

ESR's

SALES TRAINING VENDOR GUIDE

THIRD EDITION

Version 3.02



**A Comprehensive Evaluation and Comparison
of 23 Leading Sales Training Companies and Their Programs**

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The Sales Training Arena: ESR's Sales Training Vendor Guide, Third Edition

A comprehensive report and evaluation of the leading sales training companies and programs and new trends in sales training

This comprehensive *ESR/InDepth* Report provides an analytic review and comparison of the leading sales training providers. It serves as a vital instrument to help match any sales organization's sales training and performance needs with the right sales training provider to meet those needs.

During the past year we updated individual ESR/Insight™ Brief vendor reports to include additional data. The newer and updated Briefs now contain the following sections in the body:

- Training programs
- Business model
- Methodology
- Management training
- Reinforcement
- Learning technology/delivery technology
- Courseware
- Customization
- Measurement
- Train-the-trainer capabilities

1 Executive Summary

Corporations continue to spend a significant portion of their revenue on sales training. Although we believe the total in 2009 will be down significantly from previous years, enterprises will still spend between upwards of \$4 billion training their sales professionals. Some estimates are considerably higher. A significant portion of that investment is spent with third-party training firms.

ESR has studied failed sales training initiatives across many industries, sizes of companies and sales training providers. As a result, we have identified the critical success factors for sales performance improvement initiatives:

1. Understanding how the customer buys;
2. Identifying, sizing, and prioritizing the gaps between how the customer buys and how the salespeople sell;
3. Benchmarking current performance; setting improvement objectives;
4. Evaluating and selecting a methodology/training partner;

Background

Core Issue

Who are the sales training and consulting providers that deliver effective offerings for sales organizations?

In the US alone, enterprises spend over \$4 billion per year training sales professionals, half of that investment with third-party training firms. However, less than ten percent of that total is spent with the largest of providers, leaving corporations to make training decisions from an extremely fragmented and often incompatible pool of suppliers.

Very limited, if any, objective information is available about the sales training providers. And since few companies have the experience and a process to find, select, and manage a provider, many companies either do no training or embark upon a path that leads to failure.

ES Research Group, Inc. was founded specifically for the purpose of providing research- and experience-based intelligence about sales training approaches and programs and the companies that provide them.

5. Building a sales methodology and the constituent processes, tools and support mechanisms, including a sales performance measurement system;
6. Creating curricula and structure for sales training and ongoing reinforcement;
7. Training (not necessarily a single, live event as it has traditionally been delivered);
8. Monitoring and measuring behavior and performance and adjusting where required.

Previously ESR reported that only 10% of sales training initiatives resulted in performance improvement lasting longer than 90-120 days. This year we have seen that increase to about 15%, meaning that more companies are seeing extended benefits from their investments in sales training. That comes as very good news.

We now estimate that fifteen percent of sales organizations are now using a formal methodology and seeing their productivity gains last up to 12 months. This is a significant increase over last year. The importance of sustainable increases is becoming a priority for training managers and sales managers, rather than sales training just being a checkmark on the to-do list. Firms that are formal sales methodology-focused continue to out-perform those firms which do not have formal methodologies.

This year's research shows widening gaps between firms employing technology and those relying on traditional teaching and classroom methods. The training firms that are transitioning quickly to non-classroom delivery and reinforcement media, including video, remote online content access, and live telephone coaching sessions are better meeting the needs of their clients during these tough economic times.

For the first time in many years, the economy will be a factor in sales training. We expect that training companies capable of delivering their content remotely will be able to maintain their current revenue levels at best, while those that rely on face-to-face delivery of materials will see substantial decreases.

The objectives of this report are:

- Highlight the importance of the critical success factors outlined above.
- Provide a summary of evaluation guidelines for selecting external sales training.
- Identify leading sales training providers in the market
- Categorize them in a manner that makes it easier to identify those training companies that most closely meet your needs
- Score these companies by various areas of expertise and specialty

Important!

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Errors and Omissions

Invariably with a report of this size and complexity there are errors and omissions. ESR suggests you "white list" ESResearch.com in your email system so you can be apprised of any changes to this Report.

- Determine the relative effectiveness of external sales training providers vs. training provided exclusively by internal trainers/facilitators.

While it is very difficult to establish a control group, due to the lack of data collected (especially by companies that do internal training only), the key conclusion, which we will explore in more detail, is that for areas critical to sales performance, externally-provided sales training yields a considerably higher degree of training effectiveness than internal-only sales training solutions.

1.1 Who Will Benefit from This Report?

This report is written primarily for those who are responsible for building or buying sales training programs. Recommended audiences include the chief sales officer (CSO), sales managers responsible for selecting and deploying sales training for their teams, and staff groups and their managers including human resources, internal training and sales training organizations and sales operations.

1.2 The Scope of this Report

This *ESR/InDepth*[™] Report is designed to help your organization increase the return on your sales training investment. In this report, we examine the leading training and consulting vendors, their strengths and weaknesses, and the specific sales skill problems that they address. While there are many sales training vendors, there are likely only a few that match your sales training needs and criteria.

We clearly and succinctly provide you with:

- An understanding of the key criteria for selecting a sales training or sales performance improvement vendor.
- The key criteria for measuring the success of a sales productivity improvement intervention.
- Alternative providers that should be on your short list based upon your industry, size, geographic reach, and the complexity of your sales cycle.
- A tool to save weeks of time researching potential providers.
- Significant benefit from the advice and recommendations of ESR's top analysts and sales experts.

Financial Viability

As of publication date, the U.S. and Global economy is in the midst of a severe recession. This has impacted small and large training vendors alike.

ESR strongly advises an objective and comprehensive assessment of a prospective vendor's ability to deliver what is promised under these circumstances.

- A comparison of the providers in key areas such as:
 - Technology support
 - Performance measurement
 - Educational design
 - Customer satisfaction
 - Breadth of solutions
 - Compliance among sales people
 - Return on investment

Learn which providers should be on your short list.

1.3 Which Sales Training Providers Are Featured in this Report?

We have examined 19 leading companies for this report (and increase of four over the last Report). Each vendor that had been covered in our previous report has been updated:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Acclivus | 12. InfoMentis |
| 2. AchieveGlobal | 13. Knowledge Advantage |
| 3. CustomerCentric Systems | 14. Miller Heiman |
| 4. The Brooks Group | 15. Performance Methods, Inc. |
| 5. The Complex Sale | 16. Prime Resource Group |
| 6. Forum | 17. Revenue Storm |
| 7. FranklinCovey Sales Performance Group | 18. Richardson |
| 8. Holden International | 19. Sales Performance International (SPI) |
| 9. Huthwaite | 20. Sandler Sales Institute |
| 10. Impax | 21. The TAS Group |
| 11. Imparta | 22. ValueSelling Associates |
| | 23. Wilson Learning |

1.4 What Makes a Company a Leader?

Clearly, size is a factor. Larger firms command attention in the market and have the resources for ongoing development. We also include firms that have been historically important. These firms typically did innovative, ground breaking research and development that significantly influenced other programs. Pure innovation is a factor. A firm can be a leader because of innovative solutions, processes or intellectual property. Name recognition is a factor. Finally, ESR includes vendors that our clients regularly query about.

These five factors: size, historical importance, innovation, name recognition and client interest were all considered in our decision making process to determine which firms would be included in our third annual Sales Training Vendor Guide.

The reader should understand that during our extensive research and interview cycle with vendor-provided and our own sources, we found that even the best companies have at least a few negative references. And companies that did not score well in some areas had references that applauded them loudly. ESR is determined to filter out this noise and provide you with what we believe to be an objective, accurate and comprehensive report.

1.5 How Did We Evaluate these Companies?

First, when looking at leaders in an industry, it would be rare in any industry, to find “bad” or “ineffective” companies (although it does happen). We eliminated five companies from this Guide that we had evaluated because they were not on par with the rest. Such companies do not rise to a position of leadership. With the degree of competitiveness these days in the business world it is unlikely that a company that was a leader and regressed to the point that they were reasonably ineffective at what they did would stay a leader.

However, there are “better” and “poorer” *matches* between companies, their solutions, and their clients and prospects. Bear this in mind. Sales training is, from a historical perspective, ineffective. There are a number of reasons for this. One of the most important is a mismatch between the sales training buying company and the provider.

Our objective is to categorize companies, identify their strengths, their challenges, and identify the specific challenges for which each company provides solutions. Out of this list of 23 companies (up from 19 in the last edition), there are probably three to six that should make your short list, unless you have very unique circumstances. The rest, regardless of how good their solutions may be for another company, will not be optimal for your needs.

Section 2 describes our assessment criteria in more detail. But in general terms, we examine companies on Solution Effectiveness and Breadth of Solution. We also examine the coverage areas on which each vendor focuses. We categorize them in terms of deployment of learning-related technologies, rigor of selling methodology supported and classes of training solutions provided.

Each of these assessment criteria relate directly to the determination of the optimal solution for our client.

Through our proven research methodology, ESR has tapped into publicly-available information, multiple in-depth interviews with vendor CEOs and/or other senior executives, as well as numerous ongoing interviews with vendor-provided references. ESR also collects vendor-specific data from surveys residing on our website and published in our *ESR/Alert™* e-mail newsletter. We also have developed a network of sales training users, buyers and sales vps and managers who have engaged with multiple vendors and are capable and willing to share with us their experiences.

Failed Training

There are “better” and “poorer” *matches* between companies, their solutions, and their clients and prospects. Bear this in mind. Sales training is, from a historical perspective, ineffective. There are a number of reasons for this. One of the most important is a mismatch between the sales training buying company and the provider.

Section 2 has been expanded to include a detailed analysis of the criteria for our two new evaluation categories: Learning Technologies and Performance Measurement Programs.

1.6 Why Should You Invest in This Report?

There are many excellent sales training programs on the market. However, excellence depends upon the right match of training needs with training solutions. One company's excellent training program can be another's sales training disaster. Why?

First, different sales training vendors and programs address different selling environments. These are just a few of the very many questions that must be asked and answered. (For a comprehensive guide see the *ESR/InDepth* Report [Understanding, Defining, and Meeting Your Sales Training Requirements](#)):

How do your customers typically buy? Here are just a few of the many questions that need to be answered:

- What impact is the current financial crisis having on their purchasing and procurement process?
- Do they employ formal bidding process, including the RFP (Request for Proposal)?
- Are they knowledgeable about your products and those of your competitors?
- Are the buyers experienced in working with companies like yours or are you involved in "missionary selling?"
- How are final decisions typically made?

What are the characteristics of your selling model?

- Do you sell big-ticket items in small quantities or low-priced products in large quantities?
- Do you make one sale per customer or many?
- Is your product complex or simple to explain or demonstrate?
- Do you have many competitors or only a few?
- Do you sell on price or value?
- Is your sales cycle typically short or long?
- Do you sell to one or a committee of buyers?
- Do you sell products or services or a combination of both?
- To what degree are engineers, specialists or other resources required to pursue a sales opportunity?

Different vendors address different salesperson profiles:

- Are your sales people experienced or inexperienced?
- Do you have high or low turnover within your sales team?
- Do employ inside sales and/or outside sales resources?
- Do you have individual opportunity-focused reps, strategic account teams or both?
- Must your sales people have special skills, attributes, behaviors or experience?
- How is your team currently performing?

Different vendors address different learning goals:

- Do you need to improve basic or advanced selling skills?
- Do you need to increase strategic account management effectiveness?
- Do you need to improve opportunity management capabilities?
- Do you need to improve prospecting, presentation or closing skills?
- Do you need to deliver learning that supports business development managers?
- Do you need to provide learning and support to channel managers?

Please understand that these are just a few examples of what must be considered before zeroing in on a short list of providers.

1.7 Why Do So Many Companies Wind Up with the Wrong Training Vendor?

As a result of our research and hands-on advisory and consulting work with our clients, ESR has found that sales training companies are often selected for the wrong reasons. VPs of Sales, HR Managers and Training Directors often:

- Engage with a training provider with whom they have worked in the past, even though the company's situation may be very different from what it was in the past.
- Get a referral from someone in another company who has engaged a sales training provider, even if the other company's requirements may be very different from their own.
- Hire a company that has the hottest new approach, or a trainer who wrote a book with what is purported to be a solution to what the company believes its problem is.
- Attend a promotional event (webinar, sales leaders' conference, or public training event) and are impressed with the quality and style of the trainer.
- Search the Internet until they find a trainer whose offerings are appealing based upon what is represented on the trainer's site.
- Get a recommendation from a top sales performer from within their group.

ESR Recommends

The final deliverable from a comprehensive and objective sales effectiveness assessment should be a requirements document. That document is then transformed into an RFP.

Most vendors, even the best ones, will not want to respond to your RFP. They might say, for example, that it takes too much time, they do not have the

resources or it slows down the evaluation process.

It is critically important that you measure alternative vendors against your requirements.

With respect to RFPs, we have seen serious abuses on the buy-side over the past several decades.

Although you may still have to convince a vendor to respond to your RFP, here are some guidelines that will ease the situation a bit, if communicated to the vendors:

Do not develop your RFP with input from a particular vendor. That will put other vendors at a disadvantage. They would be justified in not responding.

Do not distribute the RFP to any companies that you would not consider doing business with.

Require the vendors to adhere to a policy of completing the RFP phase before they are allowed one-on-one access to individuals within your company.

2 What are Our Key Findings?

2.1 Evolution of Measurement Programs

This is the third year we have included a significant emphasis on measuring performance. It has been a focus of our published research. This year, with a slowing economy and uncertain financial outlook, measuring sales performance and knowing that you are getting value for your money, is more critical than ever. Our key findings are:

Organizations that measure sales performance improvement are more productive than organizations that do not. This seems to bear out the assertion of management guru, Dr. Peter Drucker's axiom "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it." This has shown to be true each of the last three years.

- Selling organizations are keen to implement a program to measure the improvement of their selling activities based upon performance improvement (e.g., sales training, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Sales Force Automation (SFA) or sales methodology introduction). Approximately 25% of sales organizations actually have implemented some program beyond the basic one-page evaluation surveys or "smile sheets" at the end of a training intervention. This is an increase over last year. More and more companies are recognizing the value associated with measurement programs.
- While there is still a reluctance to allow the sales performance vendor to measure its own result, the increasing reality is that the vendor is still the best candidate to measure results. What we have observed, is that an ever-increasing number of vendors are measuring results. The increase from 20% to 25% is significant. While undoubtedly, some vendors view measurement as simply a revenue opportunity, the majority of them are accepting it as their responsibility to make sure that students actually retain an employee skills.

Measurement

Organizations that measure sales performance improvement are more productive than organizations that do not.

Fewer than 20% of sales organizations actually have implemented some program beyond the basic one-page evaluation surveys or "smile sheets" at the end of a training intervention.

2.2 Evolution of Technology

Virtual World: Second Life for business

Second Life, for those who are unfamiliar with it, is an online community. But unlike other online communities, it has a realistic, three-dimensional appeal. Most of the denizens of Second Life are there for the entertainment factor. However, a select few are using it for its growing business value. To thought leaders in our industry, The Brooks Group and Performance Methods Inc., are

using this new technology in their different ways. Basically, Second Life is a proxy for or a simulation model of the real world.

What is it?

Second Life is a virtual world. Stores, entertainment venues, and homes all can be built in Second Life. Second Life is a virtual home away from home where the individual can take on any persona, one per account.

How do people get established in Second Life?

In Second Life, as an entertainment medium, people establish a personality and then pick the mode of dress, voice and other physical attributes of their virtual individual or avatar. In Second Life, people can live vicariously as their chosen avatar, interacting with other people that live in that space. It is also able to conduct commerce using Linden dollars as the mode of exchange. For several years, this has been the mode of entertainment for thousands of people.

In the commercial space, this is a very new phenomenon. Using Second Life as a training medium and a meeting is relatively new. It has only been in the last year, with the economy slowing, that people have begun to look at the commercial applications of this technology.

For commercial users, there is the opportunity to rent meeting space or, if you know you are going to run lots of sessions, buy meeting space directly from Second Life. An entire micro-industry has sprung up to design these virtual spaces.

In some instances, it is the user's responsibility to open a Second Life account. However, it is more likely that a vendor of three-dimensional training will establish the first persona for an individual which can be used anywhere in Second Life.

Second Life as a training vehicle.

As a mode of education, Second Life is certainly novel. Second Life allows users to congregate at a virtual location regardless of their physical location. Clearly, Second Life reduces travel costs. Second Life also allows individuals who may or may not know each other an opportunity to interface in a mode that is similar to a live meeting.

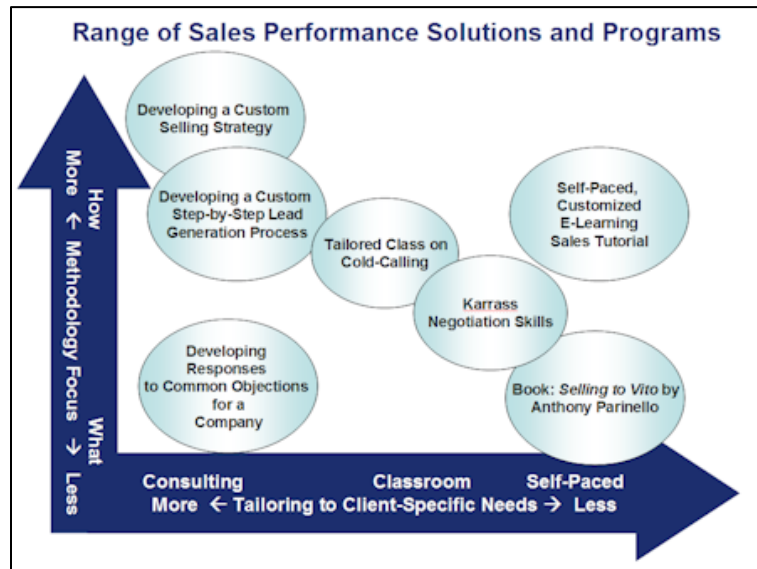
Second Life as a meeting place.

Another use of Second Life in the commercial world is as a place to hold meetings. It is much less expensive than travel. Avatars are easier to manipulate online, en masse, than physical images such as video, and it has a training appeal. One advantage of Second Life as a meeting place is that physical objects that could not possibly exist in the real world in more than one location can be manipulated by people at several locations. ESR deconstructed a collaborative planning meeting that took place on Second Life between Schneider Electric and their customer

2.9 Rigorous Sales Methodology

There is a two-dimensional continuum of methodology in sales education. (See Graphic “Range of Sales Performance...”.) In one dimension you have the adaptability of the program—is it custom consulting, an interactive classroom experience, or a self-paced or recorded tutorial? In the other dimension you have the focus of the content—is it step-by-step process training (how to) or more focused on the nomenclature, deliverables of the process, and thought process for sales decision making (what to do)? Our findings are that the following sales training providers offer the most rigorous sales methodology:

- The Complex Sale
- CustomerCentric Systems
- Holden International
- Imparta
- Miller Heiman
- Revenue Storm
- The TAS Group



2.10 Formalized Customization Programs

The sales leaders and training authorities of many organizations want a customized sales training experience. The question is, what types of changes are positive for the organizations and what changes detract from a learning experience. Universally, sales training companies claim that they will customize course materials. But the user needs to understand what forms that customization takes. Customizing case studies, examples and the like can often enhance the learning experience for the student. However one must be very careful when making structural changes to a course. The tendency, when making these structural changes, is to modify the course so that it closely resembles the current sales process. This works only once the current sales process is known to be effective. Only in rare occasions is that the case.

Buyers of sales training often don't understand that they are seeking training not because they have an effective sales process and want to reinforce its use, but because the existing sales process is broken. Alterations of the structure of a program to reflect the exact current processes can be as detrimental to the sales organization as not running training at all.

Our findings are that the following sales training providers offer the most formal and complete customization approach:

category for their creative use of three-dimensional, virtual living spaces as a means of providing training using Second Life.

ESR considers Revenue Storm innovative for their approach of individually assessing salespeople and personalizing learning to fill specific skills gaps that each sales person has.

ESR Recommends

As this Report is published the hype around Sales 2.0 and Social Media—Twitter, Facebook, Plaxo, LinkedIn, etc.—has reached a fever pitch.

ESR is concerned that companies will seek these new technology applications instead of focusing on the basic work that must be done to improve the overall performance of their sales teams.

There is a place for Sales 2.0 (a term originated by Sales 2.0 LLC) and Social Media—to support the more efficient and effective employment of processes that are in place and have been proven to work.

objectives, being able to calculate and discuss return on investment, calling on higher executives in larger organizations and being able to carry on a credible, business-oriented discussion with a senior executive, and significant data/information mining and interpretation about competition and the prospect. In addition, leveraging politics in the buyer's company and competitive selling are considered advanced selling skills.

3. Opportunity Management Education - Opportunity management is advanced education for sales executives selling expensive and/or complex products and focuses on divining the prospects' needs and requirements, evaluation criteria and spending ability. Opportunity Management Education may focus on how to identify key buying decision makers, spending authorizers, and key influencers within the organization (i.e., understanding and leveraging the politics of the buying environment). *Typically Opportunity Management focuses on winning a particular sale.*

4. Account Management Education - Account Management focuses on *strategically* managing and growing an account that may procure multiple products or services from your company over the course of many years. It differs from Opportunity Management in that an Account Manager must marshal a wider range of resources within his or her own company, project demand from the client, mine and interpret company information to determine new opportunities, facilitate partnerships between their companies and the customer, plan collaboratively, and in general, grow an account year after year, driving predictable and consistent revenue.

5. Sales Management Education - Sales Management education is for the line-manager of sales people (i.e., the sales manager with hire/fire/discipline authority over a group of sales people). Sales management education has two key branches: a) Managing the deployment of sales learning to assure that the skills are put to use in the field; and, b) Management skills such as territory assignment, coaching, quota management, compensation plans, and sales recruiting.

3.2 Best of Breed vs. Sole Source?

Understanding the various *learning objectives* of the sales training vendors makes it evident that gaining an improvement in sales effectiveness means matching the learnings of the program with the needs of your sales force.

For example, the nature of your **business and sales methodology** will determine what type of opportunity and account management training your sales force needs. If you have complex, high-priced products that are capital purchases, then opportunity management education to fit your needs is critical. Whether or not your products are complex, if your sales volume with a client is high, and you offer a number of consumable or renewable product offerings, then you need to focus on account management.

On the other hand, basic and advanced selling skills are based on the **characteristics of your sales people**. If you have high turnover, more junior sales people, major shifts in product, or just have not done basic or advanced skills training in a couple of years, then these programs will be crucial

3.3 Sales Training & Change Management

Whether your motivation is enhancement of basic skills or systemic change, the keyword is “change.” The only difference is the magnitude of the change.

Since the 1970s (with the seminal research of Bennis, Benne, Chin & Clark¹), change management has been identified as a key management discipline. From corporate administration to technology deployment to sales management, the success or failure of thousands of initiatives can be traced to the effective (or ineffective) management of organizational change.

In sales performance improvement, and sales training, the magnitude of change is directly proportional to the degree to which the organization is focused on implementing a standardized selling methodology, as opposed to simply enhancing individual sales skills. The challenge or difficulty – the risk of success – is directly proportional to the magnitude of the change. Our observations also tell us that the degree of benefit is also proportional to the magnitude of change, i.e., sales process improvement is a classical risk/reward scenario. Therefore, a key element of success in any sales training program is the ability for the organization to manage change and mitigate risk.

We see the effects of change and risk in a variety of sales-related scenarios; but perhaps the best example is the deployment of CRM technology. Research shows that roughly 60% of all organizations deploying CRM (especially in-house, installed CRM solutions) report lower return-on-investment than anticipated. Fully 70% report that there is no perceived benefit by the sales person,

¹ See *General Strategies for Effecting Changes in Human Systems. The Planning of Change*. W. G. Bennis, K. D. Benne, R. Chin and K. E. Corey. (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston) 1976.

Modification carries a big risk—LCD—“lowest common denominator.” There is an observable tendency among course and methodology modifiers to fine tune the new methods and processes taught in the course materials to such an extent that they are “devolved” into a mere reflection of the existing sales process – the lowest common denominator being what the modifier already knows and understands.

Customizing course materials to make the program “more like our business environment” can effectively negate the original objective of the program, which was to effect behavioral change.

Avoiding "Devolution"

How do you avoid “devolution” in your customized sales training programs?

Stick with tailoring-type modifications.

If you have existing best practices, make sure that you have empirical metrics that denote that those practices do, in fact, stimulate behaviors that increase sales.

Evaluate your sales training company’s methods for modification of educational programs.

The third point is important. Some sales training organizations resist modification of their programs at all. Some, such as Performance Methods actually have a core set of learnings that are assembled and designed around a study of your organization’s best practices. Others, such as Wilson Learning and Richardson have designed proprietary systems or methodologies for modifying course materials that are specifically designed to maximize the value of nomenclature tailoring, while minimizing the probability that the structural integrity of a course will be damaged by the customization effort.

Quality of Instructional design: The quality, clarity, interactivity, adaptability of the instructional design.

5.2 Current Placement

Twenty-three vendors have been positioned on the *ESR/Arena* chart below. It is important to note that they are fairly tightly clustered within the band of “effective solutions,” meaning that there were no clearly poor providers. With that being said, no vendor is right for every situation. Moving from left to right along the x-axis describes the relative, reported or estimated sales performance improvement for each solution. Across the broad array of hundreds of sales training companies, the difference in “effectiveness” across the x-axis for these leading providers is negligible, as would be suspected when examining industry leaders.

Based upon the evaluation framework presented in this guide, along with our *ESR/InDepth* Report *Understanding, Defining and Meeting Your Sales Training and Methodology Requirements*, you should be in an excellent position to manage that evaluation and selection process correctly.

ESR strongly recommends not only reading the specifics about each vendor’s offerings, but to thoroughly evaluate any vendor before selecting one.

It is ill-advised, for example, to look at the *ESR/Arena* depiction and determine that the vendor in the upper-most right corner is the one for your company.

ESR Recommends

ESR has invested considerable time and money in the research behind and preparation of this Guide.

With that in mind, the *ESR/Arena* Chart or any other graphic comparison herein, by itself, is not enough information to make a decision about engaging with a sales performance improvement provider.

Excluding a provider from the information within this Guide is not only possible, but in some cases, likely.

ESR highly recommends investing in our *ESR/InDepth* Report *Understanding, Defining, and Meeting Your Sales Training Requirements* along with a consultation with ESR.

Acclivus, The Complex Sale, Performance Methods, Prime Resource Group, Sales Performance International and Wilson Learning have the most rigorous post-implementation measurement programs among the leading vendors.

The graphic below compares the various providers' solutions. It is clear that larger firms have a distinct advantage in breadth of coverage. However, this measure is not a "good or bad" measure, but rather an indicator of "where to look first" when seeking a unique solution. Surprisingly, some smaller companies such as ValueSelling Associates actually have a wide array of offerings.

The following is the Solution Comparative Analysis:

To The Point

AchieveGlobal is a global firm. You should long-list AchieveGlobal if you are looking for a methodology-based solution with robust skills programs. You should also consider AchieveGlobal if you are a multinational firm with a geographically distributed sales organization.

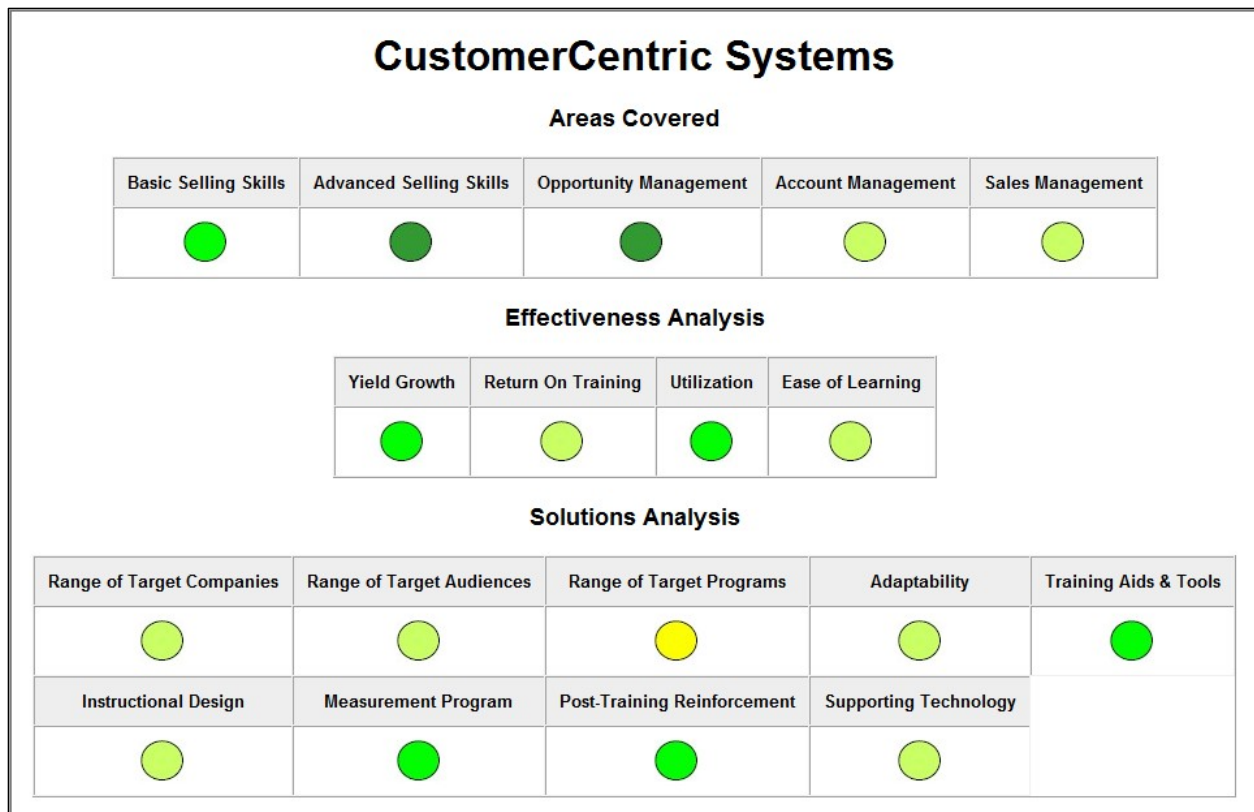
If you are looking to your sales training provider as a key to increasing the value of your CRM system and leveraging sales-person friendly technology, then you should consider alternatives to AchieveGlobal.

However, the range of target audiences is lower than a methodology-agnostic provider such as Wilson Learning, Sandler Sales Institute, or even Huthwaite.

Considering CustomerCentric vs. Alternatives

If your sales growth is stalled, and you are looking for a new and more contemporary approach to sales methodology, CustomerCentric certainly should be on your short-list. CustomerCentric, like most methodology-intensive solutions, will appeal to organizations with high cost/high value sales organizations selling complex, configurable products.

If you are looking for basic skills training, or you already have a robust, well-formed selling methodology with which you are satisfied, we recommend considering alternatives to CustomerCentric Systems.



Note: The chart above is based upon 2007-08 information about CustomerCentric Systems.

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