

Effective Sales Processes Lead to Success at Swarovski *Commitment to Sales Training Pays Dividends in Performance*

Swarovski, the world's leading manufacturer of cut crystal, has revolutionized the jewelry and fashion industries since its founding in 1895. Driven by a quest for perfection, belief in the power of innovation and a leadership style based on an awareness of responsibility for employees and the environment, the Company achieved group sales of EURO 1.85 billion in 2004, with a total of 15,900 employees worldwide.

Olivier Camus, Vice President Operations, North and South East Asia-Pacific since 2000, describes a totally customer-centric approach to the business in which Swarovski aims to be a creative partner with its clients in fashion and interiors. His challenge was to formalize the way in which the sales force would gain understanding of clients and then formulate individualized plans that would be mutually beneficial. He considered the development of a comprehensive selling/consultation training program, including the establishment of in-house training capabilities, to be key to accomplishing these objectives.

Developing and integrating the training strategy

“We recognized the need to formalize our client sales and consulting processes to help us capture client needs on an individual basis as well as through our overall marketing strategies,” says Camus. “We determined that selecting a training partner and creating an in-house training capability would help us achieve that.”

After selecting AchieveGlobal Singapore as their partner, Camus' regional headquarters identified their audiences in 14 locations in Asia: Singapore, Japan, Korea,

Dubai, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Australia, India, Hong Kong, Taiwan and three large regions in China. Participants included sales executives, sales managers, country managers and customer service executives. Their plan was to equip employees with the skills they would need to succeed, thereby increasing Swarovski's market share.

Although the initial focus was on sales training, with a particular emphasis on account management, the training plan was open ended. Once individuals attended a particular course, they were allowed time for implementation and reinforcement, followed by next-level discussions of how to develop these skills in new areas.

Building on AchieveGlobal's Account Development Strategies (ADS) module, Swarovski incorporated elements into their own Sales Information Systems, a component of their CRM strategy. "More than just using tools to reinforce ADS and subsequent programs, though, Swarovski employees have worked tirelessly to reinforce, enhance, track and measure all new skills and behaviors," says Alex Hickman, AchieveGlobal Account Executive. "It is this level of commitment and motivation that has contributed directly to the success of their training."

Implementation

In the Asia Pacific region alone, approximately 200 people have received training. Bernice Quiambao, Sales Operations Training Manager and CFC Market Manager, is a certified AchieveGlobal trainer, and has attended the vast majority of training delivered in every country.

In addition to ADS, AchieveGlobal modules include Professional Selling Skills, Professional Sales Coaching, Professional Sales Presentations, Achieving Extraordinary Customer Relations, Quality Service Skills and Professional Sales Negotiations.

Training is mandatory and an expected part of employee growth and development, and is automatically offered to new hires. “Everyone believes and supports training,” says Hickman.

Tracking the results

Training results are tracked, measured and evaluated in a number of ways:

- For sales, measurements start with transactional aspects. On the one hand, the Company tracks use of the electronic CRM, running reports to identify which information has been logged, how often sales people access the system, information they are including, etc. On the other hand, Camus and the respective country heads regularly review and challenge Account Plans prepared by the Sales Team. “We are helping the Team to prepare winning plans, meaning plans that make a difference in terms of customer retention and growth,” he says.
- For sales coaching, metrics include the number of meetings coaches conduct, as well as the level of management involvement and observation; evaluating whether/how often employees are actively observed, tracked, given feedback and measured.
- For workshops such as presentation skills, participants are observed and given feedback on their skill use.

“We have very much integrated the programs we ran into the daily sales operations and observed how the team members are practicing what they have learned,” says Camus. “This means putting these skills and concepts into a live setting, which includes an ongoing process of coaching from all the managers involved.” He adds that the sales coaching program they have initiated for their managers has also provided them with the skills required to set up development plans for their team members. In particular, Camus notes results gained from the ADS, Professional Selling Skills and Presentation modules, where skills are demonstrated daily during actual presentations to customers.

Lessons for success

“We knew from the beginning that these new processes needed the strong involvement of country managers and other senior management,” says Camus. “We first secured the buy-in and ownership on the part of these ‘success drivers,’ a step we consider critical to the program’s ultimate success.”

AchieveGlobal’s Hickman points to several other success factors:

- The partnership and working relationship: Both Hickman and Camus praise Bernice Quiambao for her tireless work in planning, organizing, presenting and attending training. Hickman points to Quiambao’s openness and active partnership with AchieveGlobal, as well as her visible support of training, which has underscored the importance of training and the value it brings.
- Client commitment to success: Swarovski expects and rewards employee participation in improving their skills and performance.

“The success of the training at Swarovski is due to their own hard work and effective planning,” Hickman concludes. “They embraced the idea of ‘before, during and after’ training and set the appropriate steps in place at every stage to ensure they fully supported their people and could therefore expect results from them.”

###

About Swarovski

Swarovski (www.swarovski.com) is the world’s leading manufacturer of cut crystal. Founded in 1895 in Wattens, Austria, the company has 15,900 employees worldwide with annual sales of EURO 1.85 billion in 2004. Swarovski, now globally active in 120 countries, is dedicated to the production of the finest crystalline products and to the constant exploration of new and exciting ways to use crystal as a creative material.

About AchieveGlobal

AchieveGlobal (www.achieveglobe.com) provides research-based learning solutions that aid clients in developing leaders and acquiring, growing and retaining profitable customer relationships. Working with AchieveGlobal’s trainers and consultants, clients can translate business strategies into business results by improving the performance of their people in the areas of leadership development, customer service and sales effectiveness. AchieveGlobal offers more than 100 comprehensive, integrated training and consulting solutions through offices throughout Asia and in 40 countries around the world.