Cone of Learning

*I see and I forget.
I hear and I remember.
I do and I understand.*
-Confucius



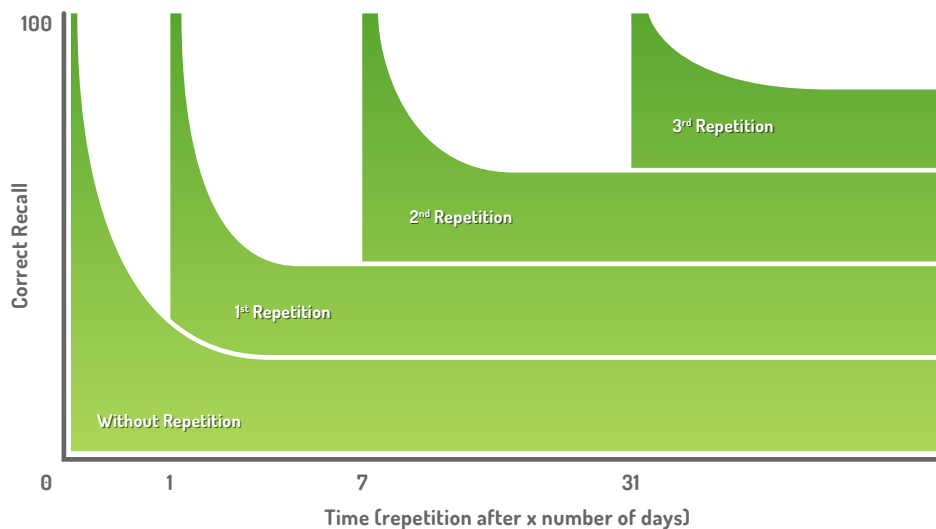
Source: Edgar Dale (1969)

eLearning to the Rescue

With the advent of eLearning, a solution for sales is in sight. eLearning holds the promise of enabling sales people to develop and refresh their skills, but do it without leaving the field. With an on-line program attendees can train at a time of their own convenience, for example a Friday afternoon. Training can be taken in small bites, say half an hour at a time. And the training can do something that the two-day limited programs struggle with. It can show sales people 'how' to do things, not just 'what' to do. It achieves this through

the use of interactive scenarios.

There are literally dozens of studies that confirm what we intuitively know. Learning is best retained when it taxes all of our senses, is close to 'the real thing' and is then put in to practice. What eLearning also enables is the confirmation of attendees understanding of the material through the use of quizzes. So the time barrier is removed, understanding is confirmed and the practical application of the learning is developed. But what about the retention problem?



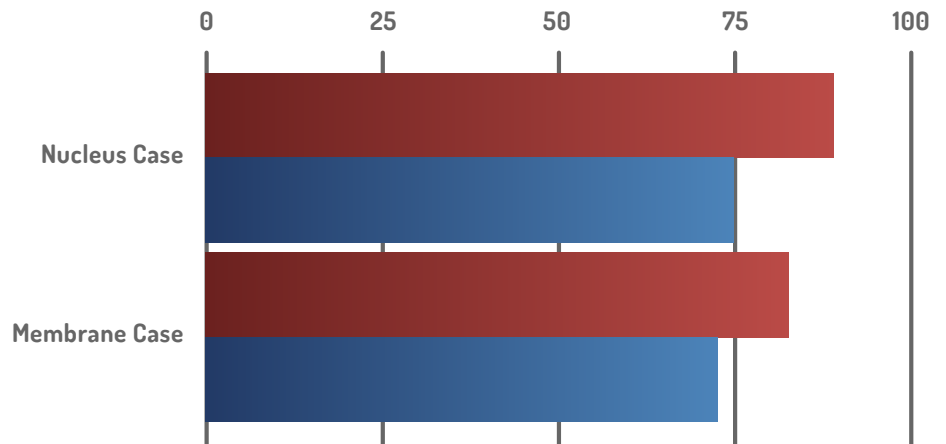
A well structured eLearning program for sales will continually re-enforce concepts and put them in to practice in scenarios. So that over the course of weeks or months that a program is delivered, the attendee will be continuously exercising their learning so that it becomes habit and sticks. Of course, there is still a significant role for coaching which we'll discuss shortly.

But still the question remains. What is the scope of development sales leaders should contemplate?

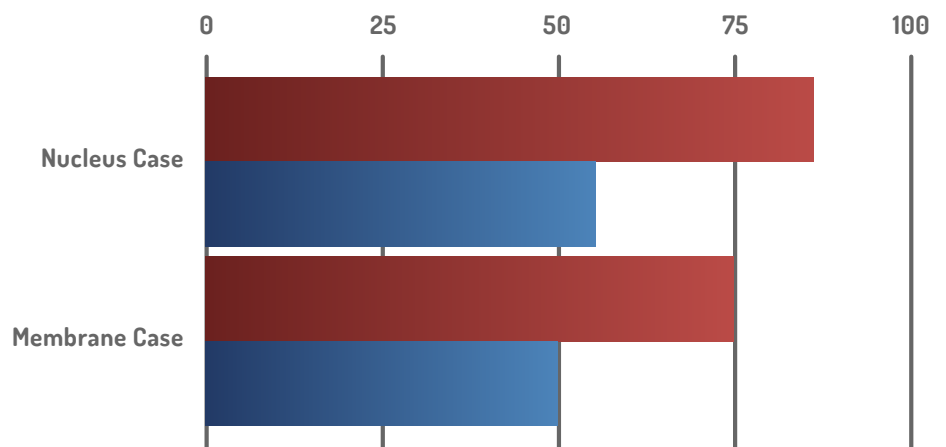
A study by M.I.T. to investigate the effectiveness of traditional learning methods compared to a multi-media format yielded some dramatic results. The study involved 452 undergraduates who were split them in to two groups. Each group studied the same material. The group using multi-media materials were given half the study time of the traditional methods group. However, even though they had half the study time they scored significantly higher on the topic areas they were tested on. For example, a test to measure the students understanding of the material showed the multi-media group scored over 50% higher than the traditional learning methods group. Not only was their learning significantly more effective, but so too was their motivation to learn more of the subject matter.

"A well structured eLearning program for sales will continually re-enforce concepts and put them in to practice scenarios."

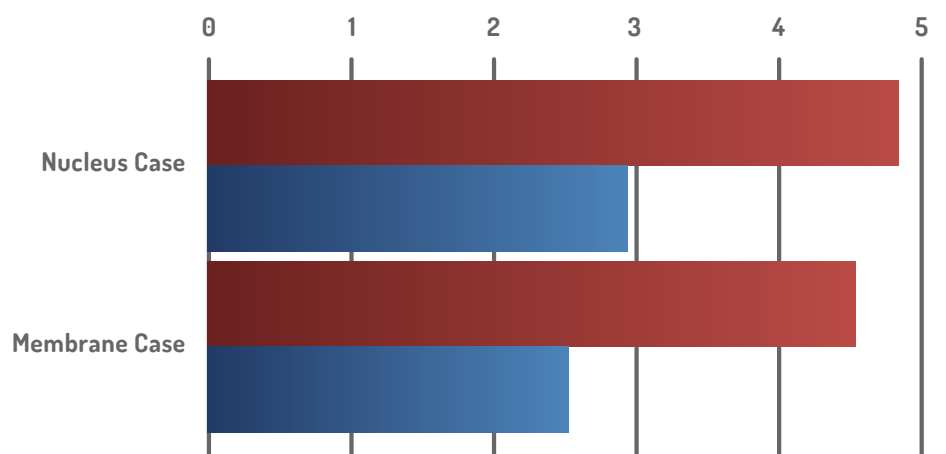
Simple Learning Score (Fact retention)



Synthetic Learning Score (Experimental interpretation)



Interest In Learning More (Scale 1-5)

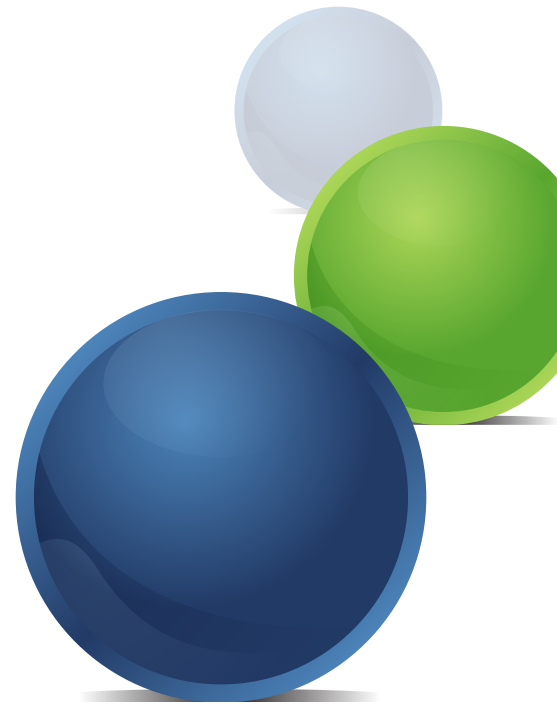


Sales eLearning

Why No Widespread Use?

Another question that the reader might be pondering is why today there is no widespread Sales eLearning? The answer to this lies buried within the way the Sales Development industry delivers its products. Many Sales Development companies use a franchise model. They develop their programs and then sublicense this Intellectual Property (IP) to small consulting operations who then sell and deliver the programs. These smaller entities pay a royalty to the IP owner. This model has worked very successfully for the industry for many years. The problem is, an eLearning platform cuts out the need for local content delivery. So there is a conflict.

If the content developers were to switch to an eLearning platform they would harm their channel. They would also find that their portfolio would become a commodity since none offer a complete solution and customers would be able to pick and choose. Since the FourThirds Total-Selling program has been designed from the outset to deliver a broad portfolio via an eLearning platform, no such channel conflict exists. The only conflict is the competitive one between FourThirds and the existing business model.



The Trick Question with the obvious Answer

Imagine a sales leader, recognizing the need to develop his or her team, is faced with the dilemma of choosing between 6 competing sales processes and 10 different skills development programs. He or she has tasked their sales operations leader to provide options and recommendations. All the programs have positive elements, but which to choose? Choosing one means the other skills and process elements don't get addressed. The sales operations person asks their manager "which program do you want to go with?" Of course the obvious answer is they want the complete solution; they want to cherry pick the best concepts and develop all the skills. But as the industry stands today this is neither practical nor possible. The direct cost is too high, the consequential cost would be crippling. And what about next year, when the chosen courses have faded and the leaning forgotten? Back to the start and repeat.

A Sales Development Strategy

In an ideal world, without the limitations of time taken out of the field, sales leaders would surely commit to the development of their teams along multiple axes.

These are:

A common

comprehensive sales

process – Using all of the best practices from the myriad of sales processes

Skills – The various day to day tools and techniques sales people need to execute each stage of the sales process

Refresh – A way to challenge the sales team to stay up to date in their use of sales skills and process

Coaching – A way to re-enforce learning and lead sales people to higher performance through the use of skills and process

Support Assets – Day to day tools that complement the use of skills and process in sales campaigns

Such a program would not be seen as an event to fix a short term problem, but instead a long term commitment to continuous improvement in performance of both the team and the individual. A great theory, but is it practical?

Introducing the FourThirds Total-Selling Program

“...for the first time, a Strategy of continuous improvement and refreshing the skills and capabilities of the sales team.”

Recognizing the challenges we’ve just discussed, FourThirds has been developing the Total-Selling™ program and strategy. Why a strategy? The strategy element is for sales leaders. What we have introduced is a complete process and skills development program. This makes possible, for the first time, a strategy of continuous improvement and refreshing the skills and capabilities of the sales teams. So, no longer do leaders have to make compromise choices. Now they can elect to adopt a strategy where their teams are continuously improving and refreshing their skills and process.

3 Year Rolling Program

The plan is designed as a three year continuous enrollment program which can be started at any time. So, new hires can start at the beginning, which means no delay in ramp-up. Unlike a classroom there are no specific dates when people need to attend, which of course aids the new-hire onboarding process.

The Total-Selling™ program has five key elements.

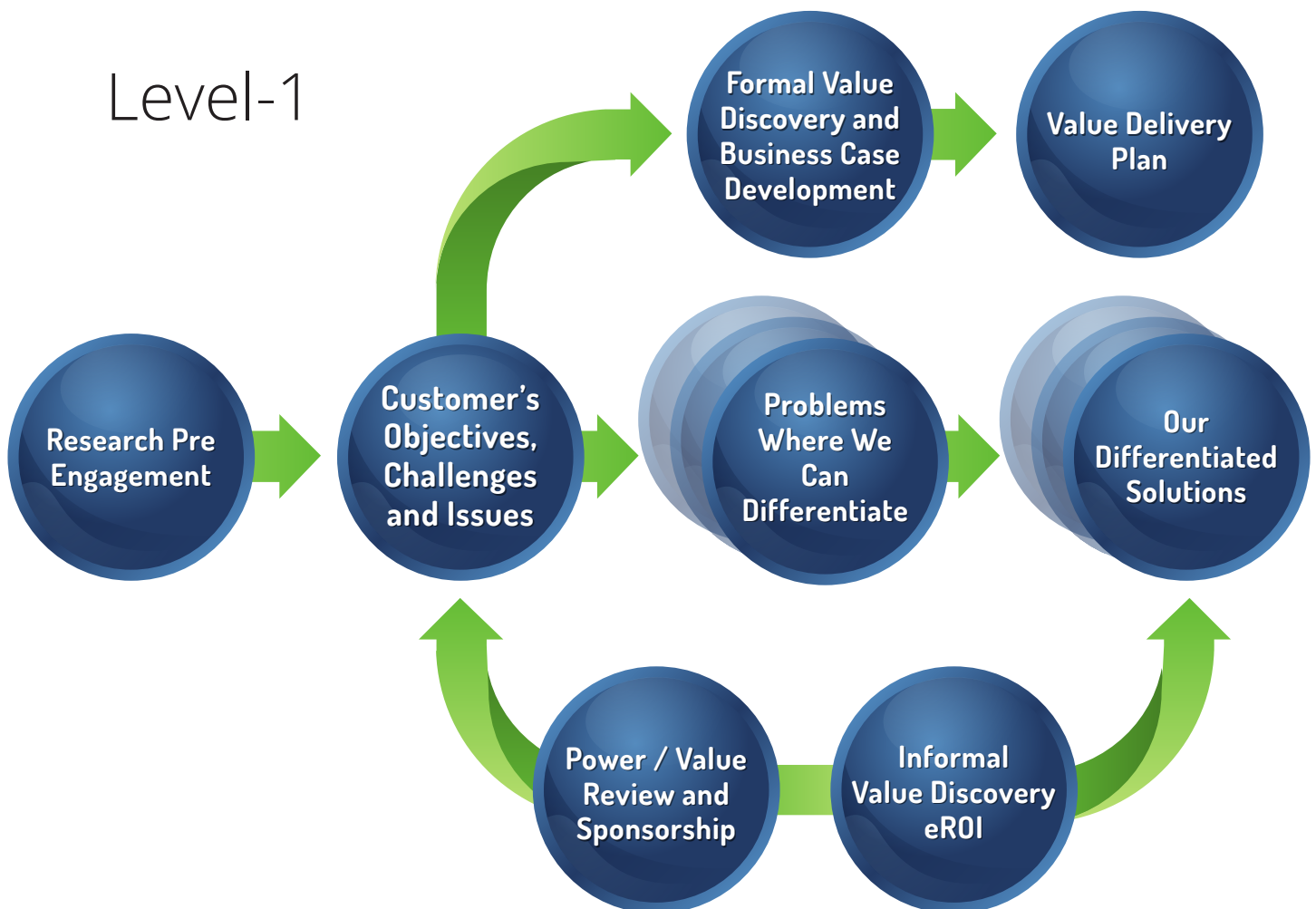
1.

Total-Selling Sales Process

The Total-Selling™ process addresses the scope of all of the niche programs within a single integrated process. It encompasses customer research, questioning skills, customer strategy, Business Issues and Objectives. It encompasses how to differentiate solutions, your company and yourself.

It encompasses power including understanding the various levels of power and how to engage and develop relationships. It shows how to discover and quantify value and how to proactively develop a business case with and for your customer. Total-Selling™ also shows how to develop unsolicited

proposals and the Level-2 stage of Total-Selling™ leads the participant to an understanding of how to develop mega deals. There are many more elements, all relevant for a sales person to be properly armed to face any sales situation.





2.

Total-Selling Skills

The Total-Selling™ Skills refresh has been developed to provide access to a broad range of skills that sales people need to deploy. These include Storytelling, Negotiation Skills, Influencing Skills, Objection Handling, Pipeline Development, Telephone skills, etc. Each of these skills modules can be taken stand alone or as part of a planned, overall continuous improvement, program.

3.

Total-Selling Coaching

Research and experience inform us that positive reinforcement and practical exercise are needed to ensure new learning takes root. So adjacent to all of the learning modules within the Total-Selling program are corresponding coaching elements.

4.

Refresh

As with other professions a key element for maintaining performance is periodic refresh. So the FourThirds Total-Selling™ program provides a series of annual scenarios for sales people to work through, that exercise skills and process. The scenarios also help sales management identify where remedial training is required.

5.

Total-Selling Assets

Smart electronic templates have been developed that prompt sales people and their managers with action at key stages in the sales process.

YEAR 1 Total-Selling Process	YEAR 2 Total-Selling Skills Process Refresh	YEAR 3 Process Refresh Skills Refresh
COACHING		
Process	Skills & Process	Skills & Process
ASSETS		
Process	Skills	

The Total-Selling™ Development

A New Business Model for Sales Development

“...the economics make it possible for the first time to engage a much broader cross section of the customer facing team.”

Current business practice for sales development is for training to be sold on the basis of the number of attendees in a classroom, charged at a standard rate, usually upwards of \$2k/person/day. The total cost for these courses is much higher once you factor in travel and accommodation. Then, the much larger expense of loss of sale team production while sitting in a classroom means that the cost of the traditional classroom based experience becomes prohibitively high. The cost of these courses is defensible once you factor in the cost of the instructor and the royalties that need to be paid. All the same, the total cost is high. One by-product of this business model is companies need to be very selective about who they have attend, rather than have everyone who is customer facing be engaged.

Since the FourThirds Total-Selling™ program is delivered via an eLearning platform costs are much lower. Also, since it's delivered as a subscription service over period of time the economics make it possible for the first time to engage a much broader cross section of the customer facing team.

Summary

eLearning holds the promise of delivering, for the first time, a vehicle for Sales Leaders to support a strategy for continuous performance improvement. The FourThirds Total-Selling™ program is a comprehensive program for process, skills, coaching

and periodic refreshment. The FourThirds Software as a Service (SaaS) model allows customers to develop the sales skills of a much broader range of their customer facing staff. Combined, these attributes will help sales teams who adopt the Total-Selling™ paradigm bring their sales teams to peak performance and keep them there.