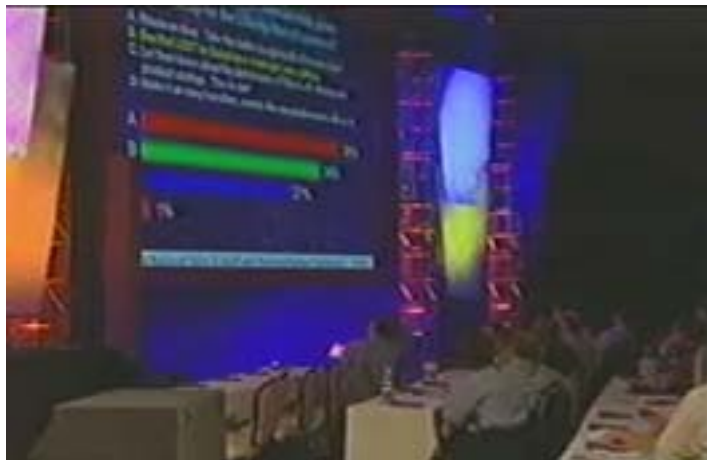


Live event simulations and podcasts for Avaya

The conventional model of sales kick off meetings is broken. Gone are the days of polished PowerPoints, the soothing monotone of marketing staff, and sterile canned speeches by executives. Not only do sales reps literally dread these types of meetings, they are also completely ineffective! The situation is so bad that many sales managers are flat out refusing to take their sales people off the street to attend. They are essentially rejecting an archaic sales training model that is both *teacher-centric* instead of *learner-centric* and *product-centric* instead of *customer-centric*. The reality is that sales people are not going to translate the barrage of product information they typically receive at these meetings into a productive dialogue with customers. The Gronstedt Group has changed the face of sales meetings by turning them into computer games; blogs and Podcasts – the technology that has mesmerized the “Pod” generation. By making the experience engaging; fun and interactive, the company can assist in delivering more bang for the buck.

Our work for telecom leader Avaya is a case in point. During its last three annual sales pow-wows in Las Vegas, the sales force got treated to short movies chronicling highly successful sales stories. The sessions - moderated by Avaya sales directors – were built around pre-produced video case studies, and served as a catalyst for engaging live competitions between Avaya sales, pre-sales, and strategic partner groups.



One of the stories began with an account rep relaying how the team was brought into a new account and told on the very first day that they would be out in four years; the client had decided to hand all its telecom business to a competitor. The movie was interrupted at various points to let the audience of 3,500 field reps vote, with handheld remote devices, on what they would do next. For instance, would they go directly to the executive suites; schedule more middle management meetings; set up a product test; or roll over and play dead? The next segment of the video followed the heroic actions of the sales team as they battled to win over the client. The audience burst into applause when the sales team eventually won the client over with a superior Voice over IP solution.

The second session, involved the audience in a virtual sales case built around a fictitious financial services client played by professional actors. The audience members viewed key scenes in the sales process, and were asked to vote on the proper course of action. They voted on what to ask the clients about their needs, preferences and concerns, and, depending on their choices, watched video sequences of their responses. Using this on-stage "sales simulation," sales reps got to practice asking key qualifying questions to diagnose customer problems and ultimately prescribing a complete solution. They were able to respond to the most common customer concerns, and make condensed "elevator pitches" of their value proposition. Once the votes were tallied, teams were shown a scene depicting what would happen if the correct actions were taken. The programs have received rave reviews and helped improve consultative selling skills.



Between what are typically annual events, sales reps need ongoing reinforcement and training. Our numerous client experiences have proven that “Podcasts” developed in a fast-paced, entertaining, radio-style format, can hold sales people's attention as they drive to client meetings or clean the house. A case in point is the development of the “Myth Buster” series of radio-style audio files to train Avaya’s sprawling global sales and service force on a new product launch. Thousands of sales reps and business partners around the world can zap the 40-minute audio programs straight to their iPods or other MP3 players; or just listen from their laptops. In this five-part audio series, employees meet the host and follow the efforts of company sales leaders along with competitors as they try to sell solutions to a fictitious client.

Company executives interject commentaries and respond to call-in questions. So far, the reviews have been resoundingly positive. Participants have responded enthusiastically to the conversational nature of this fast-paced and entertaining "theater of the mind," which comes complete with field reports, exotic imaginary locales, humorous "commercials," inspirational vignettes and subtle spoofs on the competition. The programs feature running themes; jokes and cliffhangers that make reps look forward to the next one in the series. Best of all, it's translated to no fewer than six languages for the global sales force. One of the subject matter experts we worked with wrote an email in which he contrasted our work with another Avaya vendor. He described the Gronstedt Group staff as “real professionals” and likened our work to “watching Michelangelo take some plain oil paint and a dirty ceiling, and turning it into the Sistine Chapel”!

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