

Increased Sales Revenue Through Skilled Account Executives Cabletron Sales Training

Background: Founded in 1983 in a Massachusetts garage by Craig Benson and Robert Levine, Cabletron became an industry leading provider of telecommunications products and services which included intelligent hubs, switches, routers, network management and professional services. The company had amassed numerous prestigious accolades and industry firsts including, the biggest technology Initial Public Offering (IPO) in the history of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE); #1 performing stock by the New York Stock Exchange; #330 in Business Week's Global 1000. (At its peak Cabletron employed 6,600 people with over \$1.4 billion in annual revenue; the company was acquired in 2001 by Enterasys.)



Cabletron's growth was due in large part to its successful sales model, deploying Inside Sales Representatives (ISRs) in a support role to customer-facing Account Managers (AMs). The role of the ISR was significantly different from the role of Account Manager. While both were members of the Cabletron Sales Team, the ISR used primarily an indirect, telephone-based sales process whereas the AM's sales strategy was more direct and based on face-to-face sales for account penetration and customer relationships.

There was a logical and desirable development path from ISR to AM. Unfortunately, there existed no training to support the development.

Challenge: After enjoying impressive - and perhaps uncontrolled - growth through the early 90's, Cabletron had reached a size where its bravado and panache alone could no longer sustain the company. Successful ISRs who wished to develop into AMs found themselves with product knowledge, potential, and enthusiasm; what they lacked was skill and a process.

The ISRs had demonstrated success and experience in their positions as ISRs with a working knowledge of:

- Cabletron's products, services, and technologies as well as their features, advantages, and benefits
- Cabletron's selling process as defined in New Hire Training
- Cabletron's competitors
- The networking industry and trends in networking



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- The use of the telephone in sales

The ISRs had awareness, but limited working knowledge of:

- The role of the Account Manager
- Customers who qualify as accounts for Account Managers

The ISRs had limited, or no awareness of:

- The steps involved in making face-to-face, more complex sales
- The importance and process of forming business relationships
- Recognizing opportunities
- Selling the value of a networking solution to various buyers and decision makers (CEO, department head, MIS, etc.)
- Influence (internally) and negotiations resulting in a win-win for Cabletron and for the customer

Solution: After a thorough needs assessment and working with Cabletron's sales and training leadership, Entelechy helped Cabletron create an integrated product and skills training program for its account managers. *Cabletron's Training for Experienced Account Managers (C-TEAM)* integrated new product presentations with relationship selling skills into a two-week training event that used case studies and role plays to assess the participants' knowledge and capabilities. Entelechy augmented existing Cabletron training by customizing its *High Performance Sales* program, creating new modules where necessary and developing case studies and assessment instruments required for a complete, effective performance solution.

Precourse
Reading: Bus Etiquette

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Introductions Role of the Account Manager; The Sales Team	Face-to-Face Sales Skills: HPS Forming Business Relationships	Face-to-Face Sales Skills: Cabletron Capabilities Presentation	Synthesis: Selling the Framework (Presentation)	Technology/Product/ Service Training: Selling the Benefit
Face-to-Face Sales Skills: HPS Planning for Success	Face-to-Face Sales Skills: Capabilities Presentation	Face-to-Face Sales Skills: HPS Searching for Opportunities; Etiquette Review	Technology/Product/ Service Training: Selling the Benefit	Face-to-Face Sales Skills: HPS Creating Customer Alignment
Case Study	Capabilities Presentation Prep.	Business Dinner; Etiquette Practice	Case Study	Case Study

Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Technology/Product/ Service Training: Selling the Benefit	Technology/Product/ Service Training: Selling the Benefit	Team Selling Business Communications	Face-to-Face Sales Skills: HPS Solution Presentations	Solution Presentations
Financial Selling	HPS Collaborative Negotiations	Time and Territory Management	Solution Presentation Preparation	Solution Presentations; HPS Monitoring the Relationship; Graduation
Case Study	Case Study	Case Study	Solution Presentation Prep.	



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C-TEAM was a comprehensive training program that included:

- **Role Plays, Presentations, and Experiential Learning:** Role plays, presentations, and other experiential learning formed the basis for the success of *C-TEAM*. Exercises and activities were used to introduce, teach, or reinforce skills that Account Managers need to succeed at Cabletron.
- **Videotaping and Feedback:** The presentations and role plays were videotaped which provided a revealing perspective for account managers who had never seen themselves in action. Feedback on critical skills was provided and included in the videotaping, which further provided a record for participants' follow-up.
- **Case Study:** The case studies used in *C-TEAM* required Account Managers to apply newly-acquired skills and techniques to realistic scenarios. The case studies reinforced selling skills and product knowledge.
- **Formal Dinner:** A dinner was planned during the second week for participants to demonstrate their understanding of proper business attire and dining etiquette. The dinner included a featured speaker.
- **On-The-Job Application:** *C-TEAM* was designed to lead Account Managers through actual job experiences.

Results: *C-TEAM* became the cornerstone for Cabletron's sales training. Because of its realism and intensity, graduates of the training were better prepared to face the ever-increasing challenge of the networking sales environment.

Graduates of the program went on to become top sales professionals at Cabletron. Many have taken their skills – and Entelechy's training – to other companies including Aprisma, Enterasys, Xiotech, and others.

In the two years that followed the initial deployment of *C-TEAM*, Cabletron reached its zenith with over \$1.4 billion in annual revenue.