

WARNER DEVELOPMENT'S SELLING SKILLS ASSESSMENT A Case Study



WarnerDevelopment



Assessing Selling Skills in a Specialty Pharma Sales Force

In 2009, the sales leadership at a small pharmaceutical company wanted to invest in the individual development of its specialty sales representatives and identify the critical skills needed to gain market share on its primary competitor. The company's brand possessed a 23.3% share of the market. This particular market is relatively mature and the organization's leaders were looking for a new commercial edge in an extremely competitive market.

Implementing Warner Development's Selling Skills Assessment

The organization initiated Warner Development's Selling Skills Assessment in the spring of 2009. Leadership decided that the multi-rater assessment initiative would be developmentally focused, with no evaluative impact on individual sales representatives. This was done to build trust in the process and encourage sales representative participation. To reinforce this message, individual reports would only be delivered to the sales representative – they would own the data and results. Of course, sales representatives were encouraged to share the results with their manager and leverage the coaching process and tools.

Assessing Sales representative Competencies

The multi-rater assessment consisted of 25 skill and behavior-based items representing seven competencies: Account Management, Core Selling Skills, Relationship Building, Consultative Selling, Product & Disease-State Expertise, Evidence-Based Selling®, and Managed-Care Expertise. Each sales representative

ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES

- Investing in the development of its specialty pharma sales representatives
- Identifying the critical skills for its sales representatives
- Growing market share in a competitive, mature market
- Understanding the ROI of its training investments
- Revenue growth

RESULTS

- Determined Evidence-Based Selling® as the key driver of market share
- Determined Product & Disease-State Expertise as a key driver of Evidence-Based Selling® competence in its sales force
- Determined the overall Evidence-Based Selling® competency score of its sales force by 1/4 of a standard deviation would result in a 1% improvement in market share or \$4.5 million in revenue growth

personally invited individual physicians to complete the short on-line survey (no incentive was offered to physicians to complete the survey). Physicians were identified by the organization based on territory market share potential. Managers completed an assessment of the same competencies for each sales representative. Finally, each representative completed a self-assessment to aid in the development planning process.



Survey Participation

One hundred and sixteen sales representatives participated in the Selling Skills Assessment. A total of 1266 physicians were sent a survey invitation. A little more than 50% of the physicians completed a survey. On average, 7.5 responses were received for each sales representative, including 5.5 physician responses, a manager and self-assessment. Twenty-one of the sales representatives received ten or more responses, with several representatives receiving more than fourteen responses. The highest number of physician responses received was seventeen.

report of their responses. Furthermore, a feedback workshop was delivered to sales representatives and managers to assist with: understanding the reports, identifying strengths and development opportunities, building a development plan, and leveraging the information within the existing field coaching process.

Sales Representatives and Manager Results

Individual sales representatives were each provided a summary

Managers received a summary report for their specific territories. This report allowed individual managers to follow a similar development planning process – one that is focused on their local sales team.

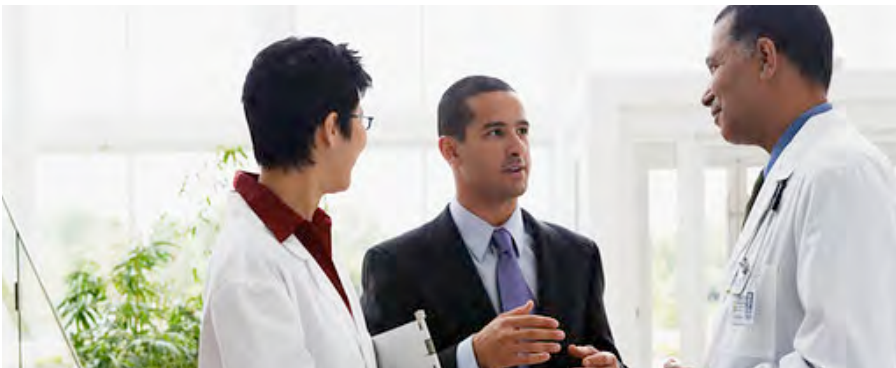
Organizational Results

Based on the aggregated data set, an overall, systemic analysis was conducted. Using structural equations modeling (a sophisticated statistical technique with many advantages over multiple regression and correlation) a linkage analysis was performed that links sales representatives competencies to business outcomes. The organization's primary performance metric for sales representatives is territory market share. As such, the manager and physician responses were statistically linked to the six-month territory market share for each sales representative. This analysis allows an organization to prioritize individual behaviors that causally contribute to the desired outcome (e.g., market share). The results of the linkage analysis are depicted below.



The results of the linkage analysis identified Evidence-Based Selling® skills as the only statistically significant driver of market share. Furthermore, the results identified Product & Disease-State Expertise as a key driver of Evidence-Based Selling® competence in the sales force. This makes sense in that a sales representative cannot sell clinically without a strong foundation in the product and disease-state being treated. Delving deeper into the data, the individual behaviors comprising the Evidence-Based Selling® competency were analyzed for impact. The items below in red have the largest statistical impact on the Evidence-Based Selling® competency and have the largest opportunity for improvement.

Evidence-Based Selling® Items	Mean	Beta	Priority
Is fluent in ProductX clinical studies and effectively articulates their findings	6.45	.25	3
Accurately answers questions about clinical study methodology	6.09	.39	1
Easily discusses concerns about bias in ProductX's clinical studies	5.80	.39	1



Expected ROI and Project Applications

The systemic analysis allowed the sales organization to assess current sales representatives' capabilities and prioritize training & development interventions. Furthermore, using the parameters from the linkage model, it was estimated that an improvement in the Evidence-Based Selling® score for the organization of .24 (1/4th of a standard deviation) would increase revenue by \$4.5 million annually. To address key needs in the areas of Evidence-Based Selling® and Product & Disease-State Expertise, the organization is currently planning training interventions to be provided to all sales representatives. The expected ROI calculation was used to secure funding for the subsequent training interventions. In addition to the impact on the organization's training strategy, the results of the study were used to adjust the brand strategy of the product. Overall, the results of the Selling Skills Assessment were found to have numerous applications and impacts throughout the organization.

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What We Do...

Warner Development is the only company of its kind that teams with pharmaceutical sales organizations to redefine impact in the field. Developing pharmaceutical sales leaders means providing pharmaceutical sales representatives and management with strategies to impact the marketplace.

Our unique specialization provides sales representatives and managers the strategies they need to command a marketplace with increased sales and market share.

Healthcare is continually evolving, adopting new processes that work and leaving antiquated methodologies behind. The role of Warner Development's programs is to not just help your organization keep pace, but to help you identify change and position sales representatives and managers for optimum growth.

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