

Job Shadowing

Being involved in the field of training, I began to learn that there are many different tools that can be used and that different forms of teaching have varied levels of effectiveness depending on the student. When my formal training began it started in the field with my sales manager. I discovered first hand an approach or technique being employed, I picked up on the concept very quickly and was able to add it to my toolbox for future reference. This was one of the best forms of learning for my personal needs. As my sales manager became more confident with my work ethic and skill set he began to leverage his time by sending other junior sales reps out for the day with me to job shadow. Job shadowing is comparable to apprenticeship training which is commonly used in skilled trades.

Whenever I was accompanied by someone in a management position or who was providing dealer support I always encouraged them to become more involved in the sales calls so that I could experience them in action. I would be a sponge soaking up every bit of knowledge that I could. I listened carefully to what they said and the words that they used. I watched their body language and facial gestures to pick up on the heart beat of what was being said and conveyed. I carefully studied tools that they introduced into the conversation and how those tools were used. Afterwards, in the car between appointments, I would question them on what had transpired in the sales call. I would ask them why they did or said something to better understand what I had just heard.

For most of the years that I've been employed in sales it has been mostly commissioned income. For that reason, as long as I've met my sales objectives I always considered my time to be my own. Once I fully understood the power of job shadowing, I would take a half or full day away from my territory to job shadow someone else. If another rep was more knowledgeable about a certain product or had greater success with a certain client type then I would ask them if they would mind if I tagged along for the day to watch them in action the next time they would be working in or on the area that was of interest to me.

Classroom training has been very important to my career development and obviously I am a big believer in the value of training. However, that doesn't mean that there aren't other important pieces to the puzzle. Job shadowing gives the student an excellent opportunity to witness first hand the theory that they have learned in the classroom. It assists to raise the consciousness of the critical steps of the sales process and to see the ideas, techniques, tips and application of tools come to life.

When choosing someone to job shadow with, you must be cautious to ensure that it is going to have the positive outcome that you desire. After many years in professional selling I went out with a sales manager one day to job shadow her. I was very accustomed to making two person sales calls by this point in my career. In the middle of her presentation, I asked the prospect a question which seemed very harmless to me. Unfortunately the sales manager lost her composure and became totally flustered and it took her a few moments to regain her direction and get back on track.

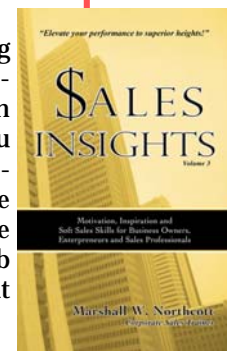
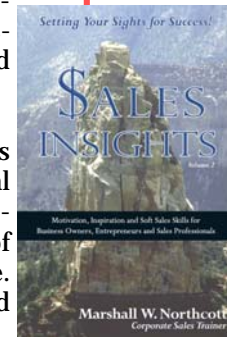
Job shadowing requires a great deal of responsibility. Therefore the person being shadowed needs to be extremely confident in their abilities. They can't be self-conscious and there needs to be an agreement beforehand regarding the student's role in the sales visits. The teacher may have no problem with your presence as long as you don't speak or become involved unless asked to do so. If you are doing the job shadowing, save your questions and comments for afterwards in the car unless otherwise discussed. If you determine that job shadowing is a valuable tool for your use make certain that you can trust the individual being shadowed to set a positive example. Job shadowing doesn't work for all people or in all circumstances but it can be of great benefit when used properly.

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Getting Beyond Average!



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“Example is the school of mankind and they will learn at no other.” - Edmund Burke