

GSSI 2014 Conference

Settings as a Design Parameter to increase Effectiveness of Sales Role-Plays in Higher Education

Framework Conditions for Sales in Higher Education

- General Reputation of Sales
- Weighting and Relevance of Sales in B.Eng. Study Courses
- Personality Traits of B.Eng. Students



Motivation of Students

Challenges in Teaching Sales

Interdisciplinary Skills

- Engineering / Technological Skills
- Business Administration / Economic Skills
- Social Sciences / Psychological and Social Skills

Communicative Skills

- Information Gathering Processes
- Information Transfer

Uncertainty and Frustration Tolerance

Role-Plays as Didactic Tool

Advantages:

- Practical Relevance
- Increased Involvement of Participants, Advisors, Observers
- Immediate Feedback (Participants, Advisors, Observers)
- Reduction of Complexity (Topics, Episodes and Situations)
- Individual Parameterization of Role-play Design

Obstacles:

- Anxiety of Students or Fear of Failure
- Comprehensive Conversation is not enforceable
- Motivation Centers around Participants only
- Suboptimal Results due to missing background information (products ...)
- Break down of Role-Plays due to lack of preparation
- Break down of Role-Plays due to diverging capabilities of participants

Findings - Didactic Results of Role-plays

Conclusions:

Settings as Design Parameters to improve didactic Results of Role-Plays

Improving results o

Suggestions to improve Role-Plays (I)

Increase of Numbers of Responsible Students

- Role-Play Managers
- Observers
- Assistants
- Introduction of Teams in a Role-Play
- Introduction of Colleagues, Superiors in Role-Plays

Individualization of Duties for each of the responsibilities

Empowerment of Responsibilities with Reporting and Commentating Functions

Suggestions to improve Role-Plays (II)

Increase the Number of Role-Plays

Sequencing of Role-Plays along the Sales Funnel

Feedback and Feed forward Role-plays

- Reporting to Superiors
- Coordination with Colleagues

Introduction of additional Parties (speed selling)

- Introduction of additional Customers
- Introduction of additional Competitors

Suggestions to improve Role-Plays (III)

Introduction of Handicaps

- With respect to Topic, Degree, Symmetry and Predictability

Topics:

- Limitation of Time
- Limitation of Communication Channels
- Limitation of Information Access
- Limitation of Physical Resources in Role-Plays
- Limitation of Behavioral Repertoires
- Limitation of Competencies and Bargaining Scopes
- Limitation of immediate access to Conversation Partners
- Limitation of Product or Service Quality, Manufacturing Capacities, Delivery Times
- Degradation of Employer Reputation
- Confrontation with delicate or reluctant Conversation Partners
- Confrontation with inherited Liabilities
- Scarce Specification of Targets, Requirements, Products, Cases, Projects or Processes
- Alteration of Projects in the Course of a Sales Cycle.
- Introduction of Interruptions and Disturbances during Role-Plays
- Changing Conversation Partners or Changing Roles

Suggestions to implement Role-Plays

Segmentating the Sales Funnel for Role-Plays
Using specific Presettings and Instructions

- Cold Calling
- First Contact
- Inquiry Talk
- Offer Presentation
- Follow-up Campaigns
- Negotiations and Closing
- Complaints

Evaluation of Settings

- Evaluators
- Frequency and Point in Time
- Methods
- Indicators

Thank you.