

Real World Simulation for Peak Performance

Situation

A major consumer goods company wanted to drive a sea-change in Account Executive negotiation and selling skills with buyers. The objective was to move good skills and competencies to an exceptionally advanced level for key accounts.

Solution

DHC consultants worked with the client to create a 360 program that included e-learning, manager coaching and mentoring, and theoretical learning. Account executives needed to “test in” to be allowed to attend the face-to-face program. The keystone of the program was a 3-day immersive simulation in which account executives interacted with DHC consultants playing the role of the buyer – some of who had actually held that role with key retailers. The “buyers” stayed in character through the entire 3 days. During those 3 days, account executives rotated through multiple rounds of one-on-one or small group sessions. The primary catalyst was a series of buyer meeting simulations where the buyers reacted and responded exactly as their buyer at their actual account might respond and react. The buyer sessions were followed up by mentoring with a senior level manager. The course concluded with preparation of a presentation they would be required to present to their actual customer after the program. Account executives were required to pass rigorous behavior demonstrations to earn a passing score in the program. Those who did not achieve the score were allowed to repeat the course at a later time, but three failures would have career consequences.

Results

Account executives’ skills and competencies were dramatically improved. Customer buyers gave impromptu comments on the marked difference in account executive performance. The program was so well-received, not only by management but by account executives as well, that it was considered a mark of great achievement to be allowed into the program and account executives actually lobbied to be included.